



## **Drugs Policy**

**Agreed: September 2016**

**To be reviewed: June 2018**

### **Section 1**

#### **Rationale**

For the purpose of this document the term 'drugs' and 'substances' includes tobacco, alcohol, over-the counter and prescribed medication, volatile substances and controlled drugs. Belfast Model School for Girls does not condone the misuse of drugs but recognises that there has been a societal increase in the misuse of drugs over recent years.

Research continues to show that by post-primary school age a significant number of young people are engaging with substances such as alcohol, cigarettes, including electronic cigarettes, or solvents and/or have misused prescribed medicines or other substances (eg: *Young Persons' Behaviour and Attitudes Survey* (YPBAS) (2013)).

Belfast Model School for Girls has a statutory requirement to have a drugs policy and to provide drugs education as part of our curriculum. This drugs education is important because it is part of the school's strategy in relation to the development of the core values of our students.

It is recognised that drug misuse is a whole-community issue and schools alone cannot solve the drugs problem; the school is only one of a number of groups and agencies which must play a part in the education of young people. As a school we work in partnership with local organisations and avail of their expertise where possible in the delivery of our programme and in the dealing with any drug related incident.

#### **Ethos**

In conjunction with our community partners, Belfast Model School for Girls has a vital preventative role to play in combating the misuse of drugs by young people. Our school mission statement commits us to the creation and maintenance of a safe and caring environment in school and we therefore deliver a Drug Education programme. Our drugs/substance abuse education programme aims to raise pupil awareness of the effects of drugs and other substances on emotional, physical and social well-being. We want our pupils to make informed and responsible decisions about drugs by increasing their knowledge and by developing in them appropriate values, attitudes and skills to enable them to say no to drugs.

All staff (teaching and non-teaching) should familiarise themselves with the information included in this policy and further copies may be obtained from the Vice Principal in their role is Designated Teacher for Drugs.

Copies of the guidance on which this policy is based, Drugs: Guidance for Schools in N. Ireland 2015, are available from the Department of Education website [www.deni.gov.uk](http://www.deni.gov.uk)

The Board of Governors were involved in the formulation of this policy and are fully involved in all decisions in relation to drugs and drugs education in school.

## Definitions

For the purpose of this document and in line with the guidance issued to all schools by the Department of Education (Circular 2004/9 revised 2015 page 3) **the terms drug and substance will include any product that, when taken, has the effect of altering the way the body works or the way a person behaves, feels, sees or thinks.**

**Drug Use:** refers to taking a drug;

**Drug Misuse:** refers to legal, illegal or illicit drug taking or alcohol consumption, which leads a person to experience social, psychological, physical or legal problems related to intoxication or regular excessive consumption and/or dependence. Drug misuse is therefore taking drugs, including prescribed drugs and New Psychoactive substances (NPS), that cause harm to the individual, their significant others or the wider community.

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

- alcohol, tobacco and tobacco-related products, including nicotine replacement therapy (NRT); and e-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), formerly 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.

\*The term 'legal high' is no longer used 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 chemicals they contain. The UK Government has published an NPS resource pack for informal educators and practitioners [www.drugscope.org.uk](http://www.drugscope.org.uk).

**Controlled substances** are legally classified according to their benefit when used in medical treatment or harm if misused. The Misuse of Drugs Act sets out a range of substances that are controlled under the act. It is an offence to possess, possess with intent to supply, supply, or allow premises you occupy or manage to be used unlawfully for the purpose of producing or supplying controlled drugs.

## **Aim**

To educate and protect young people in relation to the harm associated with the use and misuse of substances.

## **Objectives**

- To develop a consistent approach to drug-related issues in line with the school's pastoral care provision that all members of the school community can adopt.
- To have a clear and agreed understanding among everyone in the school community about the implications and possible consequences of drug use/misuse.
- To provide all staff with adequate training and support to enable them to deal effectively and confidently with incidents of suspected drug misuse, and to ensure that the procedures are sensitively and consistently applied in all situations.
- To empower staff through appropriate training and support to develop and deliver an effective drug education programme.
- To provide a drug education programme which develops pupils' self-esteem and promotes positive attitudes in their relationships with others, gives pupils' opportunities to develop the values, skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to make informed and responsible decisions about the use/misuse of drugs including tobacco, alcohol and volatile substances, within the context of a healthy lifestyle; and helps pupils' develop the skills necessary to assert themselves confidently and resist negative pressures and influences.
- To signpost to appropriate support and assistance for those pupils and their families affected by drug-related issues.
- To inform parents of the content of this policy and the procedures to be implemented in the management of incidents of suspected drug misuse.
- To establish procedures for managing specific incidents of suspected drug misuse.

- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the policy in line with whole-school self-evaluation procedures.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Pupils**

- Be aware of and adhere to school rules in relation to drug use/misuse, including tobacco, alcohol, over-the-counter and prescribed medication, volatile substances and controlled drugs.

### **All staff**

- Be alert to the possibility of drug use/misuse.
- Be familiar with the school's procedures in the handling of suspected drug-related incidents.
- It is not the responsibility of the individual staff member to investigate the circumstances surrounding an incident, however he/she should deal with any emergency procedures if necessary.
- Any information, substance or paraphernalia received should be forwarded to the designated teacher for drugs (or the Principal in their absence) who may have to take immediate action in line with the guidance in the appendix to this policy.

## **Teachers delivering the Drug Education programme**

In addition to the above:

- Deliver the school's drug education programme.
- Try to create an atmosphere in the classroom in which pupils can freely contribute to discussion, safe in the knowledge that the comments, ideas and feelings of the group are valued.
- Support pupils in their class if necessary and make referral to supports through the Designated Teacher for drugs.
- Liaise with the designated teacher for drugs regarding any aspect of the programme/policy, as necessary.

## **The Designated Teacher for Drugs**

- Ensure that all staff and parents are aware of and have access to a copy of the policy.
- Have oversight of the planning of curricular provision in compliance with the statutory requirements including periodic update and review of this policy.
- Liaise with other staff responsible for pastoral care and the leadership of drugs education in co-ordinating the delivery of the drug education programme.
- Co-ordinate training and induction of all staff in the procedures for dealing with incidents of suspected drug misuse.

- Be responsible for co-ordinating the school's procedures for dealing with incidents of suspected drug misuse.
- Determine the circumstances surrounding the incident.
- Complete a suspected incident report form and forward to Principal.
- Ensuring the engagement and active participation of parents in all aspects of drug education.
- Liaises with the Full Service Extended Schools lead who acts as the point of contact for outside agencies working with the school.

### **The Principal**

- Ensures that members of the Board of Governors have been consulted on and ratified the policy.
- Through delegated leadership ensures the curriculum coverage for drugs education is sufficient
- Ensures procedures are in place for the handling of drugs related issues

In the case of incidents of suspected drug misuse the guidance on the appendix to this policy prevails we should;

- Ensure the welfare and well being of the pupil(s) involved in the incident and the rest of the school community.
- Ensure that the following people are informed (where relevant):

\*Parents/Guardians

\*PSNI - preferably the Community and Schools Involvement Officer (CSIO)

\*Board of Governors

\*Designated Officer in Education Authority

- Ensure members of staff and other pupils and parents are informed within the confines of confidentiality
- Agree, in consultation with the Board of Governors, appropriate pastoral and disciplinary responses in relation to the incident, including counselling services/support.
- Retain written records of the incident and ensuring a copy of the reports are submitted to Board of Governors, EA as appropriate
- Review procedures and amend.

### **The Board of Governors**

- Examine and approve the completed policy prior to its implementation in the school.
- Ensure the policy is published on the school website and that it is reviewed at regular intervals.

- Be fully aware of and adequately trained to deal with suspected incidents of drug misuse, including tobacco and alcohol, and their appropriate disciplinary response.
- Agree in consultation with the Principal appropriate pastoral and disciplinary responses in relation to suspected drug related incidents.

### **Parents/Guardians**

- Support their child if they have become involved with drugs.
- Support the school with any actions taken in relation to drugs.
- Support the school in the development and implementation of this policy, including the school's procedures for handling incidents of suspected drug misuse and the drug education programme
- Follow school procedures for prescribed or other over the counter medications.

### **Education Authority**

Training is provided by the EA or other external agencies as available. The school will request training if required in the light of experience.

### **The Drugs Education Programme**

The drug education programme in Belfast Model School for Girls is just one part of the whole school response to drug use/misuse. The programme is grounded in the following aims.

and objectives:

#### **AIMS**

- To promote positive attitudes towards personal health.
- To develop self-discipline and self-respect.
- To build pupils' self-esteem.
- To develop decision making skills which may delay or prevent the onset of experimentation.
- To inform pupils of the effects of drug abuse and the risks involved.
- To help pupils to understand how they can influence their peers.
- To develop knowledge and understanding of themselves and others as individuals.

#### **OBJECTIVES**

Pupils should be able to:

- Understand their own personality, needs, abilities and interests.
- Understand the process or reasoning required to make informed choices.
- Explore their own attitudes towards drugs and drug issues.
- Develop coping strategies to deal with peer pressure.
- Develop a competence in challenging attitudes and patterns of behaviour associated with drug misuse.
- Develop self-discipline.

- Understand what is meant by a 'drug' and the definition of 'addiction'.
- Understand how some drugs affect the human body.

Drug education has a place in the Personal Development programme and is supported by the pastoral care programme throughout the school. There are relevant subject programmes of study such as Science, Home Economics, Physical Education, Religious Education and Learning for Life and Work and other subject areas which also support Drugs education.

Varied methods of delivery will be used including

- Pupil-centred/active learning. The focus will be on prevention
- Special events eg. Drug awareness days.
- Assemblies will also be used to promote healthy lifestyles.

An overview of delivery is detailed in appendix 10 of this policy.

### **Procedures for dealing with suspected drug related incidents**

Fundamental to dealing with incidents of suspected drug misuse is the principle of '*in loco parentis*', and Belfast Model School for Girls will always take the steps that would reasonably be expected of any parent to safeguard the well being and safety of all the pupils in their charge.

A suspected drug related incident is described as:

- Illness/inappropriate behaviour that may be linked to drug taking.
- An allegation of a suspected controlled drug on the site.
- Possession, possession with intent to supply and supply of controlled drug.
- Finding drugs related paraphernalia.
- Any of the above whilst on a school trip, on a school minibus or any authorised school activity.

The following procedures should be adhered to:

- Handling a drug-related incident – See APPENDIX 1
- Pupil suspected of having taken drugs/alcohol on school premises – See APPENDIX 2
- Pupil suspected of possessing/distributing an illegal substance - See APPENDIX 3
- Pupil in possession of alcohol or unauthorised prescribed medication on the school premises – See APPENDIX 4
- A parent or carer arrives at school to collect a child and appears to be under the influence of alcohol or another substance – See APPENDIX 5.
- All drugs incidents must be recorded on the Drugs incident report form – See APPENDIX 6
- APPENDIX 7 details Emergency Procedures

- When referrals are made to support the Referral pathway for Specified School Incidents proforma must be used – See APPENDIX 8 and APPENDIX 9 details Useful contacts in Northern Ireland.

## **Confidentiality**

The school will at all times give careful consideration as to how any information relating to an incident of suspected/confirmed drug use/misuse is communicated to staff, pupils and parents/guardians.

The parents/guardians of the pupil(s) directly involved in an incident of suspected drug use/misuse will be informed of the incident recognising that the future of a child or adult can be adversely affected. Confidentiality is of paramount importance in drug related incidents and subsequent outcomes, however the school or staff dealing with these matters cannot guarantee confidentiality.

## **Dealing with the Media**

If the school receives an enquiry from the media the caller will only be referred to the Principal. A response will only be given to the media following advice from the Education Authority. It is without saying when responding to the media the privacy of the pupil(s), their family and/or any staff members will be respected at all times.

## **Disciplinary Actions**

The school takes very seriously all matters in relation to drugs. Sanctions will be applied, up to permanent exclusion, however incidents will be dealt with on a case by case basis as there are often many other significant factors at play. Any decision relating to school sanctions will be in line with the school behaviour policy, with decisions taken by the Principal (or Vice Principal in the Principal's absence) in conjunction with the Chair of the Board of Governors. The decision will also take into account the pupil's health and well-being and support will be provided by an appropriate agency (see appendix 8).



