



# Drugs Policy

Ratified: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chair, Board of Governors:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Renewal Date:

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Reviewed March 2021) (Reviewed Feb 2024)





## Introduction

For the purposes of this document the term 'drugs' includes tobacco, alcohol, over-the-counter and prescribed medication, volatile substances and controlled drugs.

Willowbridge School does not condone the misuse of drugs but recognises that there has been a considerable increase in the misuse of drugs in recent years in Northern Ireland. Drug misuse appears to be affecting an ever-younger population and the so-called 'recreational' use of drugs can lead to a dangerous acceptance of illegal and harmful drug misuse as part of everyday life.

We believe that Willowbridge School has a vital preventative role to play in combating the misuse of drugs by young people and we therefore include a Drug Education programme in our curriculum.

Willowbridge School sees its role as that of a caring community committed to the physical, mental, social, emotional, moral and spiritual health, safety and well being of our pupils and staff.

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. However, we recognise that drug misuse is a whole-community issue and that schools alone cannot solve the drug problem; the school is only one of a number of groups and agencies which must play a part in the education of young people in and we make use of their expertise where possible in the delivery of the programme.

The New Strategic Direction for Alcohol and Drugs (DHSSPS 2011-2016) says that we need to "promote opportunities for those under the age of 18 years to develop appropriate skills, attitudes and behaviours to enable them to resist societal pressures to drink alcohol and /or misuse drugs" with particular emphasis on those identified as potentially vulnerable.

## Definitions

For the purpose of this document and in line with the guidance issued to all schools by the Department of Education (Circular 2015/23) the terms 'drug' and 'substance' is defined as any product which when taken, has the effect of altering the way the body works or the way a person behaves, feels, sees or thinks. E-cigarettes are treated in the same way as ordinary cigarettes and their use is prohibited on school premises (Circular 2014/25).

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

- alcohol, tobacco and tobacco-related products, including nicotine replacement therapy, 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 (processed), 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;  
and
- other substances such as amyl/butyl nitrite ('poppers') and unprocessed magic mushrooms.

\*Willowbridge School notes that the term 'Legal Highs' is misleading as the perception is that 'legal' means safe, however this is not the case as there is no regulation of these substances and therefore no way of knowing what chemicals they contain.

### **Aims and Objectives**

- 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 (teaching and non-teaching) 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 teaching 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 provide appropriate support and assistance for those pupils affected by drug-related issues.
- To inform parents of the content of his policy and the procedures to be implemented in the management of incidents of suspected drug misuse.

- To establish an environment in which the school is free from the misuse of all drugs.

## **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 (teaching and non-teaching)**

- 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 who may have to take immediate action.

## **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
- Liaise with the designated teacher for drugs regarding any aspect of the programme/policy, as necessary.

## **The Designated Teacher Safeguarding and Child Protection (including Drugs)- Mrs J Gray**

Ensure that all staff and parents are aware of and have access to a copy of the policy.

Have oversight and co-ordination of the planning of curricular provision in compliance with the statutory requirements including periodic update and review of the policy.

Liaise with other staff responsible for pastoral care 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.

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Ensuring the engagement and active participation of parents in all aspects of drug education.

Act as the point of contact for outside agencies working with the school.

### **The Principal**

It is the principal's responsibility to determine the circumstances of all incidents, but it is the responsibility of the PSNI to investigate any criminal or suspected criminal offence. In any suspected drug-related incident, the principal should contact the parents or carers of those pupils involved. The principal must ensure that in any incident involving a controlled substance there is close liaison with the PSNI. **Failure to notify the PSNI is a criminal offence.** (Appendix 1)

After contacting the PSNI, principals should confine their responsibilities to:

- the welfare and well-being of the pupil(s) involved in the incident and the rest of the school community.
- health and safety during the handling, storage and safe disposal of any drug related paraphernalia, using protective gloves at all times;
- informing the Board of Governors
- agreeing any appropriate pastoral and disciplinary response;
- the Education Authority if the incident
  - is serious enough to require PSNI involvement;
  - Requires that a child protection procedure is invoked; or,
  - Leads to suspension or exclusion of a pupil; and
- complete a written report and forwarding a copy to the BOG and the designated officer in the Education Authority

### **The Board of Governors**

Examine and approve the completed policy and education programme, prior to their implementation in the school.

Ensure the policy is published in the school prospectus 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, tobacco-related products, electronic cigarettes and their appropriate disciplinary response.

Agree in consultation with the principal appropriate pastoral and disciplinary responses in relation to suspected drug related incidents.

It is recommended that there should be a designated Governor to work with the principal and designated teacher for drugs in relation to drug related issues.

### **Drugs Education in the Curriculum**

Drugs Education will be taught as part of personal Development within Learning for Life and work where appropriate according to the ability of the pupils. Key Stage 4 and Post 16 pupils will have the opportunity to attend workshops from outside agencies such as 'ASCERT'- (Addressing Alcohol and Drug Related Issues: Reducing Harm and Supporting Positive Change). The content of the workshop will be agreed with the school and

Parents/Guardians will be contacted and informed of the type of activities that are being undertaken by any outside agencies.

### **Administration of Prescribed Medication**

When the school is responsible for administering prescribed medication, it must refer to the DE publication "Supporting Pupils with Medication Needs" [www.deni.gov.uk](http://www.deni.gov.uk). and also adhere to the policy guidelines and Procedures within the Willowbridge School "Administration and management of Medication Policy"

### **Ratified By Board of Governors**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 1

### **Handling Drug-Related Incidents**

Finding a suspected substance or drug-related paraphernalia on or close to the school premises

Unknown substance/paraphernalia found on the school premises

Inform the principal/designated teacher for drugs

Make the situation safe for pupils and staff

Arrange for removal of items  
using protective gloves

Bring the substance and any related paraphernalia to the  
designated  
teacher for drugs/principal to be stored in a secure place

Contact the PSNI and hand over the substance to the police  
for  
analysis ensuring that feedback will be provided to the  
school

Record actions taken

Investigate and record how the substance  
came to be on the school premises

Inform the EA designated officer using the  
Drugs Incident Report Form if appropriate

Prepare a report for the chair of the Board of  
Governors as appropriate