



### Substance Use and Misuse Policy

- The School condones neither the misuse of drugs, alcohol and cigarettes by members of the School, nor the supply of these substances.
- The School is committed to the health and safety of its members and will take action to safeguard their well-being.
- The School acknowledges the importance of its pastoral role in the welfare of young people and, through the general ethos of the school, will seek to persuade students in need of support to come forward.

In response to our shared concerns at a local and national level, we wish to state that as part of our care for the welfare of our students, we believe we have a duty to inform and educate young people on the consequences of drug use and misuse. We take a pro-active stance, believing that health education is a vital part of the personal and social education of every student.

Fundamental to our values and practice is the principle of sharing the responsibility for the education of young people with parents, by keeping them informed and involved at all times. Effective communication and co-operation is essential to the successful implementation of this policy.

Whilst we acknowledge that the numbers of young people who use and misuse substances is rising, it is important to recognise that the larger numbers of young people are choosing not to use or misuse substances. We shall continue to support their differing needs.

#### **Aims**

We believe and support the following educational aims in respect of substance use and misuse:

- to enable students to make healthy, informed choices by increasing knowledge, challenging attitudes and developing and practising skills
- to provide accurate information about substances
- to increase understanding about the implications and possible consequences of use and misuse
- to encourage an understanding for those experiencing or likely to experience substance use
- to widen understanding about related health and social issues e.g. sex, crime, HIV and AIDS

- to seek to minimise the risks that users and potential users face
- to enable young people to identify sources of appropriate personal support

These aims are fulfilled through aspects of the students' experiences in the taught curriculum, the informal curriculum and through opportunities for extra - curricular activities. We address the issues in the taught curriculum mainly through Science and English areas, but other opportunities to reinforce learning will occur in other parts of the teaching programme. The School actively co-operates with other agencies such as Community Police, Social Services, L.A. and Health and Drug Agencies to deliver its commitment to Drugs Education and to deal with incidents of substance use and misuse. Visitors who support the School will be informed of the values held within this policy.

**The Roles of the Headteacher and Governing Body**

The Headteacher takes overall responsibility for the policy and its implementation, for liaison with the Governing Body, parents, L.A. and appropriate outside agencies. The Headteacher will ensure that staff dealing with substance issues are adequately supported and trained.

In instances involving substance misuse or supply on the premises, and following discussion between staff members who know the student well, parents will be informed at the earliest opportunity by the Headteacher. The School and the parents can then work together to support the young person involved.

If a young person admits to using or supplying substances off the premises, the teacher's discretion will be involved, but the Headteacher should be informed and will usually inform the parents.

There is no legal obligation to inform the police, though they may be able to give relevant support and advice. However, a school cannot knowingly allow its premises to be used for the production, supply or use of any controlled drug. Where it is suspected that substances are being sold on the premises, details regarding those involved together with as much information as possible, will be passed to the Police Liaison Officer.

The Governing Body will be involved in substance education and substance related incidents in the same manner as any other matter concerning the direction of the School.

The School will consider each substance incident individually and recognises that a variety of responses will be necessary to deal with incidents. The School will consider very carefully the implications of any action it may take. It seeks to balance the interests of the student involved, the other school members and the local community. Permanent exclusion is seen as a last resort.

Regarding the welfare of staff, the School will follow any L.A. policy or advice on substance use and misuse.

The Headteacher will take responsibility for liaison with the media. As the issue of substance misuse is an emotive one, and is likely to generate interest from the local and national media, the School will take appropriate advice and guidance from the L.A.

Press Office and Legal Department to ensure that any reporting of incidents remains in the best interest of the young people, their families and the School.

## **GUIDANCE FOR STAFF**

Where a young person discloses substance misuse on the premises, staff will inform the Headteacher and, where appropriate, participate in the planning of subsequent action as described above. Where a young person discloses substance misuse off the premises, the staff member will use his or her discretion to decide on appropriate action, but will normally involve the Headteacher.

Where staff discover substances which are suspected to be harmful, illegal or deserving of investigation, they should note the two circumstances in which substances may be removed from either a place or person:

### **a) Place**

If possible, remove the substance from where it was discovered in the presence of a witness. If this is not possible, do not leave the substance there while you enlist the support of a colleague or a witness. Continue with the procedure below.

### **b) Person**

When receiving or retrieving substances from a student, do so if possible in the presence of a witness. In the absence of a witness, do not put off receiving substances or, within bounds of your professional discretion, removing a suspicious substance from a student's possession.

The following guidelines should be observed at all times:

- Remove the substance and record the time, place and circumstances when the substance came into your possession.
- Do not investigate the nature of the substance, but do record its approximate size and appearance.
- When possible, have the recordings countersigned by a witness.
- Take the substance immediately to the Headteacher. Do not keep the substance on your person or in a place of safe keeping; to do so may place you at risk.

In the presence of the Headteacher, place the substance in a suitable sealed container. The Headteacher, yourself and when possible, the witness, should sign and date the package. An official report should be completed, detailing the time, date and circumstances of the findings.

- The Headteacher can choose to arrange for the police to remove the substance from the premises or may choose to dispose of it in an appropriate way.
- In the event of a discovery of any equipment associated with substance use, especially needles and syringes, students should not be allowed to handle such items. All equipment found must be handled by adults with utmost care. The Headteacher must ensure that materials are placed in a secure and rigid container to await collection by the appropriate service