



# **Drugs Education Policy**

## **St. John's Primary School, Coleraine**

Principal: Mrs H. McDonnell

Child Protection Teacher: Miss A. McNicholl

Chairman of the Board of Governors: Mr L. McQuillan

Child Protection Governor: Mr H. McGill

*May 2019*

Work hard

Give everything a try

Enjoy the rewards



As a school we recognise the importance of tackling the issue of drug misuse (including volatile substances) and all members of St. John's school staff shall endeavour to:

- a) provide the children with a safe and drug free learning environment;
- b) actively deliver a drug prevention programme;
- c) provide a caring pastoral support system;
- d) co-operate with all law enforcing and health agencies in combating the problem;
- e) inform parents about and encourage them to support the school's policy.

## **Role of the school**

### **Prevention**

Drug misuse is not confined to disadvantaged inner city areas. The evidence suggests that affluent and rural communities are equally at risk. The problem also extends across all socioeconomic, geographical and cultural boundaries. The educationally successful as well as the low attainers are affected. Prevention will be promoted through a drug education programme. Its focus will be on developing the pupils' knowledge and understanding of the:

- (i) use and misuse of drugs;
- (ii) risks and effects of drugs and other potentially harmful substances;
- (iii) relevant personal, social economic implications of misuse.

Parents will be given the opportunity to attend periodical information and question evenings when a special speaker or panel will inform/update and advise on drug related issues. The school will also seek the assistance of the specialised agencies and counselling services as well as the EWO, Education Authority and PSNI if a problem arises if it is felt these agencies could support the in-service needs of teachers.

### **Protection**

A drug is simply a substance which when taken, has the effect of altering the way a person behaves, feels, sees or thinks. This covers a wide range of substances, not all of which are illegal e.g. cigarettes and alcohol. A clear distinction must be maintained between illegal drugs and legal substances. Staff will not be expected to recognise all drugs, but they should be able to recognise the point at which a young person becomes a danger to himself or herself or to others. Teaching approaches which equip pupils to withstand peer pressure will be appropriate to dealing with these problems. This is the duty of protection and is based on the notion of loco parentis i.e. a teacher's primary concern is the well-being and safety of all the pupils in his or her charge. The procedures relating to drug protection will be made available to all school staff.

### **Curricular Considerations**

Our Drugs Education Policy will focus on the adoption of a positive lifestyle approach with emphasis being placed on personal responsibility and the individual being equipped to make informed health choices. We will seek to help pupils:

- a) reach an informed personal viewpoint by understanding the various attitudes people have towards drugs;

- b) cultivate personal and social skills to enable them to assert themselves, communicate effectively, take personal decisions, identify risks and understand the pressures and influences which might lead them to use drugs;
- c) enhance self-esteem by encouraging positive attitudes and behaviour towards themselves or others;
- d) acquire information about the effect of drugs on health and on the risks and legal aspects of drug-taking so that pupils can distinguish fact from myth.
- e) Subjects such as The World Around Us, Communication, PDMU, PE and RE will be used to explore the issues.

At Key Stage 1, pupils will develop ideas about how to keep healthy through exercise, rest, diet, personal hygiene and safety in the home e.g. identifying substances in the home which can harm.

At Key Stage 2, this will be reinforced and built upon. An awareness of the safe use of medicines and the harmful effects of tobacco, alcohol and other substances will also be fostered.

These understandings will be complemented with the skills of formulating arguments, developing communication skills, expressing ideas and using a range of reference materials as well as developing inter-personal skills through drama.

## **Drugs Education Programme**

### **Key Stage 1**

#### Knowledge & understanding

- safe and unsafe substances in the home and school and simply safety rules;
- medicines and tablets - the reasons for use, simple safety rules and school rules;
- people who help us with medicine and drugs e.g. doctor, nurse, chemist and shopkeeper;
- people who help us when we are worried e.g. parents and teachers, Miss McNicholl and Mrs McDonnell;
- basic information about how the body works and what goes into and onto the body.

#### Skills

- Personal likes and dislikes;
- being friends with others;
- communicating feelings and concerns;
- when and how to get help from adults;
- knowing how to say “**NO**”.

#### Attitudes

- respect for oneself and others;
- realising that it is sometimes appropriate to say “**NO**”;
- realising that some adults and children are not always ‘friends’.

### **Key Stage 2**

#### Knowledge & understanding

- more detailed information about the body, how it works and how to keep it healthy;
- the value of medicine (life saver); safety procedures when using medicine;
- alcohol, tobacco and other drugs pupils may encounter-their effects on the body and behaviour;
- school rules relating to medicine, alcohol, tobacco solvents and other drugs;
- consideration of why some people take drugs;
- people who might try to persuade children to take drugs including friend and known adult etc.;
- identifying and understanding pressures;
- dangers from handling discarded drugs-related equipment;
- simple first aid;
- introduction to the law re. Drugs;
- people who can help.

### Skills

- personal strengths and weaknesses;
- handling social relationships;
- communicating feelings and concerns about drugs and the risks they carry;
- coping with peer influences;
- making choices and knowing the consequences of actions;
- keeping safe and getting help.

### Attitudes

- valuing oneself and others;
- attitudes and beliefs about drugs and the people who use/misuse them;
- responses to advertising of medicines, alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.

## **Pastoral Support and Positive Behaviour**

In keeping with the school's policy of fostering positive attitudes and values, the pastoral support given to pupils will always seek to encourage self-esteem and the reward of desirable behaviour. Pupils considered at risk of being influenced to become involved in controlled drugs will be encouraged to appreciate the gravity of the issue from both a legal and personal standpoint. The school will enlist the advice and support of specialist agencies to provide maximum help. Parents and carers will also be invited to play a full part in supporting their child.

Procedures outlined in our Positive Behaviour Policy will be implemented for any pupil who brings controlled drugs onto the premises. Their parents/carers will be invited to meet Mrs McDonnell to discuss his/her future prospects at the school. Considering the dangers from controlled drugs this discussion will include a general review of the child's progress, attitude and behaviour as well as the circumstances surrounding the sanctions imposed. The PSNI and Social Services will also be informed.

Any pupil bringing tobacco or alcohol onto the school premises will have the goods confiscated, their parents notified, and sanctions outlined in Positive Behaviour Policy imposed. The EWO and Social Services may also be informed and invited to have an input into the proceedings if it is thought this would be beneficial.

If a pupil is found to be under the influence of controlled drugs while at school the procedures set out below will be applied.

### **Procedures for dealing with Drug Misuse**

The following procedures will be made known to all staff, the Governors and parents:

#### Responding to Suspected Drug Misuse Where There Is No Immediate Danger

If a teacher notices signs and or symptoms of drug misuse in their class or if information from another pupil or parent is relayed to a member of staff the staff member will;

1. inform the principal immediately;
2. the principal will then contact the PSNI;
3. the Police will then investigate the matter as confidentially as possible.

#### Responding to Illness/inappropriate behaviour because of Suspected Drug Misuse

In case where a pupil becomes ill or collapses and the school suspects drug misuse the following will happen;

1. the pupil will be taken to hospital by ambulance;
2. the parents/carers will be informed;
3. the principal will report the incident to the Police;
4. Miss McNicholl (DT) or Mrs McDonnell (DDT) will compile a written report of the incident. This report will be brief, factual and include details such as dates/times/locations and witnesses. This report will be kept in the internal child protection register using Child Protection procedures;
5. in the light of the report the principal will act in the line with the school's Positive Behaviour Policy;
6. support may be sought for the pupil from outside agencies.

#### Responding to Suspected Possession or Dealing in School

Where a member of staff suspects that a pupil is in possession or dealing in drugs the following procedures will be implemented:

1. the pupil will be asked, by the principal, in the presence of another member of staff, to turn out his/her pockets, schoolbag etc.;
2. if the pupil refuses to comply the Police will be sent for;
3. a search will also be made of the pupil's desk. This will be conducted in the presence of the pupil with another member of staff as a witness. A search of the pupil's personal belongings, including school bag, coat or other items should only be made with the pupil's consent and in his/her presence. Another adult will also act as witness;
4. the school staff will take possession of any substance suspected of being a controlled drug. This will be kept in a secure place until the Police arrive. The pupil's parents will be informed at the same time. A written record of the time, place, date and circumstances of the confiscation will be kept;
5. if it is suspected that a pupil has swallowed a substance suspected to be a controlled drug medical assistance will be sought immediately;
6. the Chairman of the Board of Governors will also be informed of any incident involving drugs on the school premises.

### **Role of the Designated Teacher and Deputy Designated Teacher**

The designated teacher is Miss McNicholl, the deputy designated teacher is Mrs McDonnell. Their duties will include:

1. the oversight and co-ordination of the planning of curricular provision;
2. liaison with other staff responsible for pastoral care/health education;
3. co-ordination of the school's procedures for handling instances of suspected drug misuse;
4. acting as contact point for outside agencies.

### **Inservice for Teachers**

Information for the guidance of teaching staff has been provided in the form of:

- Annexes 1-5 of the DENI circular 1996/16;
- The DFE "Digest of Drug Education Resources for Schools" has also been made available, through the designated teacher, to staff who wish guidance about supplementing their resources;
- Appendix 2 & 3 of the CCEA "Guidance for Primary Schools" to be used as a resource for suggested activities;
- Appendix 2 "Recognising Drug Use" from CCEA's. Guidelines on Handling Suspected Incidents of Drug Misuse on School Premises;
- Appendix 3 "The Law on Drugs Relevant Legislation" from CCEA's. Guidelines on Handling Suspected Incidents of Drug Misuse on School Premises;

Other training needs will be met through Education Authority in-service and school-based programmes as the staff identify needs. The staff will also involve themselves in discussions about the aims, strategies and content of the drug programme as well as how best to enlist the support of parents and the community. Discussions will also take place regarding the legal responsibility of teachers, confidentiality and counselling.

### **School Premises and Grounds**

To ensure a safe learning environment, all staff will be vigilant regarding the possible use of the school grounds after hours, for the misuse of drugs. Any signs of drug abuse will be reported to the principal or designated teacher who will then contact the Police. School pupils will be kept away from the affected areas of the school until the Police have removed the suspected substances. The Building Supervisor will pay special attention when they patrol the school and grounds each morning for signs of drug use.

All staff will ensure that volatile substances e.g. glues are never freely available to pupils. Glues and other such substances will only be used in supervised circumstances and always stored in a safe place. Glues which are not of a volatile nature will be used where possible e.g. PVA

### **Links to other policies**

Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy  
Positive Behaviour Policy  
First Aid Policy  
Administration of Medicine  
Whistleblowing Policy

### **Policy Review:**

St. John's Primary School will update this Policy in the light of any further guidance and legislation and review it annually.  
On-going evaluation will ensure the effectiveness of the Policy.

**Ratification: May 2019**

**Review Due: Term 3 2020**