



'OPENING DOORS OF  
OPPORTUNITY TOGETHER'

## DRUGS POLICY

REVIEWED FEBRUARY 2024



## Mission Statement

*Meadow Bridge Primary School aims to foster a safe, happy and caring environment where each child's personal development is nurtured.*

*Every child's educational journey is enhanced and their lives enriched through stimulating learning experiences.*

*Equal emphasis will be placed on pastoral care and on ensuring each individual reaches his or her academic potential, equipping them for the future.*

# CONTENTS

## Introduction

- Rationale
- Ethos
- Definitions
- Aims and Objectives

## Development and Implementation

- Roles and Responsibilities
- Training and Information
- Drugs Education Programme
- Responses in the Event of a Suspected Drug-Related Incident
- Guidance on the Administration of Prescribed Medication in School
- Monitoring and Evaluation
- Communication and Dissemination of Policy:
  - Appendix 1: Managing an Incident
  - Appendix 2: Handling Drug-Related Incidents
  - Appendix 3: Recognising Signs of Substance Abuse
  - Appendix 4: Emergency Procedures
  - Appendix 5: Drug Incident Report Form

## Rationale

For the purpose of this document the term 'drugs' includes tobacco, alcohol, over-the-counter and prescribed medication, volatile substances, and controlled drugs. School does not condone the misuse of drugs but recognises that there has been a considerable increase in the abuse 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 school has a vital preventative role to play in combating the misuse of drugs by young people and we therefore include a Drugs Education Programme in our curriculum.

School sees its role as that of a caring community, committed to the physical, mental, social, emotional, moral, and spiritual health, safety and wellbeing 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 drugs problem; school is only one of a number of groups and agencies which must play a part in the education of young people and we make use of their expertise where possible in the delivery of the programme.

## Ethos

In Meadow Bridge Primary School the welfare and safety of our pupils is paramount. We feel that our Drugs Education Programme will promote that sense of wellbeing, as well as the safety and security of the pupils within our school.

This policy is based on the guidance provided by the Department of Education for Northern Ireland in the following documents:

- DE Circular 2015/23 Drugs Guidance.
- CEA Drugs Guidance for Schools in Northern Ireland (Revised Edition 2015).

Meadow Bridge Primary School promotes the rights of the child, based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child. This policy takes into account Article 3 which states:

**'The best interests of the child must be a top priority in everything we do.'**

## Definitions

For the purpose of this policy the terms **drug** and **substance** will include 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.

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;
- Prescribed drugs, such as antibiotics, tranquillizers, inhalers and Ritalin;
- Volatile substances, such as correcting fluids/thinners, gas lighter fuel, aerosols, glues and petrol;
- 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 marked ‘not for human consumption’;
- Controlled drugs, such as cannabis, LSD, ecstasy, amphetamine sulphate (speed), magic mushrooms (processed), heroin and cocaine; and
- Other substances such as amyl/butyl nitrite (‘poppers’) and unprocessed magic mushrooms.

## 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 agreed procedures are consistently and sensitively 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.

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- To provide appropriate support and assistance for those pupils affected by drug-related issues.
- To inform parents of the content of this policy and the procedures to be implemented in the management of incidents of suspected drug misuse.
- To establish an environment in which 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.

### **Parents/Guardians:**

- Support school in the development and implementation of this policy, including school's procedures for handling incidents of suspected drug misuse and the Drug Education Programme.
- Support your son/daughter if they have become involved with drugs.

### **All staff (teaching and non-teaching):**

- Be alert to the possibility of drug use/misuse.
- Be familiar with 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/Deputy Designated Teacher, 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 regarding any aspect of the programme/policy, as necessary.

### **The Designated Teacher:**

- 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.
- Be responsible for co-ordinating school's procedures for dealing with incidents of suspected drug misuse.
- Co-ordinate training and induction of all staff in the procedures for dealing with incidents of suspected drug misuse.
- Determine the circumstances surrounding any suspected drug-related incident.
- Complete a Drug Incident Report Form (Appendix 5), and forward to the Principal.
- Ensure the engagement and active participation of parents in all aspects of drug education.
- Act as the point of contact for outside agencies working with school.

### **The Principal:**

- Ensure that members of the Board of Governors have been consulted on and ratified the policy.

### ***In the case of incidents of suspected drug misuse:***

- Ensure the welfare and wellbeing of the pupil(s) involved in the incident and the rest of the school community.
- Ensure that the following people are informed (where relevant):
  - ❖ Parents/Guardians.
  - ❖ PSNI.
  - ❖ Board of Governors.
  - ❖ Designated Officer in EA.
  - ❖ Members of staff.
  - ❖ Other pupils and parents informed within the confines of confidentiality.
- Agree, in consultation with the Board of Governors, appropriate pastoral and disciplinary responses in relation to the incident, including counselling services/support.
- Retain written records of the incident and ensure a copy of the report is submitted to Board of Governors and EA as appropriate.
- Review procedures and amend as appropriate.

### **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 on the school website 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, and their appropriate disciplinary response.
- Agree, in consultation with the Principal, appropriate pastoral and disciplinary responses in relation to suspected drug-related incidents.

### **The Building Supervisor:**

- Be vigilant around, and conduct regular checks of, the school grounds for drug-related paraphernalia and inform the Designated Teacher as appropriate.
- Ensure the safe storage, handling, and disposal of potentially harmful substances such as solvents and cleaning fluids.

## **Training and Information**

All staff (teaching and non-teaching), and Governors will be provided with information/training to support the full implementation of this policy including the delivery of the Drugs Education Programme.

## **Drugs Education Programme**

The Drugs Education Programme in Meadow Bridge Primary School will be included in teachers' planning and will form part of the curricular area of Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU). It will also be supported by the pastoral care programme and policy throughout the school and will link with other subject areas such as Religious Education, Health Education, and PE. When available, the school will use the PSNI/outside agencies to deliver specialised drugs education lessons.

The programme is a preventative one and is pupil-centred, delivered through active learning. The aims of the programme are:

- To promote positive attitudes towards personal health.
- To inform pupils of the effects of drug use and abuse.
- To help pupils acquire skills to resist peer pressure.
- To build up the self-esteem of pupils.
- To help pupils acquire decision-making and problem-solving skills that will empower them to take responsibility for their own health and safety.

## **Responses in the Event of a Suspected Drugs-related Incident**

Dealing with a suspected incident requires extreme sensitivity on the part of all those involved. All staff should be aware of the procedures for:

- Dealing with substances found on the school premises.
- Finding/suspecting a pupil/adult of processing/distributing an illegal substance.
- Pupils suspected of having taken drugs in school.

These procedures are outlined in the. *'CEA Drugs Guidance for Schools in Northern Ireland (Revised Edition 2015) Section 3: Responding to Drug-related Incidents'*.

### **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 initial experiment with drugs.

Staff should bring any indications of illness, unusual or uncharacteristic behaviour because of suspected substance abuse, to the attention of the Designated Teacher. 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. School must inform parents and the PSNI.

### **Taking Possession of a Suspected Controlled Drug 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 pupils 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 as soon as possible. They should arrange for its safe storage until school can hand it over to the 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 school should keep a record of the details using the school's Drug Incident Report Form.

### **An Allegation of a Suspected Controlled Drug-Related Incident Carrying Out a Search**

If the Designated Teacher receives an allegation of possession, she may need to search a pupil's desk or schoolbag if she has cause to believe it contains unlawful items, including controlled drugs. However, teachers cannot search personal belongings in the desk or schoolbag without consent. Staff should only search the pupil's personal belongings, including school bag, coat, and other items, with the pupil's consent. Staff should carry out this search in the presence of the pupil and another adult witness.

If 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 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.

### **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 escort the pupil(s) to the Designated Teacher who will deal with the incident as outlined in school policy.

### **Staff Policy on Smoking and Alcohol**

Meadow Bridge Primary School is a smoke (including e-cigarettes) and alcohol-free zone. For further information, refer to the Health and Safety Executive's website ([www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)).

### **Confidentiality**

Should a pupil reveal any personal drugs information, which puts them or any other pupil at risk, this must be passed on to the Designated Teacher/Principal. Confidentiality can never be guaranteed as we are responsible for all of the pupils in our school.

### **Disciplinary/Pastoral Care Responses**

The Principal will retain responsibility for deciding how to respond to a particular incident and will take into account factors such as:

- The age of the pupil.
- Does the pupil admit or deny the allegations?
- Is this the first or subsequent offence?
- Is the drug legal or illegal?
- Quantity of the drug involved.
- What was the pupil's motivation?
- 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 illegal supply is suspected, how much was supplied and was the pupil coerced to buy for others, or is there evidence of organised or habitual supply?

At all times the needs of individual pupils will be considered and appropriate intervention and support mechanisms will be put into place. Any sanction imposed will be justifiable in terms of:

- the seriousness of the incident;
- the identified needs of the pupil and the community;
- consistency with published school rules; and
- consistency with disciplinary actions for breaches of the school rules (theft, violence, and bullying).

### **Procedures for Using Outside Agencies**

Any visitor providing an input into the Drugs Education Programmes will be given a copy of the Drugs Policy. They will have a clear set of aims and objectives as well as a lesson plan. The teacher will view these to ensure they are appropriate and will remain in class with the visitor.

### **Guidance for Confiscation and Storage of Harmful Substances**

Any confiscated drugs or drug-related items should be given to the Principal for storage in a locked cabinet in the Principal's office and then given to the PSNI.

### **Guidance on the Administration of Prescribed Medication in School**

Please refer to the school policy on the Administrations of Medications (Updated January 2022).

Medication will only be given on school trips and/or residential if the parent/carer has signed a Healthcare Form 2/General Medications Permission (Trips). If the child needs any other medication, he/she will be taken to the nearest hospital.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

This policy will be reviewed every two years and/or after any drug-related or suspected drug-related incident to see if there are any improvements to be made.

### 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; and
- Write a brief factual report of the incident and forward it to the Designated Teacher.

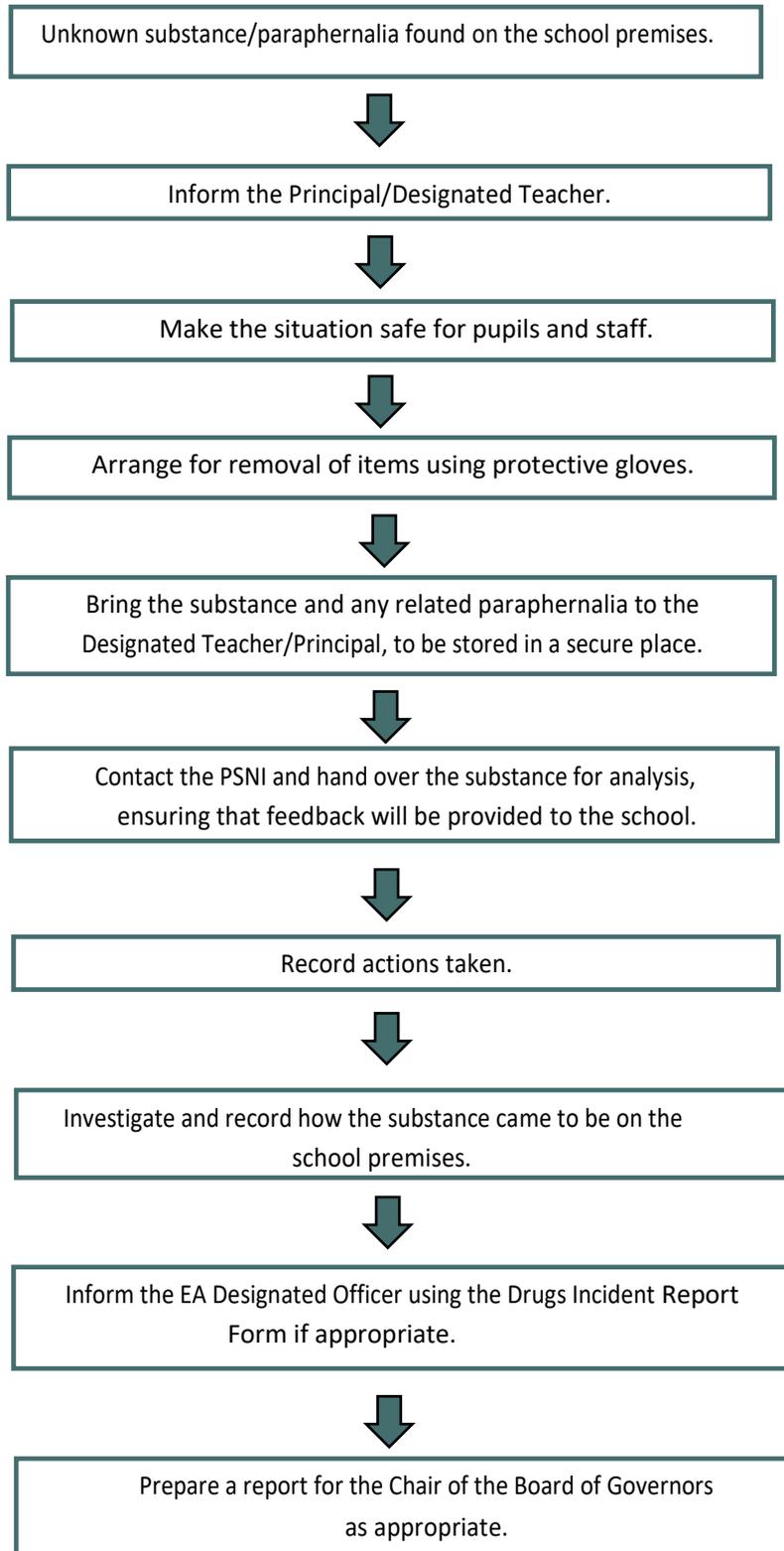
### The Designated Teacher should:

- Respond to the 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 and forward it to the Principal.

### The Principal should:

- Determine the circumstances surrounding the incident.
- Ensure that the following people are informed:
  - ❖ parents or carers;
  - ❖ designated officer in the local PSNI area;
  - ❖ Board of Governors; and
  - ❖ Designated Officer in EA.
- Consult and agree pastoral and disciplinary responses, including support.
- Forward a copy of the Drug Incident Report Form to the Chairperson of the Board of Governors and the Designated Officer in the EA; and
- Review procedures and amend, if necessary.

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



The following guidance can be found in 'CEA Drugs Guidance for Schools in Northern Ireland (Revised Edition 2015)' page 42.

### What to look out for:

If someone is having a bad time on drugs, they may be:

- Anxious.
- Tense.
- Panicky.
- Overheated and dehydrated.
- Drowsy.
- Having difficulty breathing.

### What to do:

The first things you should do are:

- Stay calm;
- Calm them and be reassuring, don't scare them or chase after them.
- Try to find out what they have taken; and
- Stay with them.

If they are anxious, tense, or panicky, you should:

- Sit them in a quiet and calm room.
- Keep them away from crowds, bright lights, and loud noises.
- Tell them to take slow deep breaths; and
- Stay with them.

If they are really drowsy, you should:

- Sit them in a quiet place and keep them awake.
- If they become unconscious or don't respond, call an ambulance immediately and place them in the recovery position.
- Don't scare them, shout at them, or shock them.
- Don't give them coffee to 'wake them up'; and
- Don't put them in a cold shower to 'wake them up'.

If they are unconscious or having difficulty breathing, you should:

- Immediately phone for an ambulance.
- Place them in the recovery position.
- Stay with them until the ambulance arrives; and
- If you know what drug they've taken, tell the ambulance crew; this can help make sure they get the right treatment straightaway.

The following guidance can be found in 'CEA Drugs Guidance for Schools in Northern Ireland (Revised Edition 2015)' page 44.

This is the current best advice on what to do if someone is in difficulty because of misusing drugs.

- It is important to find out what they have taken as this could affect emergency aid, for example, it will help the ambulance crew. Loosen clothing and call for an ambulance immediately.
- If the person has taken a depressant substance, for example solvents, alcohol, sleeping pills or painkillers, it is likely that they will be drowsy or unconscious. If the person is drowsy, it is important to try to keep them awake by talking to them or applying a cool damp cloth or towel to the back of their neck. You should not give them anything to eat or drink as this could lead to vomiting or choking.
- If they are or become unconscious, put them into the recovery position, clear their airway if blocked and keep checking on any changes to pulse and breathing rates.
- If they stop breathing, begin mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, starting with chest compressions. [If you have not been trained in CPR or are worried about giving mouth-to-mouth resuscitation to a stranger, you can do chest compressions only (or hands-only) CPR]. Stay with the person until the ambulance crew arrive and then tell them all the facts, including what the person has taken. This is very important as it could save his or her life.
- If the person has taken a stimulant, such as amphetamines (speed) or ecstasy, they may show various signs of distress. If the person is panicking, try to reassure them. It is important that they calm down and relax. Get them to breathe in and out deeply and slowly. Help them by counting aloud slowly. If they start to hyperventilate — that is, they can't control their breathing — ask them to breathe in and out of a paper (not plastic) bag, if there is one available.
- If the person has taken a hallucinogen, such as LSD, magic mushrooms, or cannabis in combination with ecstasy, they may become very anxious, distressed, and fearful. They may act in an unusual way. It is very important to reassure the person — tell them that you will look after them, that they are in no danger, that it is the effects of the substance and that these will soon wear off. You may want to take them to a quiet place, keep other people away and continue to reassure them. Just stay with them and talk calmly to them until the ambulance arrives.

**DRUG INCIDENT REPORT FORM**

**APPENDIX 5**

1. Name of Pupil/Young Person: _____ DOB: _____ Address: _____ School: _____
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: _____ Drug Involved (If Known): _____ Sample Found: YES / NO
4. Parent Informed: YES / NO Date: _____ Time: _____ By Whom: _____
5. Where Sample Retained: _____ <i>OR</i> Date Sample Destroyed: _____ Time: _____ Witnessed By: _____
6. Police Informed: YES / NO Date: _____ Time: _____ By: _____ Name of Station/Officer: _____
7. Education Authority Drug Education Officer Informed: YES / NO Date: _____ Time: _____ By Whom: _____
8. Form Completed By: _____ Date: _____ Position: _____ Countersigned by School Principal/EA Officer: _____ Dated: _____

