



## **DRUGS POLICY**

**See: Supporting Pupils with Medication for guidance on the administration of medication in schools**

*In this document drugs for medical purposes will be called 'medicines' while those for non-medical purposes will be called 'drugs'.*

### ***Statement On The Use Of Drugs In School***

Bellingham Partnership Schools believes that the possession and use of drugs, and any other substances that can be misused as drugs, is inappropriate, whether obtained legally or illegally.

No drugs as defined above are permitted to be brought to, sold, passed on or obtained on school premises at any time. These rules apply to school staff and other adults working in and for the school, apart from the use of alcohol at official social events. There is a 'no smoking' policy in force at Bellingham Partnership Schools.

Any breaking of these rules will result in sanctions and may result in permanent exclusion of pupils. Adults will be referred to the school's disciplinary procedure.

Prescribed drugs that are brought to school are handed into the school office, with a note from the parent/guardian of the child. The office staff will monitor the use of these medicines within school in accordance to guidelines.

### **RATIONALE:**

Bellingham Partnership Schools is committed to the Health and Safety of all pupils and works together with parents and the local community to educate our pupils to make healthy and informed choices and discourage the misuse of drugs. We are aware that current research indicates that drug use, both legal and illegal, is rising amongst young people and as part of the school's care and welfare of pupils we believe we have a duty to inform and educate them about drug use. We therefore strive to provide a balanced drug education programme, containing accurate and up to date information alongside the development of life skills.

Bellingham Partnership Schools believes that drugs play a part in the lives of every one of us and that experimentation with drugs has always been a feature of many young people's lives, occasionally even of children of school age. It is our responsibility to help reduce the harm from drugs and play a role in drug prevention and help those who misuse drugs. It is the aim of this policy to give a clear view on the use of drugs in school and the importance of drug education.

### **AIMS:**

1. To ensure pupils are safe and have an awareness of medication and drugs and are aware of the issues relating to their use.
2. To clarify appropriate procedures in the management of drug related incidents within the school environment.
3. To provide a framework for informing staff regarding drugs education. The policy to emphasise the school's pastoral role and proactive approach to drug education and a clear view on the handling of drugs use in school. In developing this policy we have considered the legal responsibility, the needs of pupils, teachers, governors, parents and the local community.

## ***A Definition Of Drugs***

Drugs are substances that alter the mind or the body. For the purpose of this policy the definition of a drug will apply 'a drug is a chemical substance that brings about a change in a person's emotional state, body functioning or behaviour'. This policy is concerned both with substances taken for medical and those taken for non-medical purposes. Therefore this policy covers a range of drugs including medicines, tobacco, alcohol, solvents and illegal drugs.

- Adults for their children will have obtained medicines legitimately, normally, over the counter or by prescription (e.g. antibiotics, pain killers).

- Drugs are either legal or illegal or legally obtained substances sold for legitimate purposes:

- Legal drugs, such as alcohol or tobacco, may be obtained over the counter by adults, but not by children under the age of 18.
- Illegal drugs are those such as ecstasy, cannabis, cocaine, crack and heroin, and drugs, which may be used by children such as 'poppers'.
- Some substances (e.g. solvents, lighter fuel) that can be obtained over the counter for legitimate purposes may be misused as drugs.

This policy applies to school pupils, all staff, participants in community activities, parents and all visitors on site.

This policy applies at all times when staff are acting in *loco parentis* this includes educational visits in line with the *School's Educational Visit off site visits and County Guidelines on off site visits*. The policy applies to pupils travelling to and from school. It applies to extra curricular activities and those organised by the community department. It also affects the use of school premises after normal school hours. Organisers of any out of hours activities will be made aware of this policy and their responsibility to implement it.

## ***Drug Education And Drug Prevention***

Bellingham Partnership Schools provides a planned drug education curriculum for all children, as part of PSHE and science programmes of study. The middle school programme reflects knowledge and understanding, attitudes and personal and social skills, building upon the work done by the feeder First schools. We aim to give all children knowledge, attitudes and skills to be able to make informed decisions about drugs. We believe these are very important attributes for our children to take with them to High school. Bellingham Partnership Schools acknowledges that a positive school ethos helps children to feel valued and part of the school community and, in so doing, helps to foster positive self images which may help children cope better in situations involving drug use. It is a key school aim to raise the self-esteem and confidence of all our pupils and help them to develop the life skills that will help them in make informed decisions in difficult situations.

### ***The aims and Objectives of our Drugs Education Programme.***

- To enable our pupils to make healthy, informed choices by increasing knowledge, exploring their own and other peoples attitudes.
- To promote positive attitudes towards healthy lifestyles.
- To provide accurate information about substances.
- To increase understanding about the implications and possible consequences of use and misuse.

On the whole teachers deliver our drugs education programme, with the support from the school nurse. Where appropriate we invite outside visitors to contribute, such as the police drugs officer. Teachers have access to on-going support and training as part of their own professional development and the teaching materials are under review for quality and relevance. The school actively cooperates with other outside agencies including the LEA, Health and drugs agencies, social services, the police, to deliver and develop our commitment to drugs education.

## ***Confidentiality***

Children at Bellingham Partnership Schools need to feel able to talk in confidence to a member of staff about a drug-related problem without the fear of being judged or told off. The welfare of children will always be central to our policy and practice. However, teachers, other staff members and youth workers will not be able to promise complete confidentiality in order to seek specialist help if needed. Children will always be given this information if at all possible. Information about a child in relation to drugs will follow the same procedure as for other sensitive information. The head teacher will be informed and help sought if appropriate and in discussion with the child involved.

Confidentiality will be maintained beyond certain key people, including the Headteacher, SENDCO and school nurse.

## ***Parental Involvement***

Parents will be informed of the drug education curriculum and have the opportunity to raise concerns. Parents will have access to a copy of this policy. Parents will be contacted if their child is caught breaking the rules on drugs. Opportunities will be made available for parents to get support and guidance concerning drugs and other health-related issues.

## ***Police Involvement***

In most cases any punishment is likely to be a school not a police matter. However, the school is aware of the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, which controls heroin, cocaine, LSD, MDMA (ecstasy), amphetamines and cannabis and other drugs as well. This Act makes it an offence to possess or supply these drugs and it allows individuals to take possession of an illegal drug in order to prevent someone else committing an offence, providing they either hand it to the police or destroy it immediately. Bellingham Partnership Schools maintains strong links with the local community police through their involvement in the drug education curriculum, which helps children to have a greater understanding of the role of the police and about drugs and the Law. It is the policy of this school to contact the local community police/schools involvement officer where an incident has involved illegal substance, and to hand the substance to the police.

## ***Responding To Drug-Related Incidents***

In all situations involving drugs the following principles apply:

- All situations will be carefully considered before deciding on the response.
- The needs of the child will always come first.
- The Pastoral System will be the first response if at all possible.
- Parents/Carers will be involved at an early stage and throughout any investigation.
- Support agencies including the police will be involved if appropriate.
- Support for children will be maintained and counselling arranged if appropriate.
- Responses may include both a disciplinary and counselling response.

## ***Disciplinary Response***

Situations, which include breaking of the school rules on drugs, will result in punishment. The type of punishment will depend on the exact nature and degree of the offence. The school employs a variety of sanctions related to the offence, e.g. working with the school nurse on self-esteem and development projects, fixed exclusions, detentions. Permanent exclusion will be considered and used only in exceptional cases, such as dealing in drugs. In most cases permanent exclusion will be used only as a final resort, after all other approaches have been taken Parents/carers and children will be informed throughout the investigations.

## ***Counselling response***

The child's welfare is paramount and in all incidents involving drugs, referral for counselling or support within the school will be actively considered. Local drug agencies will be able to offer some counselling and work with children where appropriate. We believe that those children who are misusing illegal drugs and volatile substances should be encouraged to seek help at the earliest possible stage so that they can be helped.

## ***Reporting Procedure***

The reporting procedure ensures that only a limited number of people will be involved in any incident. All incidents are reported to the Headteacher. If exclusion is considered then the procedure for this is put into action by the Headteacher, and will involve the governing body. All incidents are written down and kept in the office as confidential items.

## ***Managing Drug-Related Incidents***

- Incidents involving drugs may take the form of emergencies, intoxication, discovery/observation, disclosure, suspicion / rumour. This policy considers responses to these situations.
- Emergency situations where a person is unconscious, which may be as a result of drug use. Staff with first-aid qualifications should be called and the person not left alone. The person will be placed in the recovery position and an ambulance called. The parents will be informed and called to the school. An assessment of the incident will be started, including finding out whether a substance has been taken and evidence gathered. A report of the incident will be written down and given to the head teacher. The head teacher will decide whether disciplinary and/or counselling action will be taken.
- Intoxication from drug use: The person will be removed to a quiet room and not left alone. The first aider and head teacher will be called. The person will be helped to calm down and medical assistance sought if necessary. The parents will be informed and called to the school. A report of the incident written down and the head teacher will decide if disciplinary and/or counselling action will be taken.
- Discovery/observation when a person is discovered using, supplying or holding a substance that is not permitted on school premises and which is described in this policy. The person should be approached and the substance confiscated, if possible. The head teacher will be called and the person involved questioned. If the substance is illegal or there is doubt about its identity, drug services or the local community police officer will be contacted. All illegal substances will be handed to the police. Parents will be informed and called to the school. A report of the incident will be written down and the head teacher will decide whether a disciplinary and/or counselling approach will be taken.
- Disclosure: when a child discloses to a member of staff that he/she has been using drugs, or is concerned about someone else's drug use. Teachers will be non-judgemental and caring and will show concern for the child's welfare. Children will know that teachers cannot promise total confidentiality if further support is to be considered such as referral to a drug service or counselling service. Information about the child will only be given to key people and no one else unless the child gives consent. Total confidentiality is maintained at all times in drug and counselling services.

- Suspicion/rumour. Staff should not assume use of drugs on the basis of rumours or behaviour alone. However, if there is suspicion, evidence will be collected over a period of time before a decision is made to question the child involved.

### ***Administering Medicines***

Guidelines for administering medication in school is contained in the Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy ***Training and Support for Staff***

We will ensure that staff receive training (but within the constraints of the school budget) to help them provide effective drug education and support for their teaching and understanding of the issues. The PSCHC co-ordinator has responsibility for ensuring there is drug education within the PSCHC curriculum and receives support from the Education Department of Northumberland LEA. The school will make every effort to take advantage of the support, advice, information and training provided by Northumberland LEA, the Health authority and the Police. The community manager, youth leader and PSCHC coordinator will liaise closely to raise community staff awareness and support training needs in relation to this policy.

### ***Roles and Responsibilities***

- **Headteacher** – the head teacher takes overall responsibility for providing a safe place for all staff and pupils and as such takes responsibility for this policy, its implementation and for liaison with the Governing body, parents, LEA and appropriate outside agencies in the event of a drug related incident. Pupils who are suspected of being at risk from drugs will be supported and monitored with the assistance from relevant agencies.
- **Governors** – as part of their general responsibilities for the management of the school the governors play a key role in the implementations of the school's drug education and prevention [as referenced in DFES circular 4/95]. They will continue their involvement through regular evaluation of the policy. Safeguarding lead governors are: Helen Revels and Trish Taylor.
- **All staff – school and community** – drug prevention is a whole school issue. All staff, both teaching, community, youth and non-teaching staff are made aware of this policy and how it relates to them should they have to deal with a drug related incident. If staff have any queries or training requirements these should be made available, as part of the annual performance management cycle, to the Head teacher or at other times discussion should be held with the PSCHC coordinator – Miss Veitch.
- **Caretaker** – the caretaking staff regularly check the school premises – any drug or drug paraphernalia found will be recorded and reported to the Head teacher and dealt with in accordance to this policy.
- **Parents** – parents are encouraged to support the school's drug education programme and have access to this policy. They are responsible for ensuring that the guidelines relating to medication in schools are followed. The school plays its part in ensuring that parents have up to date information regarding drugs. Parents have the right to be informed of any incident that could result in potential harm to their child. This can be a sensitive issue for parents, and therefore, it will be handled with care and consideration. The head teacher will consider if there are any special circumstances, which may temper this right.

### ***Review of this Policy***

This policy is to be reviewed every two years and in the light of any incident that may occur related to drugs. This policy has been developed with the support of the Local Authority and Drugs Education advisory support team.

***Links with other Policies.***

- PSICHE programme of study and curriculum policy.
- Behaviour policy
- Health and Safety policy.
- Child protection policy
- Equal opportunities policy.
- Visit policy.
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions

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