

DRUGS

POLICY

EATON HOUSE SCHOOLS
POLICY DOCUMENT

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Policy Statement

“Drugs” include medicines, alcohol, tobacco, controlled drugs and volatile substances. Controlled drugs are often referred to as “illegal substances”. Obtaining controlled drugs by any method other than via a doctor's prescription is illegal; drug trafficking and taking controlled drugs that have been obtained illegally are criminal offences. The school seeks to comply with the law of the land and also wishes to encourage its pupils to behave in a way which is deemed to be fitting for them as well as best for their health.

As part of the personal, social, health and Economic education (PSHEE) programme, the school believes that it should ensure that its pupils have:

- a substantial knowledge of substances that are currently illegal
- an understanding of the reasoning behind the banning of such substances
- the skill to distinguish between fact, promotion and polemic
- the ability to analyse data and comment critically on issues raised.

Alcohol, tobacco and volatile substances, while legal, can pose greater problems for society than illegal substances and the PSHEE programme covers their use, abuse and dangers. The school has a no smoking policy and a policy on alcohol, both of which are separate to this document.

Summary

Schools have a role to play in preventing drug misuse as part of their pastoral responsibilities. Drug education is, therefore, an important part of the curriculum for all schools. It must be relevant and appropriate and must also match the needs of the pupils.

The school has in place a clearly defined policy and procedure for responding to drug-related incidents. The purpose of a drugs policy is to prevent pupils using controlled drugs at any time. This does not include medication prescribed by a doctor. Please see the school policy on medicines.

The Aims of the Policy

The aims of this policy are:

- to develop pupils' understanding of the difference between controlled and illegal drugs
- to educate pupils on the effects of drugs and solvents on the mind and body
- to provide opportunities for pupils to develop the skills and the strategies needed to deal with situations involving drugs
- to explain the legal situation with regard to the use and misuse of drugs, including the system of classification
- to provide pupils and parents with information about the sources of help and support available, especially in the local area
- to inform pupils that the possession of drugs, taking of them or trafficking in them is illegal; that any pupil involved in an illegal drugs incident on school premises can expect to be dealt with accordingly; that they run the risk of being excluded from the school; and that the school has the right to determine whether or not the police should be informed

Employers' Duties

Schools should:

- provide accurate information on drugs and alcohol through education and targeted information
- address problem behaviour
- work with other organisations to prevent drug or alcohol misuse
- have a designated, senior member of staff with responsibility for the drug policy and drug issues (this would be senior management)
- Staff are informed of the policy at induction and can be found on the school policy website.

Employees' Duties

- Teachers should not involve themselves in drug education unless specifically required by the school to do so. All those involved in drug education must ensure that they develop the skills, knowledge and confidence that will enable them to address drug issues with pupils. The implementation of any school policy is meant to act as a positive and effective deterrent.
- Senior managers should support any teachers required to be engaged in drug education and ensure that they have adequate access to appropriate professional development.
- All staff should be thoroughly conversant with the school's policy regarding drug misuse.
- Staff should exercise their responsibility as role models.

Procedure

Selling or trading in drugs on school premises will almost certainly mean that a pupil will be permanently excluded. Using and encouraging others to use drugs on school premises will almost certainly lead to permanent exclusion.

The school will consider any incident involving illegal substances individually and recognises that a variety of responses will be necessary to deal with such incidents. It will consider carefully the implications of any action it may take. It will seek to comply with the law and to balance the interests of the pupil with the interests of other members of the school.

The school wishes to support parents as well as it can and will inform them about its drug education policies. Parents have the right to have copies of syllabuses and to see all materials used. It will inform individual parents if their child is involved in any incident involving illegal substances.

Guidance to Staff

If you believe, or it is reported to you, that a pupil may have illegal substances in his/her possession at the school, you must report the matter immediately to your relevant Head Teacher or Mrs Cawood, the Principal.

Action will then be taken, as follows.

1. The pupil will be seen in the presence of another member of staff and told that an accusation has been made.
2. The pupil will be asked to empty his/her pockets, bags, etc. in front of an appropriate member of staff and a witness. This may also extend to the pupil's locker.
3. If a pupil refuses, he/she will be detained and the parents will be contacted. The police may be contacted.
4. Parents will be informed of the accusation and the results of any subsequent search.
5. If any illegal substance(s) is/are found, the pupil will be questioned further by the relevant Head Teacher with the parents and a witness in attendance. If the pupil's parents cannot be contacted, the interview will take place and they will be informed as soon as possible. The pupil will be asked to write his/her account of the situation if able to do so.
6. A decision as to whether the police should be called will be made in conjunction with the Head and parents. The decision will be influenced by:
 - a. the amount found
 - b. whether other pupils are involved
 - c. other wider circumstances.

At all points, the school reserves the right to inform the police if it deems it to be appropriate. Although each incident will be treated separately, the school is likely to take action in addition to any legal proceedings. The school will consider exclusion, and this will probably be permanent.

Any member of staff who believes that any pupil(s) is/are taking or dealing in illegal drugs while on school premises should report the matter immediately to their relevant Head Teacher or Mrs Cawood who will investigate the allegation following the above guidelines.

Pupils should be encouraged to report immediately to a member of staff any matters concerning illegal substances.

Defining drug incidents

Drug incidents are likely to begin as:

- a disclosure
- a suspicion arising from an observation
- the discovery of paraphernalia or a suspicious substance.

The following would be regarded as a drug incident.

- A pupil appears to have an inappropriate level of knowledge about drugs for his or her age.
- A pupil, parent/carer or a member of staff is suspected of being under the influence or in the early stages of recovery from the misuse of a drug.
- A pupil discloses that he or she, or a family member or a friend are misusing drugs.
- A staff member or pupil has information that the sale or supply of drugs is taking place in the locality of the school.
- A pupil is discovered to be in possession of drugs or associated paraphernalia.
- A pupil is found to be supplying drugs on school premises.

Investigating Drug-related Incidents

The objective of the initial school investigation is to determine the seriousness of the incident. A decision can then be made as to whether the police or other agencies should be involved.

The initial investigation should focus on:

- whether the incident involved a legal or an illegal drug
- if it is a one-off incident or a longer-term situation
- the quantity of the drug involved
- the pupil's motivation and knowledge of the drug concerned
- whether the pupil knows and understands school's policy and rules on drugs
- the pupil's home circumstances
- where the incident appears on a scale from "possession of a small quantity" to "persistent supply for profit"
- if supply is suspected, how much is involved, whether the pupil was coerced into the supply role or if there is evidence of organised habitual supply
- whether or not other pupils were involved.

The investigation should be conducted by the Head Teacher or the member of staff with designated responsibility for implementing the drugs policy. The following points should be kept in mind.

- The confidentiality of those involved must be respected.
- Any drug should be treated as a controlled drug if its legal status cannot be identified.
- Under schools' general power to discipline (Education and Inspections Act 2006), a member of staff can confiscate, retain or dispose of pupils' property where it is reasonable to do so.
- If more than one pupil is involved in the incident, they should be kept apart until the investigation is complete.
- Leading questions or direct accusations must not be made.
- Open-ended questions should be used and the pupils should be listened to.

If it is decided that the police should be involved, further questioning should be left to the investigating officers. The police should not normally be involved in incidents involving legal drugs.

Confiscating Controlled Drugs

If it is necessary to take temporary possession of a suspected controlled drug, schools are advised to:

- ensure that an adult witness is present
- seal the sample in a plastic bag, with details of the date, time and witness
- store the drug somewhere securely, with access limited to senior members of staff
- notify the police
- record details of the incident, including the police incident reference number
- inform parents (unless this is not in the best interests of the pupil)
- identify any safeguarding concerns and respond accordingly.

Responding to Drug-related Incidents

Any response must be proportionate and balance the needs of the individual with those of the wider school community. An incident should not automatically lead to exclusion. Planned intervention and support might be a more appropriate response.

Responses used by schools include:

- early intervention and targeted prevention
- counselling
- behaviour support
- referral
- inter-agency programmes
- pastoral support
- a managed move
- fixed period exclusion
- permanent exclusion.

The *DfE and ACPO Drug Advice for Schools* recommends that schools should ensure that pupils have information about local and national helplines including:

- FRANK (for drugs)
- SmokeFree (NHS))
- Drinkline (Independent charity)

Referral to Other Agencies

When necessary, a drug-related incident should be referred to appropriate services and agencies. These might include:

- the youth and community service
- social services
- the family support and child protection team
- young people's drugs services.

It may be appropriate to refer the pupil to general youth services or counselling in the first instance, rather than to a drug-specific agency. Parents and carers should always be involved in a referral decision.

Involving Parents and Carers

Schools are not legally required to inform parents and carers:

- before a search involving their child takes place; or
- if alcohol, illegal drugs or potentially harmful substances are found.

However, Eaton House School will always try to inform parents. Parents and carers should be encouraged to involve the school if they are concerned about drug-related issues involving their child.

If the school is concerned that a parent or carer is using illegal drugs, it may be prudent to follow child protection procedures or involve social services.

Whole School Approach

In order to prevent misuse of drugs effectively, the whole school must be involved (including staff, parents/carers, pupils, SMT and the wider community). The key features of an effective strategy are that:

- it is consistent with the school's values and ethos and is developed by all members of the school community
- it is part of a well-planned programme and is delivered in a supportive environment, where pupils feel able to engage in open discussion and to ask for help if necessary
- policy and practice for managing incidents are consistent with teaching
- pupils' needs and views are taken into account when developing programmes and policies
- staff have access to quality training and support
- it is supported by consistent messages from the family and community.

Planning Drug Education

Drug education should be relevant and appropriate and match the needs of pupils in a particular school by taking account of the social and demographic context of the school. It must be accessible to all pupils, including those with special education needs.

The majority of drug education is usually delivered as part of the personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE) programme. It must be accessible to all pupils, including those with special educational needs. Schools determine the exact form this takes by taking into consideration:

- the local context
- the needs of their pupils.

Drug education programmes should:

- be taught by people who know what they are talking about
- be interesting
- provide as much information as possible including the range of effects and risks
- give them the knowledge to deal with an emergency
- involve them in discussion and debate in which their views and opinions are noted and listened to
- avoid patronising approaches (e.g. “just say no”).

Other areas of the curriculum that can contribute to the drug education programme include:

- English, e.g., group discussion about information materials and related items in the media
- Mathematics, e.g., compiling and interpreting relevant statistical data and discussing results if appropriate
- ICT, e.g., carrying out related research activities
- drama, e.g., exploring and developing relevant themes through role-play
- music and art, e.g., exploring popular culture
- geography, e.g., discussing economic activity such as the poppy fields in Afghanistan
- physical education, e.g., health and fitness
- religious education, e.g., exploring moral, social and cultural values.

Local Context

It is vital to take the local context into consideration when planning drug education. This includes:

- pupils' existing knowledge and understanding
- local levels of drug usage
- ethnic and cultural diversity
- misuse of drugs by parents

Pupils' Existing knowledge and understanding

It is vital to evaluate how much pupils know and how accurate their knowledge is. Most pupils will have some knowledge but much of it will almost certainly be based on myth or misinformation. Pupils of the same age will vary enormously in their knowledge.

Local Levels of Drug Usage

The police and other local support agencies should be able to provide a local drug usage profile. This will help to identify the particular issues in the school's locality, so that they can be addressed in the drug education programme.

Ethnic and Cultural Diversity

Drug education must be relevant and sensitive to the cultural and ethnic diversity of the population served by the school. There may also be language issues that will need to be taken into account when consulting with pupils and keeping families informed.

Misuse of Drugs by Parents

The parents/carers or close relatives of pupils might misuse drugs.

Care must be taken not to unduly heighten pupils' anxieties about their parents or other family members' welfare.

The use of language in drug education needs to be carefully considered, for example smoking tobacco can be described as harmful but phrases like "cigarettes kill" should be avoided.

Aims of Drug Education

Drug education has three aims.

- To increase pupils' knowledge and understanding and clarify misconceptions about:
 - the short- and long-term effects and risks of drugs
 - the rules and laws relating to drugs
 - the impact of drugs on individuals, families and communities
 - the prevalence and acceptability of drug use among peers
 - the complex moral, social, emotional and political issues surrounding drugs.
- To develop pupils' personal and social skills and their ability to make informed decisions about staying healthy and safe through:
 - assessing, avoiding and managing risks
 - communicating effectively
 - resisting pressure
 - finding information, help and advice
 - devising problem-solving and coping strategies
 - developing self-awareness and self-esteem.
- To enable pupils to explore their own and other people's attitudes towards drugs, drug use and drug users, including challenging stereotypes and exploring media and social influences.

Teaching strategies

Drug education is particularly well suited to interactive and participatory teaching methods. Active teaching and learning strategies ensure that all pupils are fully involved in the lesson.

Successful strategies include:

- brainstorming and mind-mapping sessions
- action research and case studies
- whole class discussions and formal debates
- media analysis
- local surveys
- role-play and simulations
- quizzes and structured games
- watching and then discussing videos.

External contributors

Healthy schools programmes and external agencies have qualified and experienced specialists who are prepared to visit schools and contribute to drug education lessons. The use of reformed drug users is, however, considered a high-risk strategy.

When external specialists are used, teachers should always stay with the class to:

- maintain discipline
- consider follow-up work to reinforce what pupils have learned

Drugs of Particular Significance

Drug education programmes should:

- encompass all drugs that can cause potential harm
- emphasise the dangers of using combinations of drugs such as mixing alcohol with illegal class A, B or C drugs.

However, the drugs or groups of drugs that are regarded as being of particular significance are:

- alcohol
- tobacco
- cannabis
- volatile substances
- class A drugs
- legal highs.

Tobacco

Smoking is the single most preventable cause of premature death and ill-health. Passive smoking is also extremely dangerous. Although it is illegal to sell tobacco products to anyone under the age of 18 years, a tenth of 11–15-year-olds and a quarter of 16-year-olds are regular smokers.

Schools have a role to play in raising pupils' awareness of the health risks associated with smoking.

Cannabis

Cannabis is currently classified as a class B drug. It is the illegal drug that is most commonly used by young people with up to a third of 16-year-olds admitting that they have tried it.

Schools must reinforce that:

- it is an illegal drug
- possession is a criminal offence, leading potentially to a criminal conviction
- criminal convictions have long-term consequences
- cannabis use is harmful to health.

Volatile substances

According to Home Office statistics, three times as many young people die as a result of volatile substance abuse (VSA) than die as a result of illegal drug misuse.

VSA is the inhalation of volatile substances such as lighter fuel, glue and aerosols. The dangers need to be stressed in the very early stages of drug education to reduce the risk of very young pupils experimenting out of curiosity or through peer pressure.

Class A drugs

Class A drugs, including cocaine, crack, ecstasy and heroin, will not normally be included in drug education until the age of 11 onwards although primary aged pupils will need to know how to keep themselves safe around discarded drug paraphernalia such as used needles.

Although not many young people use class A drugs themselves, they may be exposed to their use at home. They must, therefore, be made aware of the:

- associated health hazards, including those associated with discarded drug paraphernalia
- strong links to major social problems and crime.

Legal highs

Legal highs are similar to illegal drugs but they are not currently controlled under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 because there is insufficient information about them. Although they are not illegal, they cannot be sold for human consumption. They are, therefore, sold as something else such as bath salts or plant food. Tackling supply is difficult as new and unregulated substances emerge as soon as others are banned.

The lack of information about legal highs also means that there is uncertainty about the level of harm they can do, but there are a number of well-documented reports of deaths that resulted from the use of legal highs.

Linked Policies

Alcohol Policy

No Smoking Policy