

Drugs Education Policy



Redrafted Autumn 2016

Signed Chair of Governors

Signed..... Principal

St. Brigid's Primary/Nursery School

Drugs Education Policy

Principles of the Drugs Education Policy

- a) To provide a clear statement of the school's view on drugs education.
- b) To ensure a consistent approach from staff to drugs education and in the handling of drug related incidents.
- c) To include drugs education policy as an aspect of the Preventative Pastoral Curriculum.

Purposes

In St. Brigid's Primary/Nursery School the welfare of every child is central to all that we do. Therefore we endeavour to create a nurturing, caring, happy, secure, supportive and stimulating environment where children can develop socially, emotionally. The staff endeavour to provide an atmosphere of nurture, care and respect within the life of the school community.

Rationale

The Department of Education requires the Board of Governors to establish and maintain a Drugs Policy. The school drugs policy is based on guidelines from DENI (Circular 2015/23 Drugs Guidance).

The policy endeavours to make a clear statement of our views on drugs. For the purpose of this document drugs includes tobacco, alcohol, over-the-counter, prescribed medication volatile substances and controlled drugs. It ensures a consistent approach among staff on drugs education and in the handling of suspected drug related incidents.

We at St. Brigid's Primary/Nursery School take a very serious view of drug related incidents. We recognise that there are those who are required to take prescribed drugs for health problems.

Drug abuse is a whole community issue and we believe that the school has a role to play in conjunction with the other statutory and voluntary agencies within the community. The support of parents is central, as the school needs the support of parents to extend the messages taught in the classroom into the home.

Drugs education is a cross-curricular issue whereby we seek to ensure that key messages are reinforced in all aspects of school life, which reflect the nurturing ethos of the school. We believe that drugs education needs to be part of a holistic learning approach within PDMU aimed at the overall development of our pupils.

Drug Definitions

A drug is any substance which when taken has the effect of altering the way a person behaves, feels, sees or thinks.

Drugs include:

Illegal drugs-those substances listed as controlled drugs eg. heroin, cocaine, Ecstasy, cannabis and magic mushrooms.

Illicit drugs-include those socially unacceptable legal drugs. e.g. poppers, solvents and the underage consumption of alcohol and tobacco.

Prescribed drugs-those given by a doctor on prescription (also known as 'over the counter drugs') e.g. tranquillisers, sleeping tablets and strong painkillers.

Administrating Prescribed Medication

Any medicine being used by a child should be handed over to the Principal, Vice-Principal, Class Teacher or School Secretary. Medicines may only be administered by the named staff and if it is accompanied by a letter containing parental permission which will be retained in the Pupils' File and SENCO File. **Medicines must be handed over by a responsible adult, and stored in a locked cupboard in the office.**

This is also where confiscated drugs would be stored if necessary.

Development and Implementation

Roles and Responsibilities

The Board of Governors and Principal will have overall responsibility for ensuring the effective implementation of the Drugs Policy in St. Brigid's Primary/Nursery School.

The Designated Child Protection Teacher, Ms Mary McCallion and Assistant Designated Child Protection Teacher, Mr Paul O'Doherty are responsible for managing drug related issues.

The PDMU and Health Education Co-Ordinators will ensure appropriate preventative education learning opportunities are being delivered for all pupils within the school curriculum.

All teaching staff will be responsible for putting into practice the policy and ensuring that appropriate lessons are taught to ensure that children are developing positive attitudes towards a healthy way of life. Non-teaching staff will support teachers where necessary and will report all drug related incidents to the Principal.

Staff Training

When available drug education training programmes may be organised for staff to meet training needs, in order to implement the drugs education policy effectively.

Parent Information

Parents will be informed about certain drug issues if appropriate by receiving information leaflets from the school produced by statutory agencies. Parents will also be encouraged to contact the school if they have concerns about drug related issues which may impact on the school community.

Overview of Drugs Education Programme

Drugs education will be an integral part of our Personal Development and Mutual Understanding programme, incorporating the personal and social development of pupils in their environment. Aspects covered will be relevant to their age and will take account of their present knowledge and experience of drugs. Adequate and suitable resources will be used in lessons. The approach adopted will be mainly preventative and teaching methods will include pupil centred activities e.g. role play, drama, circle time, school council and group work. Where appropriate links will be made with other relevant areas of learning e.g. Shantallow Community Resident Association, Health Education, Religious Education, Physical Education and PDMU. On occasion outside agencies may be asked for specialist help.

Drug Education Programme will include:

- To promote positive attitudes towards personal health.
- To inform pupils of the effects of drug use and abuse.
- To help pupils build up the self-esteem of the pupils.
- To help pupils acquire skills in managing the pressures of the youth culture in which they live.
- To help pupils acquire decision-making skills.
- To create a climate where a young person feels comfortable to discuss problems around substance misuse.
- To encourage a participate approach in which each pupil is actively involved.

- To encourage a healthy and critical respect for all substances taken into the body.
- To equip pupils with skills that will empower them to take responsibility for their own health and safety.

Smoking and Alcohol

St. Brigid's Primary/Nursery School is a smoke-free zone. This means there will be no smoking on the premises, grounds, outside the grounds or any of the school doors. Consumption of alcohol is not permitted.

Communicating the Policy to Parents and Other Relevant Agencies

The Drugs Education Policy will be made available to all parents and in the event of the policy being updated new copies will be issued to parents.

Management Issues

Procedures for Managing Drug-Related Incidents

Dealing with suspected incidents of drug misuse will require extreme sensitivity on the part of those involved. If a pupil is suspected of being under the influence of drugs parents will be notified immediately and appropriate medical action will be taken. Parents will be encouraged to make the school a drug free zone. Confidentiality in drug related incidents cannot be guaranteed.

Finding Drugs – related materials

- Any member of the school community who encounters any materials associated with drug use/misuse should use extreme care, as these may be hazardous
- The presence of any materials should be reported immediately to the designated teacher for drugs.
- MATERIALS MAY INCLUDE: small bottle, pill bottles, aerosols, hydrodermic needles, drugs themselves.

All teachers and staff will refer to the DENI Curricular 2015/23 Drugs Guidance. Detailed procedures for dealing with the different types of drug related incidents are included in the appendix 1.

Sanctions

The Board of Governors, Principal and staff have a duty to protect every pupil from the drug culture and will follow CCMS, EA/DE procedures to protect all pupils from the danger of drugs. Pupils suspected of possessing, supplying or using drugs on the school premises will be dealt with in a serious manner. Incidents involving drugs may lead to suspension, after investigation of the incident and in extreme cases expulsion may be recommended. The school in these cases will act in accordance with CCMS, DE and EA Western Region Guidelines.

The school expects parents to support these measures and to cooperate with the school in encouraging the child to lead a healthier lifestyle. Parents need to be aware of the school's discipline policy on drugs as:

- It reassures parents that the school treats drug related matters very seriously, thus providing protection for pupils.
- It informs parents on what to expect if their child becomes involved in a drug related incident.

At all times the needs of each individual child involved in such incidents will be considered and appropriate intervention and support mechanisms will be put in place.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality can never be guaranteed to any pupil. Any criminal activity disclosed must be passed on to the designated teacher, CCMS, EA and other relevant agencies.

First Aid Training

All support staff, assistants, supervisors and two teachers trained in First Aid. August 2014

Handling and Disposal of Hazardous Substances

Within many classrooms materials are required and used which are toxic and emit intoxicating fumes e.g. solvent-based glues, aerosol sprays, paint thinners, felt-tipped pens. These materials will be kept to a minimum and need to be carefully monitored and stored in locked cupboards to which only staff have access. Classrooms where such materials are used will be kept in locked cupboards when not in use. Materials of a similar nature which are used by caretakers and cleaning staff will be kept in locked storerooms and used with care.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The drugs education policy and programme will be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis as part of the School Development Plan to take account of the needs of staff and pupils. It will also be reviewed in light of particular incidents or local circumstances. Account will be taken of the views of the Board of Governors, staff, parents and pupils and any necessary changes will be made.

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CHECKLIST FOR HANDLING SUSPECTED DRUG RELATED INCIDENTS IN ST BRIGID'S PRIMARY/NURSERY SCHOOL

This is a guide on the key procedures to undertake when a drug-related incident occurs in school:

1. Ensure the safety of the individual pupil involved, of other pupils, yourself and other staff.

- Get help immediately from another adult
- Assess situation, to see if this is a life-threatening situation or not.

If an emergency:-

- Contact an ambulance.
- Put person under the influence of the drugs in the recovery position.
- Ensure airways are cleared.
- Remove any other bystanders from the immediate vicinity.
- Carefully gather up any drugs /paraphernalia/ evidence lying around and keep safely.
- Ascertain which substances /drugs have been taken and how much.
- Secure all drugs paraphernalia and give to the Principal/ designated teacher for drugs immediately, and lock them away.
- Contact the parents/guardians.

2. Ensure all incidents are properly investigated and recorded:-

- Conduct search procedures according according to school policy. (Never search belongings without permission. This includes school property such as cupboards, lockers or desks).
- Ensure all drugs are safely and securely stored or destroyed, making sure that this is witnessed by another adult and recorded.
- Gather details and data from all the eyewitnesses at the scene.
- Record all information on official Child Protection Initial Concerns Form Appendix 4 Child Protection Policy and sign and date, or ensure accurate details are given whoever is writing the form and co-sign.
- Ensure the form is filled in and forwarded to the EA Western Region/CCMS.

3. Ensure appropriate individuals and agencies are informed and contacted as needed.

- Principal and designated teachers for DTCP and Assistant DTCP
- Parents/Guardians
- EA Western Region/CCMS as appropriate
- Chairperson initially and subsequently the Board of Governors
- The Education Welfare Officer
- Media statements, only the Principal should do this
- Other pupils, parents and staff are only told on a need-to-know basis

A pastoral / disciplinary response needs to be made by the school, balancing the need for compassion and the pupil's welfare with the need to send a clear message about illegal actions and behaviour and the impact on the school community.

