

Ashgrove Primary School

Policy
for
Drugs
Education

15 September 2006
Version 1:2

Drugs Education Policy

Introduction

The Governors and Staff of Ashgrove Primary School are committed to maintaining a school environment free from harmful substances.

A drug is any substance which, when taken, has the effect of altering the way a person behaves, feels or thinks (Guidance to Primary Schools Misuse of Drugs-CCEA 1996). Drugs can be classified as:

- prescribed drugs: those issued on prescription by a doctor;
- legal drugs, including solvents, poppers, magic mushrooms, alcohol and cigarettes. (Whilst these are termed 'legal drugs' they are classified within school as harmful substances); and
- illicit drugs: anything that is listed as a controlled drug, including illegal drugs such as cannabis and ecstasy; those prescribed by a doctor but wrongly used such as Valium and Mogodon; and misused glues, solvents and nitrates which are deemed socially unacceptable and harmful.

We live in a society where drugs are common and it is our aim to develop in children the knowledge, understanding and skills necessary to choose and maintain a healthy lifestyle.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure a consistent approach among staff and to provide a clear statement for parents and other interested parties.

Rationale - Why Include Drugs Education In The Primary School?

- Through the influence of the media and by mixing with older children young people today are commonly aware of drugs from an early age. They have more freedom than children in the past and many young people have first-hand knowledge and experience.
- Anti-smoking campaigns have been relatively successful with children and have assisted in highlighting the link between smoking and the use of cannabis. Children should be given a similar awareness of other connections and their associated dangers.
- Children need to gain knowledge and attitudes that are appropriate to their age and context, and to develop the confidence in themselves that enables them to be assertive and positive when faced with temptations.

We recognise that despite our efforts and the influence of family and church, some of our pupils will go on to misuse drugs. The school cannot solve society's drug problem, but it is hoped that the implementation of an effective programme will prevent or delay the onset of drug use.

Overview

Ashgrove Primary School will endeavour to promote a positive, healthy lifestyle. Health will be seen in the context of personal development, social development and health in relation to the environment. In Key Stage 1 drugs education it will be taught within topics and in Key Stage 2 it will be through health education, science, literacy and religious education. Active pupil-centred teaching methods will be used both with whole classes and with groups.

The key person in drugs education will be the class teacher, but it is also the policy of the school to bring in experts trained in drugs education to work with children at Key Stage 2.

Procedures For Dealing With Drugs-Related Incidents

In dealing with drugs-related incidents the school will co-operate with the police and follow the NEELB guidance to schools. If drugs are found in the school grounds or on the premises the police will be sent for.

Staff cannot and will not search any person. Staff cannot and will not normally search a person's belongings. In a case of emergency only, the school reserves the right to search a person and his/her belongings in the presence of a witness. School property may be searched. Any suspicion concerning the presence of drugs inside school will be referred to the principal or vice-principal who may ask pupils to turn out his/her pockets and schoolbag voluntarily in the presence of a witness. If the child refuses to do so, police and parents will be sent for.

Whilst awaiting police and/or parents a pupil may be detained using reasonable force. (See Policy for Safe Handling and the Use of Reasonable Force.)

As with other aspects of child protection, confidentiality cannot always be guaranteed, but in all cases pupils will be treated sympathetically. If the need arises, parents and children will be given advice on where to obtain long-term support.

Outline Of Disciplinary Measures

The school will always view drug-taking and the possession of drugs extremely seriously. This extends to pupils under the influence of drugs in school. A pupil may be suspended for a period of up to five days, plus an extension in exceptional circumstances, while an investigation is carried out.

Parents will be expected to support the school in any action taken. The school in turn will co-operate reasonably with parents and other contributing bodies as part of any subsequent programme of help for the pupil.

The Management Of Solvents In School

Teachers and ancillary staff will ensure that appropriate care is taken with the management of solvents in school. Pupils will not have access to stores without staff supervision. Guidance

for caretakers is set out in the NEELB Health & Safety Manual Section 9. Where possible the school will use non-intoxicating substances, but where these must be used they will be stored under lock and key. Our children will not knowingly be given glues containing solvents, however the class use of any glues, paints or other liquid materials will be carefully supervised.

The Management Of Prescribed Medicines In School

See Ashgrove Primary School's Policy for the Administration of Medicines in School.

Training In The Recognition Of Drugs And Their Symptoms

Staff (including non-teaching) will be trained regularly in the awareness of drug issues. Parents will also be offered relevant information. The school may use the support of the following agencies:

- NEELB CASS
- The Milena Programme
- The Health Promotion Agency
- The PSNI Drugs Squad & PSNI Community Partnership
- Newtownabbey Borough Council

The Responsibilities Of The Drugs Education Co-Ordinator

The co-ordination of drugs education may be done along with pastoral care and/or health education and will include:

- monitoring the implementation of this policy;
- ensuring that a suitable programme of study is being taught throughout the school;
- planning for staff needs in relation to drugs education;
- liaising with other professional and voluntary bodies in relation to drugs education;
- liaising with staff on any drug-related incident at school.

Monitoring, Review And Evaluation

As part of the pastoral care policy within school, the drugs education programme will be reviewed each year using feedback from staff, pupils, parents and governors. Staff will be kept up-to-date with training in dealing with both drugs education and possible incidents.