



The Royal Belfast Academical Institution

Drug Education Policy

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.

Schools have an important role to play in enabling children and young people to make informed and responsible decisions and to enable them to resist societal pressures to drink alcohol and/or misuse drugs while living in an increasingly substance-tolerant society. RBAI has a statutory requirement to have a policy and to provide drugs education as part of its curricular provision.

AIM

The RBAI Drugs Education Policy reflects the school aims to:

- provide conditions where a pupil can fulfil his potential
- stress the importance of good health, mental well-being and physical fitness.

Our aim specific to the Drugs Education Policy is twofold:

- Prevention
- Protection

The education system can provide a holistic response to substance misuse. This includes:

- helping to build the factors that protect children and young people from becoming involved in substance misuse;
- providing knowledge and skills to make healthier choices and reduce problematic behaviour and risk; and
- directing children and young people to appropriate services and support, where misuse has been identified.

DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this document, the terms **drug** and **substance** include any product that, when taken, has the effect of altering the way the body works or how a person behaves, feels, sees or thinks. (Appendix 2 includes a substance list.)

Drug Use: refers to taking a drug; there is no value judgement, although all drug use has an element of risk.

Drug Misuse: refers to legal, illegal or illicit drug taking or alcohol consumption, which leads a person to experience social, psychological, physical or legal problems related to intoxication or regular excessive consumption and/or dependence. Drug misuse is therefore taking drugs, including prescribed drugs and New Psychoactive Substances*, that cause harm to the individual, their significant others or the wider community.

*We no longer use the term 'legal high' because it is misleading. The public perceived that 'legal' meant safe. This is not the case, as these substances are not regulated and there is no way of knowing what chemicals they contain.

OBJECTIVES

- To provide a drug education programme, through Health Education and the Personal Development Programme, which will help to build the factors that protect children and young people from becoming involved in substance misuse;
 - 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 healthier choices and so reduce problematic behaviour and risk responsible decisions about the use/misuse of drugs including tobacco, including nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) such as electronic cigarettes/vapes/nicotine pouches, alcohol, intoxicants and volatile substances, new psychoactive substances (NPS), formerly known as 'legal highs', 'Spice', prescribed drugs, and controlled drugs;
 - understand the need for appropriate storage of all prescribed medication;
 - understand the importance of restricting the use of prescribed drugs to the person the drug is prescribed for, and adhering to the instructions for the use of the medication;
 - 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 consequences** (social, psychological health, physical health or legal problems) and **disciplinary consequences**.
- 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 about the drug education policy and disciplinary procedures in the event of drug use/misuse.
- To direct children and young people to appropriate services and support, where misuse has been identified.
- **To establish an environment in which the School is free from the use of all drugs for the benefit, health and safety of the School community.**

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Pupils

- Be aware of, and strictly, adhere to the School Rules (Code of Conduct) **(2h)** 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

- 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.

Facilities manager and janitorial 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 on site.
- Ensure the safe storage, handling and disposal of potentially harmful substances such as solvents and cleaning fluids.

Individual staff members should:

- assess the situation and decide the action;
- make the situation safe for all pupils and other members of staff, secure first aid and send for additional staff support, if necessary;
- carefully gather up any drugs and/or associated paraphernalia or evidence and pass all information or evidence to the designated teacher for drugs; and
- write a brief factual report of the incident and forward it to the designated teacher for drugs.

The designated teacher for drugs should:

- Where drug-related incident is suspected and where there are concerns that a pupil has drugs or related paraphernalia in their possession, request permission to search the belongings of the pupil. This will be done in the presence of the pupil and another adult witness.
- respond to first aider's advice or recommendations;
- inform parents or carers immediately, in the case of an emergency;
- take possession of any substance(s) and associated paraphernalia found;
- inform the Principal;
- take initial responsibility for pupil(s) involved in the suspected incident; and
- complete a Drugs Incident Report Form (see Appendix 3) and forward it to the Principal.
- invoke safeguarding procedures, if a parent or carer's behaviour may place a pupil at risk (for example arriving at school to collect a child and appears to be under the influence of alcohol or another substance).

The Principal should:

- determine the circumstances surrounding the incident;
- ensure that the following people are informed:
 - parents or carers;
 - PSNI;
 - Board of Governors; and
 - designated officer in Education Authority
 - consult and agree pastoral and disciplinary responses, including counselling services or support;
 - forward a copy of the Incident Report Form to the chairperson of the Board of Governors and the designated officer in the Education Authority, if appropriate; and
- review procedures and amend, if necessary.

The Board of Governors should:

- collaborate with appropriate staff, pupils and parents or carers to foster and support developing and reviewing its drugs education policy
- facilitate the consultative process where the school community can respond and contribute to the policy's effectiveness and quality;

- ensure that the following people are informed; examine and approve the policy before implementing it in the school; ensure details of the policy are published in the school prospectus and that these are reviewed at least annually and after a drug-related incident;
- be fully aware and adequately trained to deal with suspected drug-related incidents, and their appropriate disciplinary response.
- Have a designated governor for drugs-related issues who has received specific training in drug-related issues.

Procedures for dealing with suspected drug related incidents on the School premises

- The member of staff assesses the situation.
- The situation is made safe for all pupils.
- First aid is given and an ambulance called, if necessary.
- The Principal and the Designated Teacher is informed.
- The Principal and the Designated Teacher decide on the action to be taken, ensuring that the following are informed – the PSNI, parent/guardian, Board of Governors, relevant ELB officer.
- The Principal invokes disciplinary procedures, if appropriate, with the Board of Governors.
- The Principal, or in the absence of the Principal, the Vice Principal, will deal with any media enquiry.

Disciplinary Procedures

A pupil may 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, representing the School. This list is not exhaustive. If drug use/misuse is confirmed, then this may result in the permanent exclusion of the pupil.

Pastoral Care

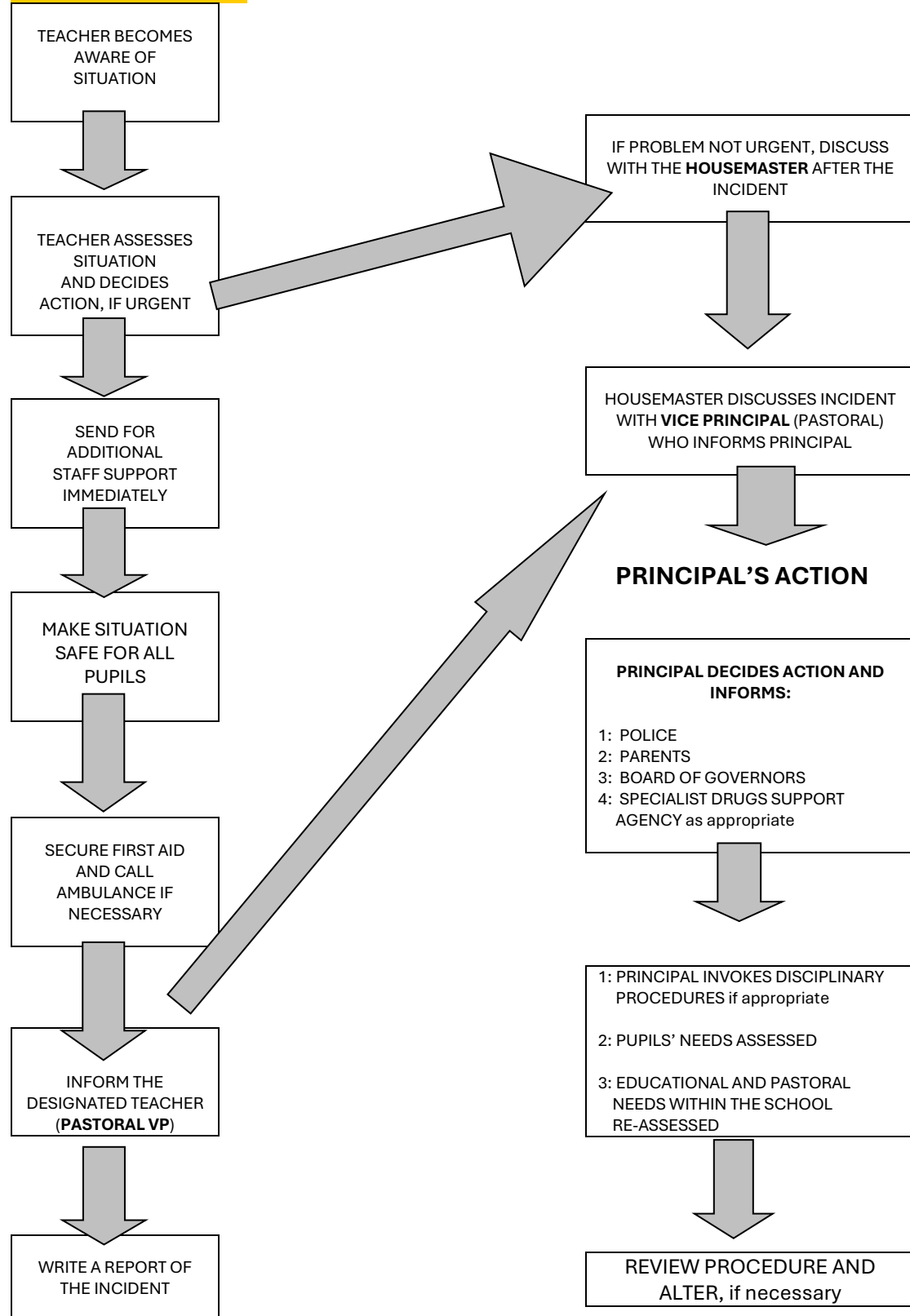
Pupils admitting to drug use out of School will be offered support and counselling through appropriate agencies. The member of staff, in whom the pupil confides, should make it clear that **no guarantee of confidentiality can be given.**

Designated Teacher (for drug-related incidents) Mrs J Muise (Vice Principal)
Designated Governor (for drug-related incidents) Mr S Gowdy

APPENDIX 1

Action to be taken in the event of a suspected incident of drug-related incident

TEACHER'S ACTION



APPENDIX 2

Appendix 2 - Substance list

Substances include:

- alcohol, tobacco and tobacco-related products, including nicotine replacement therapy (NRT), and electronic cigarettes/vapes/nicotine pouches;
- 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, heroin and cocaine;
- new psychoactive substances (NPS), such as 'Spice'; these were 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 or butyl nitrite (known as poppers) and unprocessed magic mushrooms.

Controlled substances are legally classified according to their benefit when used in medical treatment or harm if misused. The Misuse of Drugs Act sets out a range of substances that are controlled under the act. It is an offense to possess, possess with intent to supply, supply, or allow premises you occupy or manage to be used unlawfully for the purpose of producing or supplying controlled drugs.

APPENDIX 3

Drugs Incident Report Form

1. Name of pupil _____ Reg group: _____
DoB: _____
Address: _____

2. Date of incident: _____ Reported by: _____
Time of incident: _____ Location of incident: _____

3. First Aid given YES/NO Administered by: _____
Ambulance/Doctor called YES/NO Time of call: _____

4. Parent/Guardian informed YES/NO Time of call: _____
5. PSNI informed YES/NO Date: _____ Time: _____
6. Where substance is retained _____ OR
Date substance destroyed or passed to PSNI _____ Time: _____

7. Education Authority informed YES/NO Date: _____ Time: _____

Description of the incident

Action taken

Incident form completed by: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX 4

Additional responsibilities for the management of the Drugs Education Policy

- **The designated teacher is responsible for:**
 - co-ordinating the school's procedures for handling suspected drug-related incidents and
 - training and inducting new and existing staff in these procedures;
 - ensuring that the school's disciplinary policy has an appropriate statement about any disciplinary response resulting from suspected drug-related incidents;
 - ensuring that the school's pastoral care policy has an appropriate statement about drugs education and a reference to the Drugs Education Policy which provides information on the pastoral response resulting from suspected drug-related incidents;
 - liaising with other staff responsible for pastoral care;
 - being the contact point for outside agencies that may have to work with the school or with a pupil or pupils concerned;
 - reviewing and if required updating the policy at least annually and after a drug-related incident, where learning from the experience could improve practice.

- **The role of 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 inform the PSNI of a suspected incident involving controlled drugs is a criminal offence.**

After contacting the PSNI, the Principal will confine his responsibilities to:

- the welfare of the pupil(s) involved in the incident and the other pupils in the school;
- health and safety during the handling, storage and safe disposal of any drug or drug-related paraphernalia, using protective gloves at all times;
- informing the Board of Governors;
- agreeing any appropriate pastoral or disciplinary response;
- reporting the incident to the Education Authority, for example if an incident:
 - is serious enough to require PSNI involvement;
 - requires that a child protection procedure is invoked; or
 - leads to the suspension or exclusion of a pupil; and
- completing a written report and forwarding a copy to the Board of Governors and the designated officer in the Education Authority.

Legal responsibilities and involving the PSNI

Schools must ensure that all staff are aware of their legal responsibilities. Schools must notify the PSNI in all instances where there is an allegation or suspicion that a crime has been committed. This will only be done by the Principal (or Vice Principal in her absence). **Failure to notify the PSNI is a criminal offence.**

Staff must be aware of the legal implications of:

- receiving information about a controlled drug;
- discovering a young person in possession of a controlled drug; or
- discovering a young person is involved in supplying a controlled drug.

Contacting the PSNI

RBAI will establish and maintain contact with the designated officer in their local PSNI area to ensure an appropriate response when dealing with suspected drug-related incidents that might arise in school. Each PSNI area has a designated officer who will advise on and agree procedures for schools to follow. The PSNI will always try to handle all incidents promptly and with discretion, understanding and tact. A non-uniformed officer will respond, wherever possible, depending on the circumstances and the nature of the suspected offence. RBAI must notify their local PSNI officer in every case where a pupil has or is suspected of having controlled drugs in their possession, either on their person or in their belongings, or if controlled drugs are found on the school premises. This may include new psychoactive substances or prescription medication. RBAI is not legally obliged to notify the PSNI if they suspect the misuse of solvents or alcohol, although we will notify the designated PSNI officer. The officer will be available to work with the school, pupils, parents or carers and other appropriate agencies to provide support, advice and assistance to help prevent reoccurrence and ensure the pupil is no longer at risk.

Interviewing pupils

In certain circumstances, the PSNI may interview a pupil on school premises with the Principal's agreement. This may be a less intrusive and upsetting option for a pupil than going to a police station. If the school takes this course of action, the PSNI will conduct the interview in accordance with The Police and Criminal Evidence (Northern Ireland) Order (PACE) 1989. This has strict guidelines about when and where to exercise this option. RBAI will make all possible efforts to inform the pupil's parents or carers before a PSNI interview takes place. The PSNI will not conduct an interview without the correct persons being present.

Responses in the event of a suspected drug-related incident

- **Illness, unusual or uncharacteristic behaviour**

Young people's behaviour may be unpredictable and bizarre for many reasons during their time at school. Changes in behaviour may indicate a range of difficulties and problems and may be related to a medical condition, rather than substance misuse. It is, however, important to note that intoxication, physical collapse or unconsciousness can also result from an initial experiment with drugs.

Staff should bring any indications of illness, unusual or uncharacteristic behaviour because of suspected substance misuse to the attention of the designated teacher for drugs. They should not make any judgement until they have determined the circumstances surrounding the incident. Where staff believe a pupil may have taken a substance they suspect is a drug, they should seek medical assistance immediately after following the recommended emergency procedures. The school must inform parents and the PSNI.

- **Taking possession of a suspected controlled substance and/or associated paraphernalia**

The law permits school staff to take temporary possession of a substance suspected of being a controlled drug to protect a pupil from harm and prevent the pupil committing the offence of possession. The teacher should, using appropriate safety precautions, take the suspected substance and any associated equipment and/or paraphernalia to the designated teacher for drugs as soon as possible. They should arrange for its safe storage

until the school can hand it over to the local PSNI officer to identify whether it is a controlled substance. School staff should not attempt to analyse or taste an unidentified substance. An adult witness should be present when staff confiscate the substance and the school should keep a record of the details, using the school's Drug Incident Report Form (Appendix 3).

An allegation of a suspected controlled drug-related incident

- **Carrying out a search**

If the designated teacher for drugs receives an allegation of possession, he or she may need to search a pupil's desk or locker, if he or she has cause to believe it contains unlawful items, including controlled drugs. However, teachers cannot search personal belongings in the desk or locker without consent. Staff should only search the pupil's personal belongings, including schoolbag, coat or other items with the pupil's consent. Staff should carry out this search in the presence of the pupil and another adult witness. If the school suspects pupils of concealing controlled drugs on their person or in their personal belongings, staff should make every effort to encourage them to produce these substances voluntarily. Staff should ask pupils to turn out their pockets or schoolbags. If the pupils refuse, staff should contact their parents or carers and the PSNI to deal with the situation. **A member of staff should never carry out a physical search of a pupil, unless there is compelling evidence that the pupil has committed an offence.** If staff recover a substance or an object that they suspect has a connection with drugs, they should take possession of it and make a full record using the school's Drug Incident Report Form (Appendix 3). If a pupil refuses to be searched the school must establish whether the probability that the pupil has committed an offence outweighs their right to privacy, before deciding whether to carry out a search without consent.

Possession, Possession with Intent to Supply and Supply of Controlled Drugs

Schools must be aware that pupil involvement in suspected controlled drug-related incidents may take several forms. These could include:

- possession;
- possession with intent to supply; and/or
- the supply of controlled drugs.

It is illegal for pupils to be in possession of a controlled drug. If a member of staff comes across a pupil in possession of what they believe or suspect to be a controlled drug, they should immediately attempt to take possession of the substance and detain the pupil. They should then send for assistance from the designated teacher for drugs, who will deal with the incident as outlined in the school policy.

Although it contravenes the school rules, it is not illegal for a pupil to possess or use other substances that are not controlled, for example alcohol, solvents, tobacco, tobacco-related products, electronic cigarettes, nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) such as electronic cigarettes/vapes/nicotine pouches, over-the-counter medication or prescribed medication. Prescribed medication, however, may be considered a controlled substance if it has been prescribed for someone else. The teacher should make a preliminary enquiry to clarify who the medication is for. This will establish whether the school should contact the PSNI about the incident. Although some unknown substances may be new psychoactive substances, RBAI will treat all unknown substances as suspected controlled drugs and respond accordingly.

The school will deal with a pupil in possession of substances that are not controlled, using the RBAI Disciplinary or Pastoral care procedures in line with the RBAI Safeguarding and Child Protection policy. It should also notify the pupil's parents or carers. In these

circumstances, the school has no legal obligation to notify the PSNI. Where the Principal feels that there are issues about the origin of these substances, the school may notify the designated officer in the local PSNI area for advice and guidance.

Detaining a pupil

When managing a suspected drug-related incident the school should invite the pupils concerned to remain in school under the supervision of appropriate members of staff until their parents or carers and the PSNI arrive.

If the pupil refuses to remain, the school cannot detain a pupil against their will. However, if a member of staff has reasonable grounds to suspect that the pupil has in their possession or has taken a controlled substance, they can make a citizen's arrest under Article 26A of the Police and Criminal Evidence (Northern Ireland) Order (PACE) 1989.

The reasons are to prevent the person in question:

- causing physical injury to himself or any other person;
- suffering physical injury;
- causing loss of or damage to property; or
- making off before a constable can assume responsibility for him.

The member of staff should make the pupil fully aware of the implications before making the arrest, confirming:

- that the pupil is not free to leave once they have been informed by the arresting person why they are being arrested, and
- that they will be detained until they are handed over to a PSNI officer who will then deal with the investigation.

Staff must be able to recognise the point where a young person becomes a danger to either themselves or others. They should also be aware of their duty of protection because they are in loco parentis.

Finding drug-related paraphernalia

Paraphernalia in the school grounds is an indication of drug use or misuse. Any member of the school community who encounters any paraphernalia should use extreme care, as these items may be hazardous. Anyone who finds paraphernalia associated with drug use or misuse should report it to the designated teacher for drugs, who will assess the situation and respond accordingly. This response may include contacting the PSNI.

Recording an incident

If the Principal considers an incident to be serious, the school will call the Education Authority designated officer to alert them to the incident and then make a full written factual record of the incident.

The school will carefully record any statements that pupils suspected of being involved in or witness to an incident provide. For an incident that requires only an internal school investigation, for example finding cigarettes on school property, schools must treat any sensitive information about pupils in a confidential and secure manner. Schools may need to engage the help of another adult to support both the designated teacher for drugs and the pupils involved in the incident, particularly when the pupils may need to be interviewed separately.

For an incident that requires a PSNI investigation, the Principal is responsible for determining the circumstances of all incidents. The PSNI is responsible for investigating any criminal or suspected criminal offence. Under these circumstances, schools should not take any written statements from individuals involved in the incident. The investigating officer is responsible for dealing with the incident to co-ordinate recording all statements that could be required for a potential court case.

School response to drug-related incidents

The Principal in conjunction with the Safeguarding Governor is responsible for deciding how to respond to particular incidents, taking account of factors such as:

- the age of the pupil concerned;
- whether the incident involved one pupil or a group of pupils;
- whether there has been evidence of particular peer group pressure; and
- the level of involvement.

The Principal will consider what sanctions or actions would be in the best interests of the pupil in the longer term, while ensuring the safety and well-being of other pupils.

The school will explore the relevant factors to determine the seriousness of the incident and the needs of those involved and then respond appropriately. This includes factors such as:

- Does the pupil admit or deny the allegations?
- Is this a first offence?
- Is the substance legal or illegal?
- What quantity of the substance was involved?
- What was the pupil's motivation?
- Is the pupil knowledgeable and careful or reckless about their own or others' safety?
- Does the pupil have a parent or carer or family member who is misusing drugs?
- Does the pupil know and understand the school policy and school rules?
- Where does the incident appear on a scale from 'possession of a small quantity' to 'persistent supply'?
- If the school suspects the pupil of supplying, how much was supplied and was the pupil coerced into the supply role or the one 'whose turn it was' to buy for others, or is there evidence of organised or habitual supply?

RBAI has a repertoire of responses, incorporating both sanctions and support.

Behavioural contracts

In the case of serious breaches of discipline or while the school is investigating a suspected drug-related incident, it may draw up a behavioural contract and agree it with the pupil and the parent or carers. The contract should clearly set out the terms allowing the pupil to remain at school and include monitoring their progress.

Suspension or exclusion

The school will consider and carry out any suspension or exclusion within the terms of schemes prepared by the Board of Governors. Where a school permanently excludes a pupil in a drug-related offence, the Education Authority will work to secure an alternative school place for the pupil. Where this cannot be secured quickly, the Education Authority will ensure that, in line with its legal obligations, it makes appropriate Education Otherwise Than at School (EOTAS) provision until a further school placement becomes available or the pupil is beyond compulsory school age. In either mainstream or EOTAS provision there will be a clear need to provide appropriate pastoral support for the pupil, including drugs awareness and counselling.

Involving parents or carers

The school will keep parents or carers fully informed of school procedures in the event of suspected drug-related incidents.

Pastoral care

During and after any incident, the school will consider the individual needs of any pupil or pupils involved. This should involve the pupil or pupils, the principal, parents or carers, the designated teacher for drugs and appropriate pastoral care staff. It may also involve the PSNI officer and an education welfare officer, where appropriate. Communication between staff and early involvement of parents or carers may set the scene for early, supportive, pastoral intervention.

Role of counselling

Counselling rarely focuses on drug misuse alone. It can consider more holistic needs that may underlie or indicate drug-related problems, for example the 'toxic three':

- hidden harm, where a young person is affected by their parents' or carers' substance misuse;
- domestic violence; or
- parental mental health.

Counselling is only appropriate when a pupil wishes to take advantage of what it offers. Pupils can refer themselves or a parent or member of school staff can refer them. It is usually neither constructive nor effective to attempt to impose counselling on a pupil. The Principal, pastoral vice principal and school counsellor may assess appropriate support needs for individual pupils and identify who is in the best position to meet these. The school will always seek the pupil's consent before referring them for counselling.

Confidentiality

Members of staff cannot and should not promise total confidentiality. They should make the boundaries of confidentiality clear to pupils. Members of staff should carefully consider their response, if a pupil approaches them for individual advice on drug use or misuse. In the case of controlled substances, the staff member should explain to the pupil that they cannot offer a guarantee of confidentiality. If the pupil discloses information concerning controlled substances, the staff member must pass this on to the designated teacher for drugs. The member of staff can direct the pupil to sources of confidential information and advice and to treatment and rehabilitation services.

Communication following a suspected or confirmed drug-related incident

Staff, pupils and parents or carers

RBAI will carefully consider how it communicates any information about a suspected or confirmed substance-related incident to staff, pupils and parents or carers. Information will only be disclosed to members of staff concerned with the pastoral needs of the individual pupil. Only the parents or carers of the pupil or pupils directly involved will be informed of the incident and subsequent outcomes. Teachers will not discuss individual cases with other pupils. The school may, however, need to make a general statement informing the school community after an incident where rumours may create a negative atmosphere.

Dealing with the media

If the school receives an enquiry from the media, only the principal, the Chairman of the Board of Governors or a designated nominee will respond to the call. When responding to the media, the school will respect the privacy of pupils and their families.

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