



Drugs Awareness Policy

1. Reviewed: December 2024
2. Renewal date: December 2028

Rationale: Why do we need a drugs policy?

It is a statutory requirement for every school to have a Drugs Education Policy.

Every school must teach Drugs Education as part of the Health Education cross-curricular theme Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU).

As well as fulfilling our legal requirements, and in keeping with our School Policy of maximising the potential of each pupil and recognising our responsibility to care for each pupil's physical and emotional well-being, we must express our concern about the misuse of drugs in present day society.

We therefore feel it is our duty to:

- explain what a drug is; a substance which, when taken, has the effect of altering the way a person behaves, feels, sees or thinks.
- emphasise that while all medicines are drugs, not all drugs are medicines and that the improper use of drugs can have serious consequences.
- begin to equip our pupils with the necessary life skills and information to prevent and protect children from the dangers attached to the misuse of drugs.

The Drugs Education Programme will be delivered mainly through Health Education in PDMU. It will be appropriate to the needs and the experience of the children in our school.

In drawing up this Drugs Education Policy we believe that in addressing the drugs issue we are being a responsible school.

We wish to deal with drugs education in a manner which does not condone drug use. This school condemns drug misuse.

Above all our primary concern is the welfare care and protection of our pupils.

Aims

- To promote abstinence,
- To delay the onset of experimentation,
- To totally dissuade from use of drugs at all,
- To begin to enable and equip children to make informed responsible decisions about drug use.

Objectives

Kells and Connor Primary School works in partnership with parents.

- To enhance pupils' self-awareness and self-esteem.
- To increase pupils' knowledge of the harmful consequences of drug misuse.

Curriculum

Drugs Education will be taught in a cross-curricular manner within the Northern Ireland curriculum, particularly in the areas of PDMU, Pastoral Care, World Around Us, Religious Education and Language and Literacy (where suitable).

One of the main objectives of Drugs Education within the cross curricular theme of Health Education is that pupils should develop their knowledge and understanding of the use, misuse, risks and effects of drugs and other potentially harmful substances and that they should develop a critical awareness of the relevant personal, social, and economic implications. This must be an important part of our drugs education programme.

We will adopt a "life skills" approach - giving our children appropriate information at the level they require, equipping them with the necessary skills and strategies to make informed decisions about drug use and to help them withstand peer pressure.

Areas covered

We will cover the following areas of drug abuse - alcohol, tobacco, solvent, and controlled drugs.

Outside Agencies

Outside agencies such as the Police and the Health Promotion Agency may be called upon to support the staff in the delivery of the Drugs Education programme.

All members of staff will work together as a team to deliver the Drugs Education Programme as effectively as possible.

Storage of hazardous and volatile substances

All substances which constitute a hazard to the safety of the children, including materials used to clean the school such as bleach and polish, must be securely stored at all times. Out of reach does not necessarily mean out of harm.

The use in class by pupils of volatile substances, such as glue, must be carefully monitored by all members of staff. Children are not allowed to have gas lighter fuel, cigarette lighters or correcting fluid in their possession. The use of aerosol sprays should be discouraged.

We will use PVA or other water-soluble glues. The felt tip pens that children use should also be water based.

Procedures for dealing with drug/substance related incidents

We have agreed procedures for handling cases of suspected drug/substance misuse on the school premises based on our primary concern which is the well-being and safety of all the pupils in school.

We will follow the procedures outlined by DENI when dealing with the following drug incidents:

1. Finding a substance on the school premises
2. Pupils suspected of possessing, distributing an illegal substance
3. Pupils suspected of having taken drugs into school.

Disciplinary Measures

We in Kells and Connor Primary School will take a very serious view of anyone caught possessing or under the influence of illicit drugs. The disciplinary measures will reflect this which will include contacting parents and police and may include suspension or expulsion. Disciplinary matters will be dealt with under the relevant disciplinary procedures.

Administration of medication

The school will follow the guidelines issued by the Education Authority (Northern Region) on the administration of medication in schools with which all members of staff should become familiar. Reference should be made to the school's Medication Policy.

Wider Community

Drugs Education is a whole school issue. The whole school community including teaching and other staff, governors and relevant outside agencies should be involved. We act "in loco parentis" and everyone concerned must realise that our primary concern must be the well-being and safety of all the pupils in our charge.

Every effort will be made to ensure that the staff are well informed about the misuse of drugs, the necessity of having a Drugs Education programme and of being familiar with the school's procedures.

The Board of Governors will be involved in the development of the school's Drug Education Policy and procedures.

Many parents are concerned about drugs in our community. They may be anxious to know that the school is addressing the issue, the manner in which this is done, and the information supplied.

The school will ensure that parents are aware of our Drugs Education Policy. Finally we must do our best to stress that all teaching will be done in the wider context of health education and carefully matched to the age and maturity of the pupils concerned.

Review Procedures

The Drugs Education Policy will be regularly reviewed and evaluated. The policy and programmes of study will also be revised to take account of changing trends and circumstances.