

# **DRUGS POLICY**

## **The Need for a Policy**

We believe that drugs play a part in the lives of most people and that experimentation with drugs is a feature of many young people's lives. It is the responsibility of the school to help reduce the harm from drugs and play a role in drug prevention and help those who misuse drugs. The school needs a policy that gives a clear view on the use of drugs in school and the importance of drug education. This policy emphasises the school's pastoral role and gives a clear view on handling drug misuse by pupils in school. In developing this policy the school has considered its legal responsibility, the needs of the pupils, teachers, parents, governors and the local community.

## **A Definition of Drugs**

Drugs are substances that alter the mind or body. This policy is concerned with legal drugs such as alcohol, tobacco and solvents, over the counter and prescribed drugs such as tranquillisers and pain killers and illegal drugs such as ecstasy, cannabis, cocaine, crack and heroin, and other drugs young people may use such as "poppers".

## **Drug Education and Drug Prevention**

The school must be pro-active in its fight against drug misuse. We will therefore aim to educate about drug misuse before it becomes a problem for most of our pupils. We acknowledge that education takes place both formally and informally and that all staff may have a role to play in this, particularly through their work as tutors.

Through the taught curriculum and the pastoral system we will pursue the following aims regarding drug use and misuse:

1. To promote the individual's self-esteem, irrespective of academic abilities.
2. To enable young people to make responsible, healthy, informed choices by increasing knowledge and understanding, exploring attitudes and values and by developing and practising personal skills including those of communication and assertiveness.
3. To promote accurate, sound information about substances.
4. To increase awareness and understanding of the implications and possible legal, social, economic and health consequences of the use and misuse of drugs.

The school provides a comprehensive and planned drug education curriculum for all pupils as part of the health education within PSHCE together with elements of the Science curriculum, and aims to provide all pupils with knowledge, attitudes and skills to be able to make informed decisions about drugs. The taught curriculum is as follows:

- Year 7: PSHCE - looking at the dangers of smoking.
- Year 8: PSHCE - pupils look at the effects of peer pressure and the dangers of solvent abuse. Science - the causes of disease including self-inflicted diseases.

- Year 9: PSHCE pupils increase their knowledge about a variety of drugs and look at Drugs Law. Pupils are also made aware of the implications of this policy.
- Years 10 and 11: PSHCE - the emphasis is again on knowledge, resistance and assertion skills, and levels of risk. There is a closer look at the effects of alcohol and at agencies that can help young people with drug problems. Science - the physical effects of solvents, tobacco, alcohol and other drugs that may harm the body.

### **Unauthorised Drugs in School**

Millthorpe School does not condone the misuse of drugs by any member of the school community, nor the illegal supply of drugs.

We therefore clearly state that the drugs covered by this policy are not permitted to be brought into, sold, passed on, or obtained on school premises. Any breaking of these rules by pupils will result in punishment. In cases where a pupil is found to be in possession of an illegal substance, the normal punishment will be fixed term exclusion. In cases where a pupil is found to be supplying an illegal substance to others, the normal punishment will be permanent exclusion from the school.

### **Confidentiality**

Pupils at the school need to feel able to talk to a member of staff about a drug related problem without the fear of being judged or punished. The welfare of our pupils will always be central to our policy and practice. However, teachers will not be able to promise complete confidentiality in order that they can seek specialist help if needed. Information about a pupil in relation to drugs will follow the same procedure as other sensitive information. The Head of Year, Pastoral Head and the SMT will be informed and help sought if appropriate and in discussion with the pupil involved. It is important for staff to be aware that, because the school nursing service is not bound by the same rules of confidentiality, it may be appropriate to advise a pupil to speak to our school nurse.

### **Parental Involvement**

Parents will be contacted if their child is caught breaking the rules on drugs. Where it transpired that a pupil has a drug related problem, the school will work closely with the parents to ensure the best outcome for all concerned. The school will help to arrange counselling for both pupils and parents in this situation. The school has links with local drug agencies.

### **Police Involvement**

In most cases any punishment is not likely to be a police matter although police involvement may well be sought. In particular the police will probably be included in any cases of supplying illegal drugs. The school has no statutory obligation to call in the police following a drug related incident in school. The Misuse of Drugs Act (1971) allows individuals to take possession of an illegal drug in order to prevent someone else committing an offence, providing they either hand it in to the police or destroy it immediately. Teachers may therefore take temporary possession of a substance suspected of being controlled. The decision as to whether or not the police should be involved in any particular incident will be the responsibility of the Headteacher. If the police request assistance from the school on a

drug related problem, the school, with due regard to the welfare of all and particular pupils, will normally co-operate fully.

### **Responding to drug related incidents**

In all situations involving drugs the following principles will apply:

- The needs of the child will always come first.
- Parents/Carers will be involved at any early stage and throughout any investigation.
- Support agencies including the police will be involved as appropriate.
- Responses may include both a disciplinary and a counselling approach.

### **Managing drug related incidents**

Incidents involving drugs may take the form of emergencies, intoxication, discovery/observation, disclosure, suspicion/rumour.

*Emergency situations* where a person is unconscious, which may be a result of drug use. Staff with first aid qualifications should be called and the person not left alone. The person should be placed in the recovery position and an ambulance called. The parents will be informed immediately by the school. An investigation of the incident should be begun immediately and a careful written record made of any findings. The Headteacher must be informed immediately. After consultation with the key staff involved, the Head will decide if disciplinary and/or counselling action should be taken.

*Intoxication* from drug use. The person should be removed to a quiet room and not left alone. The first aider and a senior member of staff should be called. Medical assistance will be sought if necessary. The parents will be informed immediately and called to the school. A report of the incident should be written down and a decision made as to whether a disciplinary or counselling approach is appropriate.

*Discovery/observation* when a person is discovered using, supplying or holding a substance that is not permitted on school premises. The person should be approached and the substance confiscated, if possible. A senior member of staff may be called and the person involved questioned. If the substance is illegal or there is doubt about its identity the school's liaison 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 key staff will decide whether a disciplinary and/or counselling approach will be taken.

*Disclosure* when a pupil 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 pupil's welfare. Pupils 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 pupil will only be given to key people and no one else, unless the pupil gives their consent.

*Suspicion/rumour* If there is suspicion that a pupil is misusing drugs, evidence will be collected over a period of time before a decision is made to question the pupil(s). In the case of rumour, a senior member of staff will inform the parents.

### **Warning Signs**

Early detection of drugs misuse is extremely important. Teachers need to be vigilant, particularly when they are in charge of activities that take young people away from school premises. The signs listed below may indicate that individuals or groups of young people are misusing drugs. Their presence alone is not conclusive proof of drug or solvent misuse: many of them are a normal part of adolescence, but the presence of several signs together may point to a need for greater vigilance.

### **Warning signs in individuals**

- Changes in attendance, and being unwilling to take part in school activities.
- Decline in performance in school work.
- Unusual outbreaks of temper, marked swings of mood, restlessness or irritability.
- Spending more time away from home, with new friends or friends of an older age group.
- Excessive spending or borrowing of money.
- Stealing money or goods.
- Excessive tiredness without obvious cause.
- No interest in physical appearance.
- Sores or rashes, especially on the mouth or nose.
- Lack of appetite.
- Heavy use of scents, colognes etc. to disguise the smell of substances.
- Dilated or constricted pupils.

(Drug Prevention and Schools DFE 4/95)

### **Administering Medicines**

Where it is necessary for medicines to be administered to pupils during the school day, parents must ensure the school is correctly advised about the medication, its usage and administration. Where a pupil has medication for allergies such as wasp stings, the medication should be kept at Reception and a first aider will administer it as necessary. In the case of severe asthma it is advised to leave a spare labelled inhaler with Reception.

### **Review of this Policy**

This policy is reviewed annually and in the light of any incident that may occur related to drugs.