



# **Victoria Primary School**

## **Drugs Policy**

**2024**

This policy should be read with the;

- Behaviour policy
- Safeguarding policy
- Child protection policy
- Anti-Bullying policy
- Health and Safety policy
- Critical incidents strategy

## **Vision Statement**

*An inclusive, imaginative and inspiring Learning Community where everyone can be safe, healthy, happy and successful together.*

**Victoria Primary School Drugs Policy**

In Victoria Primary School we aspire to maximise the skills and talents of our pupils in a happy and caring environment, enabling them to become fulfilled and responsible citizens.

## **1. INTRODUCTION.**

V.P.S. believes that the misuse of drugs endangers our pupils. As we strive to promote the personal and social well-being of each pupil, we realise that drug misuse potentially undermines this and would hinder the development of the young person.

This policy provides a guide as to how drugs education should be implemented and developed within the curriculum and outlines the roles, responsibilities and legal duties of key staff. It also forms an integral part of our existing Personal Development for Mutual Understanding (PDMU) strand in the primary curriculum, the Pastoral Care and Child Protection programmes and it complements these. It is in accordance with "*Drugs: Guidance for Schools in Northern Ireland Revised Edition 2015*". The policy follows the guidance given in the Education Authority's Drug Policy Document.

### **1.1 RATIONALE.**

V.P.S. recognises that young people in today's society can be exposed to the risks associated with any existing drug culture. The school wishes to promote the development of the "whole child" and to equip pupils with the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values to handle their lives effectively now and also in the future. Research cites personal inadequacy, a lack of self-esteem and peer pressure as the main reasons for drug misuse among young people. This places a responsibility on schools to "better prepare young people for adult life." (Education Reform (NI) Order 1989). Because of this, drugs education needs to form an integral part of the school curriculum.

### **1.2 DRUGS EDUCATION IN CONTEXT.**

The programme of education is integrated within the PDMU strand of the curriculum. A life skills approach to drug prevention is needed and within the programme pupils are taught about raising self-esteem, self-confidence and assertiveness to prepare them for making informed decisions about drug use, the main focus being on knowledge, social skills, attitudes and values.

Drug education should not be seen as a one-off topic but as a continuous process that involves the development of skills and attitudes enabling pupils to make informed choices. Effective drug education should take account of, the individual pupil, their family, their peer group and the wider community. Where possible the school promotes the partnership between the parent and child, when addressing drug issues.

In conjunction with this, the Pastoral Care system offers pupils the opportunity to discuss any drug related problems they may have and they are informed that confidentiality cannot always be guaranteed.

Drugs education is included specifically within the "Health, Growth and Change" programmes of study for PDMU. It is also found within other subjects such as science, English, religious education and physical education, where there are opportunities for considering drug-related issues from different perspectives.

### **1.3 DEFINITIONS**

The terms drug and substance include any product that, when taken, has the effect of altering the way the body works or how a person behaves, feels, sees or thinks.

As well as everyday products such as tea and coffee, substances include:

- Alcohol, tobacco and tobacco related products, including nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) and electronic cigarettes
- Over-the-counter medicines such as paracetamol and cough medicine
- Prescribed drugs, such as antibiotics, painkillers, antidepressants, antipsychotics, inhalers and stimulants such as Ritalin

- Volatile substances such as correcting fluids or thinners, gas lighter fuel, aerosols, glues and petrol
- Controlled drugs such as cannabis, LSD, ecstasy, amphetamine sulphate (speed), magic mushrooms, heroin and cocaine
- New psychoactive substances (NPS) formally known as \*legal highs, which contain one or more chemical substances that produce similar effects to illegal drugs and are sold as incense, salts or plant food and marked 'not for human consumption' to avoid prosecution
- Other substances such as amyl or butyl nitrite (known as poppers) and unprocessed magic mushrooms.

\* We no longer use the term legal high because it is misleading. The public perceived that 'legal' meant safe. This is not the case, as these substances are not regulated and there is no way of knowing what substances they contain.

## **2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

The school's drugs education programme is grounded in personal development and the enhancement of protective factors.

### **2.1 AIMS**

- To ensure that all members of the school community adopt a consistent approach to drug related issues.
- To define the roles, responsibilities and legal duties of staff in school, including the Principal, designated teacher, all staff (teaching and non-teaching), Governors, pupils and parents or carers.
- To identify how the school will implement and deliver drugs education as part of the overall provision for PDMU in the curriculum.
- To develop procedures and protocols that address drug-related issues across all areas of school life and deal with specific incidents of suspected drug misuse
- To consider the wider issues of drug use or misuse as part of a whole-school approach

### **2.2 OBJECTIVES**

Drugs Education should enable pupils to develop a knowledge and understanding about drugs and drugs issues, as well as the skills needed to cope with challenges they will encounter.

Pupils should be able to:

- Understand their personality, needs, abilities and interests.
- Understand the process of reasoning required to make informed choices.
- Develop coping strategies to deal with peer pressure.
- Develop self-discipline.
- Understand what is meant by "a drug" and the definition of "addiction"
- Understand how some drugs affect the body.
- Be aware of the benefits of healthy lifestyles.
- Be aware of the current drug culture and the effect of advertising campaigns

## **3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **3.1 THE ROLE OF THE PDMU CO-ORDINATOR.**

- Ensuring that the programme of study is being taught effectively



- Liaising with staff on drug education matters, for curriculum purposes
- Organising training for staff as appropriate
- Liaising with outside agencies for curriculum purposes.

### **3.2 THE ROLE OF THE DESIGNATED TEACHER**

- Implementing procedures for dealing with an incident as outlined in this policy
- Receiving any substance and associated paraphernalia found in school (in the absence of the Principal)
- Liaison with the principal on any drug related incident
- Updating staff on the policy and procedures for dealing with drug related incidents
- Induction of new staff as appropriate
- Liaison with the PDMU co-ordinator re: delivery of the drug education programme
- Liaison with outside agencies in relation to drug related incidents

### **3.3 THE ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL**

It is the responsibility of the principal to ensure that correct procedure is followed if a drug incident occurs. The role includes: -

- Determining the circumstances surrounding incidents
- Liaison with the PSNI
- Ensuring pupils' welfare.
- Handling, storage and safe disposal of any drug/drugs related paraphernalia.
- Liaison with the EA and the board of governors
- Ensuring the completion of a written report and forwarding to the governors and EA.
- Contacting parent/guardian of pupil/s involved.

### **3.4 THE ROLE OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

School governors have responsibility for their individual school and foster and support development and on-going review of the policy and education programme. Their role includes: -

- Approve the school policy
- Ensuring the policy is published to the school community.
- Ensuring the policy is reviewed at regular intervals.
- Appointing a governor who is trained to deal with suspected child protection incidents including those related to drugs.

## **4. DRUGS EDUCATION IN THE CURRICULUM.**

Drugs Education is a whole school issue. Where possible, staff will receive in-service training on drug issues and are regularly updated with changes in the curriculum and changes to the policy. The programme is organised through the Safeguarding Team and they ensure there is a programme of study for each year group. It is the responsibility of the classroom teacher to include drugs education in other subject areas if it forms part of the NI curriculum.

### **4.1 RESOURCES.**

The main resources used for the delivery of this programme are listed in the Appendices.

### **4.2 OUTSIDE AGENCIES.**

V.P.S. may use outside agencies to help deliver the drug education programme if the teacher ensures that the following criteria are met:

- The content and delivery of the programme has been jointly agreed.
- The programme and methods of delivery are consistent with the aims and objectives outlined in this policy.
- The Principal has given their approval for the use of the outside agency.

- The members of staff from the agency have been vetted in relation to Child Protection as necessary.

## **5. PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING AND REPORTING INCIDENTS.**

A suspected drug related incident is described as:

- Suspect drugs found on the school premises
- A pupil suspected of being in possession of drugs
- A pupil found to be in possession of drugs
- A pupil suspected of being under the influence of drugs

When an incident occurs the member of staff should:

- Send for support
- Make the situation safe
- Administer first aid if necessary
- If a drug is found, gloves should be used and it should be secured in a safe place until dealt with by the police
- Report the incident.

*(Members of staff are not permitted to search pupils' clothing or possessions. However, it is acceptable to ask the pupil to empty pockets and school bags. Staff may search school property such as lockers or desks.)*

The incident will first be reported to the Designated Teacher, and then to the Principal, who will contact the Community and Schools Involvement officer (CSIO) from the police in the area. The parents of those pupils involved will also be contacted and made aware of the situation. The teacher who reported the incident and the designated teacher will complete a "Record of Action" form. One copy will be sent to the EA designated officer for Drug Education, (Kim Scott), and a copy will be retained for the school's confidential file. The Board of Governors will also be informed. All members of staff are made aware of these procedures, which follow the guidelines issued by CCEA Drugs: Guidance for Schools in Northern Ireland 2004. They are also made aware of their responsibilities under the law outlined in Appendix 1

### **5.1 PROCEDURES RELATING TO DISCIPLINE.**

Procedures should be carried out in line with the school Assertive Discipline Policy.

### **5.2 EMERGENCY PROCEDURES.**

For the purposes of this policy, an emergency is considered to be either:

- A situation in which a pupil or member of staff is in danger, or
- A sequence of events, which requires urgent attention.

A First Aid guide for dealing with incidents is contained in Appendix 2 of this policy. The procedure for recording the incident is contained in Appendix 3.

## **6 CONFIDENTIALITY.**

Confidentiality is of primary importance to those who work professionally with young people in a trusting environment. However, where a pupil makes a drug related disclosure to a teacher, the teacher should make it clear that he or she can offer no guarantee of confidentiality.

School staff will pass on any information about suspected criminal activity associated with drugs to the designated teacher, PSNI and the Education Authority.

## **7 DISCIPLINARY OR PASTORAL CARE RESPONSES**

The school will align any response to a drug-related incident with the school's Discipline Policy and Pastoral Care policy and will consider the pupil's health and well-being when making an appropriate response to a drug-related incident.

## **8 SERVICES AVAILABLE FOR SUPPORT**

Education Authority – South Eastern Region: 028 90 566200  
Department for Education: [www.deni.gov.uk](http://www.deni.gov.uk)  
Health and Safety Executive: 028 90 243249 [www.hseni.gov.uk](http://www.hseni.gov.uk)

## **9 DEALING WITH THE MEDIA.**

If the school receives an enquiry from the media, the caller should be referred only to the Principal.

When responding to the media, the privacy of the pupil should be respected; only short, factual statements should be given and the concluding statement should be positive and reassuring. No further statement should be given. Caller should be referred to EA – South Eastern Region for further comment.

## **10 LINKS WITH PARENTS, THE COMMUNITY AND THE POLICE.**

Parents play a vital role in the prevention of drug misuse and so should be involved in the education of their child. Parents are encouraged to play an active role in homework tasks and should be aware of the school's procedures for dealing with drug related incidents.

V.P.S. has developed good working relationships with the local police. This helps to ensure that if a drug related incident is reported, it will be dealt with in a professional and discrete manner, and in keeping the best interests of the child concerned in mind.

Community and Schools Involvement Officers are invited in to school to facilitate citizenship workshops from P4 – P7 and are available to offer advice and support when it is needed.

## **11 MONITORING AND EVALUATING.**

The school education policy is periodically reviewed to reflect changing circumstances and trends in drug use. The programmes of study are likewise reviewed and any changes deemed necessary are implemented.

The policy is on the agenda of staff meetings when necessary and is reviewed regularly.

This document is freely available to the entire school community. It will be reviewed on a regular basis.

Signed – Chair of Governors: 

Signed – Principal: 

Date: April 2024

Review Date: 2027

Actions by members of staff in the event of a suspected drugs-related incident:

**1. Individual Staff Member**

- Assess situation and decide action;
- Secure First Aid and send for additional staff support if necessary;
- Make situation safe for all pupils and other members of staff;
- Carefully gather up any drugs and/or associated paraphernalia/evidence.
- Pass all information/evidence to the designated teacher for drugs; and
- Write a brief factual report of the incident and forward it to the designated teacher.

**2. Designated Teacher**

- Respond to first aiders advice/recommendations regarding the incident;
- In the case of an emergency inform parents/guardians immediately;
- Take possession of any substance(s) and associated paraphernalia found;
- Inform Principal;
- Take initial responsibility for pupil(s) involved in suspected incident;
- Complete an incident report form (see Appendix 7) and forward it to the principal.

**3. Principal**

- Determine the circumstances surrounding the incident;
- Ensure that the following people are informed where relevant:
  - Parents/guardians;
  - Community and Schools Involvement Officer (CSIO);
  - Board of Governors;
  - Designated Officer in ELB/CCMS.
- Agree pastoral and disciplinary responses including counselling services/support;
- Forward a copy of the incident report form to the chairperson of the Board of Governors and the designated officer within the ELB and CCMS if appropriate; and
- Review procedures and amend, if necessary

**APPENDIX 2.**

**Handling Drug Related Incidents**

**EMERGENCY FIRST AID**

Emergency First Aid will be administered as required by members of staff with First Aid at work qualifications.

**Emergency Action for all members of the school community:**

In the event of finding someone collapsed and unconscious, summon help and follow these procedures until help arrives:

1. Check that the mouth is free of obstruction and the airway clear.
2. If necessary, reposition the head to pull the tongue forward.
3. Loosen clothing at the neck-line.
4. Place the person in the recovery position with the mouth to the side and down.
5. Check for chest movement and colour of face, lips and tongue; if these begin to turn blue, a person qualified in first aid should resuscitate.

**APPENDIX 3**  
*CONFIDENTIAL*

**RECORD OF DRUG RELATED INCIDENT  
VICTORIA PRIMARY SCHOOL**





**APPENDIX 4**  
CONFIDENTIAL

**DRUGS INCIDENT REPORTING FORM**

1	Name of pupil	Date of Birth	Address
2	Date of incident	Reported by	Address
3	Time of incident	Location of incident	
4	First Aid Given?	Yes In what form?	No
5	Parent / Carer informed?	Yes Name?	No
5	Substance retained?	Destroyed?	Passed to PSNI?
6	Was the Education Authority informed?	Yes Name?	No
7	Form completed by?		
	Date:		
	Position in school:		