Coleraine Grammar School

Substance Misuse Policy

Introduction

Coleraine Grammar School believes that the role of the school is to provide its pupils with education which will allow them to develop to their full potential. An essential part of this goal is the provision of a stable and secure learning environment. Coleraine Grammar School takes its pastoral responsibility very seriously and we aim to ensure that our pupils' welfare is protected. This includes enabling our pupils to make informed and responsible decisions and helping them to cope with living in an increasingly drug tolerant society.

Attitude of the School to drug abuse

The school will do everything in its power to discourage the misuse or abuse of drugs and will actively encourage pupils to adopt a healthy lifestyle.
This school will provide a drugs education programme which will aim to develop the self-esteem of the pupils, to warn them of the dangers of drug misuse and to develop the values and skills necessary to resist temptation or pressure to abuse drugs. Pupils will be encouraged through this programme to have a positive attitude to a healthy lifestyle.

Rationale

Drugs education is necessary because the evidence shows increasing abuse of drugs in the youth culture in Northern Ireland. No school can afford to ignore the threat that the increasing drugs culture poses to the health and well-being of the young people in its care. Drug misuse is a whole community issue and we recognise that schools alone cannot solve the drugs problem but "the implementation of an effective programme of drug education is an essential step in tackling drug misuse" (Drugs: Guidance for Schools, Circular No. 2015/23 and Circular No. 2004/09). Schools, in partnership with parents/carers and other agencies, need to be proactive in combating this trend. The drugs education programme will contribute to the work of the school as a whole in empowering pupils to make informed choices in a society of changing values and attitudes. Teachers will adhere to this policy in planning and delivering the curriculum.
(see also New Strategic Direction for Alcohol and Drugs – phase 2 – final review (October 2018) https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/alcohol-and-drug-misuse-strategy-and-reports)

Definition of drugs

For the purpose of this document the terms 'drug' and 'substance' will include any product or chemical substance which, when introduced into the body, has the effect of altering the way the body functions, artificially produces physical, emotional and mental changes and/or alters an individual's emotional state and/or behaviour, or the way a person behaves, feels, sees or thinks. For clarity, it should be understood that where reference is made in this policy to possession or use of drugs, (unless otherwise stated) it is not intended to refer to the safe, appropriate use of medicinal products for personal use.
This policy covers a wide range of substances, not all of which are illegal, but many of which can be equally harmful in their effects. The term 'Legal highs' is misleading. Public perception is that 'legal' means safe. This is not the case as there is no regulation of these substances and therefore no way of knowing what chemicals they contain.
The terms 'drug' and 'substance' will include 'legal' substances such as solvents, poppers, magic

mushrooms, 'legal highs' and alcohol as well as controlled or illegal substances such as cannabis and LSD. (This list is by no means exhaustive.)

- 'Illegal drugs' are substances listed as controlled drugs.
- 'Illicit drugs' are socially unacceptable legal drugs e.g. poppers and underage consumption of alcohol.
- 'Prescription drugs' are those which are issued on prescription by a doctor
- 'Over the counter drugs' are those which are freely available without prescription.

The Policy therefore relates to:

- underage consumption and abuse of alcohol;
- tobacco and e-cigarettes or vapes (e-cigarettes or vapes are treated in the same way as ordinary cigarettes and their use is prohibited on school premises. This was confirmed in DE Circular 2014/25 – Encouraging a Smoke-Free and E-Cigarette Free Environment in Schools and Youth Organisations which issued on 15 December 2014);
- the misuse of prescribed drugs e.g. antibiotics, tranquillisers and inhalers and over the counter drugs.e.g. paracetamol;
- volatile substances e.g. solvents;
- controlled drugs, such as Ecstasy, Cocaine, Cannabis, Heroin; and magic mushrooms;
- Other substances such as poppers

Within these guidelines, drug related incidents include;

- drug-related litter on or near school premises;
- suspicion and allegations about drug-related activities in and out of school;
- disclosure about drug misuse taking place in school and during out of school activities;
- pupils who display symptoms of drug misuse;
- pupils/adults possessing, using and/or supplying drugs on school premises/trip/transport;

Aims of the policy

- To ensure that a consistent approach to drugs related issues is adopted by all members of the school community.
- To define the roles, responsibilities and legal duties of various people, including the Headmaster, the designated teacher (DT) for drugs, all staff (teaching and non-teaching), governors and parents/carers.
- To consider how drugs education is to be implemented and delivered within the curriculum.
- To develop procedures and protocols that address drugs related issues across all areas of school life, and deal with specific incidents of suspected drugs misuse.
- To provide a drugs education programme which will develop pupils' self-esteem; promote positive attitudes in their relationships with others; give pupils the opportunities to develop the values, skills, knowledge and understanding to make informed and responsible decisions about the use/misuse of drugs including tobacco, alcohol, intoxicants and volatile substances, within the context of a healthy lifestyle; help pupils to develop the skills necessary to assert themselves confidently and resist negative influences and pressures.
- To have a clear understanding among everyone in the School community about the implications and possible consequences of drug use/misuse, including the personal and disciplinary consequences.
- To provide information and clear guidelines for staff.
- To provide appropriate training and support to enable staff to deliver the drug education programme and be familiar with the procedures for dealing with suspected drug misuse on the School premises.
- To provide information to parents/carers about the drug education policy and disciplinary procedures in the event of drug use/misuse.
- To consider the wider issues of drug use/misuse within the school community.

- **To establish an environment in which the School is free from the inappropriate use of all drugs for the benefit, health and safety of the School community.**

Aims of Drugs Education

- To promote positive attitudes towards personal health.
- To inform pupils of the effects of drug abuse.
- To build up the self-esteem of pupils.
- To help pupils to acquire decision-making skills.
- To help young people distinguish between different drug substances.
- To minimise the chances of any pupil abusing drugs.
- To explore healthy methods of dealing with pressures, anxieties, exploitation and boredom.
- To provide pupils with the opportunity to acquire a realistic evaluation of their own strengths and limitations, abilities, potentials, personal qualities, attitudes and values.
- To provide pupils with opportunities to acquire an ability to understand and communicate their feelings.
- To provide pupils with opportunities to acquire an understanding of the influence they can be on others.

These aims are based on the perceived needs of the pupils. They may in the future be altered in response to the expressed needs of the pupils, parents/carers and teachers as the drugs education programme is reviewed and monitored. Parents/carers will be informed that a full copy of this policy will be made available on request or may be downloaded from the school website.

Outline of Drugs Education

- Some subjects have a statutory obligation in drugs education, while others inevitably touch on the subject over the course of the school year. Many of the aims of the drugs education programme are fulfilled through Learning for Life and Work (LLW) classes.
- Other aspects of drugs education are met in the formal taught curriculum.
- When appropriate, the school may make use of outside agencies or individuals to assist/provide extra expertise and knowledge in delivering the drug education programme. In this event the following principles will be followed:
    - A teacher will always be present or nearby when a representative of an agency or individual is taking a session with a class.
    - The designated teacher will assess the suitability of the lessons provided.
    - An agency or individual will be found and checked by:
        - contacting the EA representative or
        - contacting other schools for reference and
        - discussing/reviewing aims and objectives and materials to be used by an agency/individual.
        - The input by the agency/individual will be monitored by a teacher and on some occasions by pupil questionnaire to assess the suitability and effectiveness of any session.
        - Parents/carers will be informed of any outside agency/individual being used by the school if necessary. Any concerns will be fully addressed by the Headmaster or designated teacher.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Pupils

- Be aware of, and strictly, adhere to the School Code of Conduct and Promoting Positive Behaviour policy in relation to the possession of drugs, supplying of drugs, as well as drug use/misuse.

All staff

- Be alert to the possibility of drug use.
- Be familiar with the procedures in the handling of suspected drug-related incidents. (See Appendix 1 of this Policy for Procedure Flow-chart)

Parents/Carers

- Be aware of the drug education programme and the drug education policy.
- Be aware that in dealing with drug use/misuse the School is obliged to inform external agencies such as the PSNI.
- Support the School in handling suspected incidents of drug use/misuse.

Estates and ancillary staff

- Be vigilant and conduct regular checks of the School premises for any type of drug and/or drug related paraphernalia.
- Inform the Designated Teacher if drugs or paraphernalia are found.
- Ensure the safe storage, handling and disposal of potentially harmful substances such as solvents and cleaning fluids.

Procedures for dealing with suspected drug related incidents:

For guidance, a suspected drugs related incident includes inappropriate behaviour, an allegation, possession, possession with intent to supply and/or supply of drugs, use of drugs and finding drugs related paraphernalia.

When a staff member becomes aware of a situation, individual staff members should (see Appendix 1 of this policy for procedure flow chart):

- assess the situation and decide action, if urgent;
- send for additional support staff DT/VP (Pastoral) immediately;
- make the situation safe for pupils;
- secure first aid and call ambulance if necessary;
- carefully gather up any drugs and/or associated paraphernalia/evidence and pass on all information or evidence to the Designated Teacher (Pastoral VP).

In the event of drugs being discovered in the possession of a pupil or being distributed by a pupil the following steps should be taken and documented:

- The pupil should be taken by a member of staff to the Designated Teacher (Pastoral VP) along with their school-bag and other possessions;
- The pupil should be kept apart from other pupils and supervised constantly. There should be no opportunity to destroy or hide evidence;
- **It is good practice not to search pupils. Lockers should only be searched in the presence of PSNI and pupil along with a parent or carer if possible;**
- If a pupil is unwilling to remain on the premises they cannot be detained. Such behaviour may influence subsequent disciplinary measures;
- The Headmaster will be informed and if in his opinion the pupil may have committed an offence, a PSNI Youth Diversion Officer will be contacted;
- The pupil's parents or carers will be informed that the pupil is being detained in school until they can be collected.

- If there are reasonable grounds to believe that a pupil has been vaping on school premises or on the way to school, the pupil's parents/carers will be required to collect the pupil from school, monitor him/her at home and/or seek medical assistance. The rationale for this statement is that school staff cannot know what substance a pupil has been using in a vape.
- If the parents/carers arrive before the police, a witness must be present at all times;
- A report of the incident and action taken will be written by the DT/Pastoral VP (CR/LR) and kept on file;
- The Headmaster, in consultation with appropriate colleagues, will decide on the disciplinary measures appropriate;
- The Board of Governors and the designated officer of the EA will be informed.

In the event of a pupil in school being suspected of having taken non-prescribed drugs the member of staff involved should determine whether or not the pupil is conscious.
If the pupil is **unconscious** the following steps must be taken immediately:

- Place the pupil in the recovery position;
- Stay with the pupil, inform the DT (Pastoral VP), who should telephone for an ambulance. The DT should:
    - Take possession of any substances and associated paraphernalia found.
    - Take initial responsibility for pupils involved in a suspected incident.

If the pupil is **conscious** the following steps should be taken:

- Inform the DT/VP Pastoral(CR/LR);
- Try to find out what substance has been taken and how much;
- Bring the pupil to the DT VP (CR/LR) who will help to decide whether the pupil needs hospital treatment;
- If the pupil needs to be sent to hospital inform parents/carers;
- The pupil's parents will also be informed that the pupil is being detained in school until they can be collected;
- If the pupil's parents arrive before the police, a witness must be present at all times.

In both situations the following steps will be taken:

- If in the opinion of the Headmaster or DT/VP (Pastoral) the pupil may have committed an offence a PSNI Youth Diversion Officer will be contacted;
- A report of the incident and action taken will be written and kept on file;
- The Headmaster, in consultation with appropriate colleagues, will decide on the disciplinary measures appropriate;
- The Headmaster will inform the Board of Governors and the designated officer of the EA will be informed.
- The Headmaster invokes disciplinary procedures, if appropriate, with the Board of Governors.

In the event of a suspicious substance being found on the school premises the following steps should be taken:

- Lift it carefully, avoiding contact with cut or scratched hands. Do not taste it.
- Bring it to the DT VP (Pastoral).
- The substance will be passed on to the police for analysis and the school will seek a report.
- Action taken will be recorded and kept on file by the Headmaster.
- The SMT will investigate how the substance came to be on the school premises.
- The Headmaster will inform the Board of Governors.

Informing Staff

In the event of a drug-related incident staff will be informed without disclosing the name(s) of the pupil(s) that

- a drug-related incident has happened;
- appropriate steps were taken;
- the problem may be a wider one so they should be alert;
- the school policy was carried out.

Responding to the Press

- Teachers should refer any enquiry to the Headmaster.
- The Headmaster will deal with all press enquiries on drug-related matters.

Outline of the disciplinary measures

- In the event of a drug-related incident in the school there will be an investigation normally by the DT VP (Pastoral) who will report to the Headmaster.
- If a pupil is found to have been in possession of drugs or to have used or supplied drugs, firm action will be taken.
- A pupil will be suspended, pending investigation if suspected of any involvement with drugs in School, on the School premises, in School uniform, at a School event, on a School trip, on the way to and from School (whether in or out of school uniform), or when representing the School. This list is not exhaustive.
- Where a pupil in school has been found to have been in possession of or to have used or to have supplied drugs to other pupils in school, the Headmaster will initially temporarily exclude the pupil from school. In all these cases and especially if the pupil has used or supplied drugs in school, further action may result in a recommendation to the Board of Governors to expel the pupil. Parents/carers will be advised of sources of support which may be appropriate to the individual circumstances.
- If there is evidence that a pupil uses drugs outside school, the matter will be reported to the pupil's parents/carers by the Headmaster or Vice Principal. It will then be for the pupil's parents/carers to take appropriate action.
- If a pupil discloses to a member of staff that they are involved with possession or use of illegal or controlled substances, they must be clearly advised that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. As caring professionals' teachers in this situation will act with appropriate compassion and the primary concern will be the pupil's health.

The management of solvents in school

- Parents will be advised by the Headmaster to be alert to the potential hazards from some felt-tip pens, some aerosols and some glues. Parents should seek advice when purchasing such materials for use by pupils. Pupils must not bring aerosols or correction fluid pots into school and should only use stick/roll-on deodorants/antiperspirants in school.
- Classroom teachers should be alert and vigilant when such materials are used in the classroom. Materials supplied by the school should be securely stored and the issue of such materials to pupils should be carefully monitored. Substances which could be misused include correction fluid, lighter fluid, petrol, aerosols including deodorant and air freshener, helium and propane. This is not an exhaustive list and a fuller list can be found at www.inhalant.org .
- Cleaning materials kept in the painters' and cleaners' stores should be kept securely locked away when not in use.

The management of prescribed medicines in school

- Parents/carers will be asked to inform the school of any medical condition which a child may have and any medication which may be required. The school should be informed, in writing, of the amount to be taken, the times at which it is to be administered and the steps to be taken in an emergency.
- Pupils should supply the school with spare inhalers for emergency use, if the condition is acute.
- Where it is necessary to bring antibiotics to school, pupils should bring only the dosage for that day.

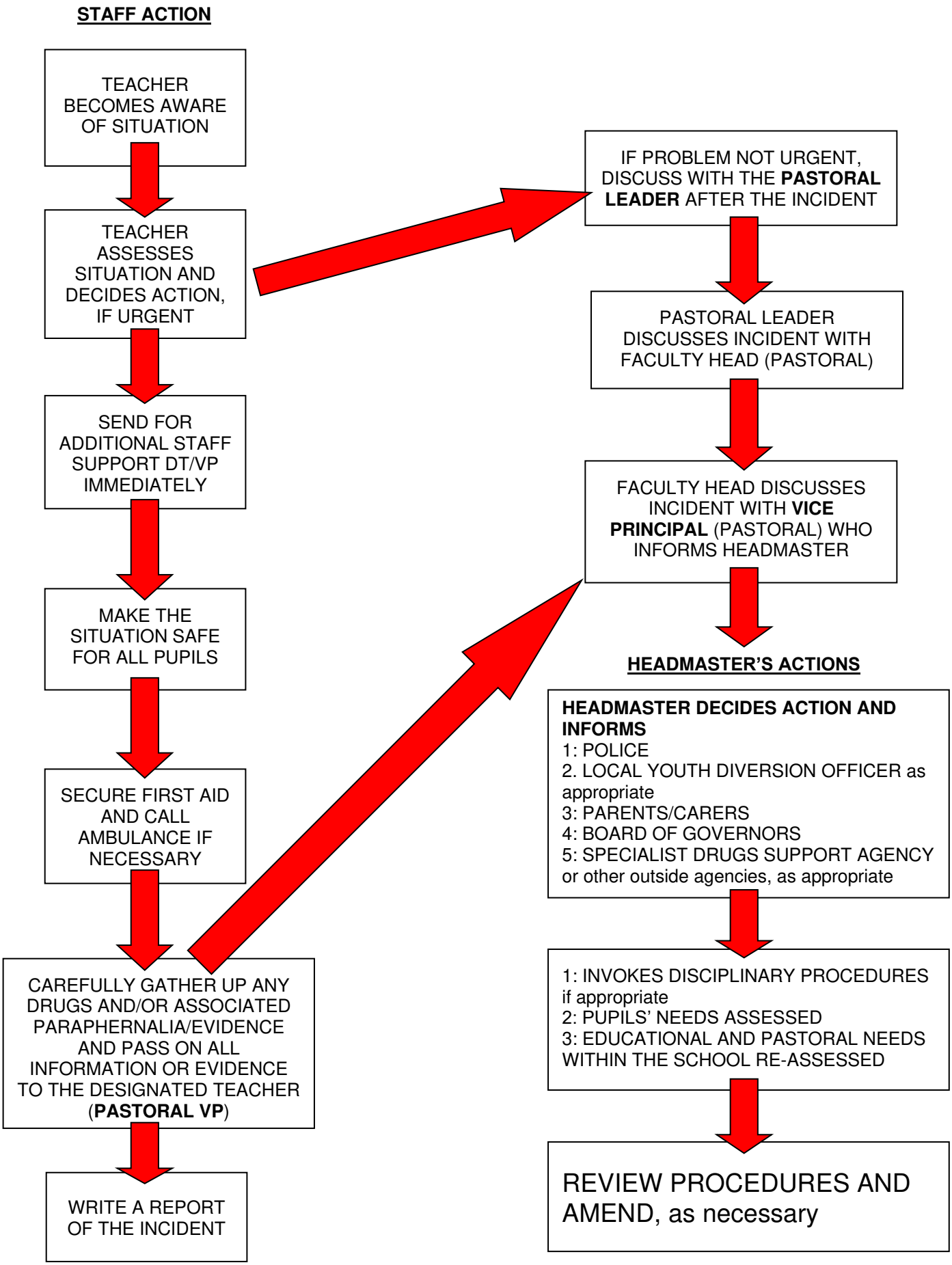
Training of Staff and Parents in the recognition of drugs and their symptoms

- The school will provide drug awareness training for staff and parents/carers as time and resources permit.
- Parents/carers will be able to access the policy by contacting the school and making appropriate arrangements.

Responsibilities of the LLW/PD Co-ordinator in Relation to Substance Misuse Education

- Liaising with other bodies in relation to substance misuse education.
- Ensuring that this policy is being implemented.
- Liaising with other staff on substance misuse education matters.
- Liaising with the Headmaster on any drug-related incident at the school.

Designated Teacher(s)

- **Mr T A Hamilton (Vice Principal Pastoral)**

APPENDIX 1
Action to be taken in the event of a suspected incident of drug misuse