



## Misuse of Substance/Drugs Policy

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## **Rationale:**

As a health promoting school, Lurgan Junior High School supports its pupils in making informed responsible life choices and in promoting positive coping strategies.

We recognise that some young people, their social groups and families can be exposed to drugs at various times in their lives. Therefore, we strive to provide our pupils with opportunities to develop skills which will allow them to understand the dangers and consequences of taking drugs.

Drugs: Guidance for Schools DENI Circular No 2015/23, outlines the following responsibilities of the school:-

1. To have a relevant Drugs Education Policy and to share same with parents.
2. To ensure a consistent approach to Drugs Education (through Personal Development) in order to raise pupil awareness of the dangers and effects of drugs including the legal consequences.
3. To have clear procedures for managing drug related incidents including informing the PSNI if/when a pupil is suspected of being in possession of a 'controlled' drug.
4. To develop a pastoral care system within the school in order that pupils develop the necessary skills to enable them to withstand the pressures from peers or others to experiment with or to use illegal substances.

## **Definitions:**

The definition of a **drug** or **substance**, given by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime is

*"A substance people take to change the way they feel, think or behave."*

As well as everyday products such as tea and coffee, substances include:

- alcohol, tobacco and tobacco-related products, including nicotine replacement therapy (NRT), and electronic cigarettes;
- 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), 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. \*We no longer use the term legal high because it is misleading.

## **Ethos:**

Lurgan Junior High School is committed to the safeguarding and welfare of all our pupils. We believe that the misuse of alcohol or the use of drugs (except for medical reasons) is detrimental to the health and wellbeing of our pupils and all those in our community.

We believe that the majority of our pupils choose never to use illegal drugs, but recognise that it is essential to provide our pupils with the knowledge, understanding and skills to support them in making responsible healthy choices and deal effectively with the negative influences that are present in our society.

## **Aims:**

To safeguard our young people by:

- Providing opportunities to promote a healthy lifestyle.
- The development of pupils' self-respect and self-esteem.
- Enabling our pupils to make informed choices by increasing their knowledge, exploring their own and other pupils' attitudes and by developing and practising social skills.
- Increasing pupils' understanding about drugs, their effects and the consequences of use and misuse.
- Having clearly defined procedures for managing incidents of suspected drug misuse.
- Enabling our pupils to identify support.

## **Implementation:**

1. collection by the PSNI.
2. To report the incident to the Education Authority.
3. To inform the Board of Governors and agree on the most appropriate pastoral support and disciplinary action to be taken.

## Designated Teacher

Vice-Principals have responsibility for overseeing this policy and for the management of incidents of suspected drugs misuse.

1. Collate all incident forms from witnesses.
2. Act as a contact point for all external agencies that may be accessed to support pupil/s concerned.
3. Ensure safekeeping of any substances or paraphernalia related to incident. Liaise with any other staff concerned in order to initiate pastoral care and welfare of pupil/s concerned.

## Pupils

All pupils have a responsibility:

1. To engage in all Personal Development lessons related to Drugs Education.
2. Report to a member of staff any concerns related to pupils (drugs possession/paraphernalia).
3. Pupils should never be in possession of drugs.
4. Outside of prescribed medication, pupils should never take drugs nor be in possession of paraphernalia relating to same. In addition, pupils should not pass drugs to another individual or attempt to sell them.

## Parents/Guardians

The school requests that if parents have any information relating to the misuse of drugs that they inform the Principal or Designated Teacher.

## Staff

All staff, teaching and non-teaching, have a responsibility to:

1. Inform Designated Teacher or Principal if they suspect or discover a young person in possession of a drug or illegal substance.
2. Inform Designated Teacher or Principal if/when a disclosure relating to drugs is made to them.
3. Provide for Designated Teacher or Principal a written factual account of any suspected incident (see Appendix A).
4. Seek First Aid attention immediately if there are any drug related concerns about pupil/s.

## Communication/Liaison with Parents

The school aims to keep parents informed at all times and the policy is available to all parents.

## Use of External Agencies

Lurgan Junior High School works closely with the PSNI and other agencies to ensure our pupils receive relevant and current information to support their health and wellbeing.

## Procedures for the Management of Drugs Related Incidents on School Premises

A suspected drugs related incident includes:

- Inappropriate behaviour
- An allegation
- Possession with intent to supply and/or supply of drugs or illegal substances
- Finding drug-related paraphernalia

## Illness/Inappropriate Behaviour

- Any indications of illness/inappropriate behaviour as a result of suspected drugs misuse by a member of staff will immediately be brought to the attention of the Designated Teacher (see separate policy relating to staff misuse of drugs).
- No judgement will be made by any member of staff until the circumstances surrounding the incident have been determined.
- If it is considered that the pupil has taken a substance suspected to be a drug, medical assistance will be sought and the parents/guardians and PSNI informed if appropriate.

## An Allegation of a Suspected Controlled Drugs related Incident

- If any member of staff suspects a drug related incident, they will report their concerns to the Designated Teacher immediately.
- Where a pupil is suspected of concealing controlled drugs, every effort will be made to secure the voluntary production of these substances in the presence of the Designated Teacher and another adult.
- Personal belongings (such as school bags) of any student can only be searched by the Designated Teacher with the pupil's consent and in the presence of another adult witness. No pupil will ever be physically searched by any member of staff.

## Possession of a Suspected Drug and/or Drugs Paraphernalia

- Staff will seek another adult witness and then take possession of a substance suspected of being a controlled drug, protecting the pupil from harm and from committing the offence of possession.

- It may be necessary for the member of staff/school nurse to take immediate action. This may involve calling an ambulance or administering first aid.
- The teacher will take the suspected drug and any associated equipment and/or paraphernalia immediately to the Designated Teacher where it will be stored until handed over to the PSNI for identification.
- School staff will not attempt to analyse an unidentified substance and not make any judgements until the case has been determined.
- The adult will then make a factual record of all events.

#### Possession of Drug-related Paraphernalia

- Any member of staff who encounters any paraphernalia or equipment on school grounds will use extreme care as items may be hazardous.
- Any cases will be reported immediately to the Designated Teacher who will respond accordingly including possible contact with the PSNI.

#### Detaining a Pupil

- When managing a suspected drugs-related incident, the pupil/s concerned will be encouraged to remain in the school under the supervision of two members of staff until their parents/guardians and PSNI arrive.
- If a pupil refuses to remain, the school will not detain the pupil against their will.

#### Possession of Non-Controlled Substance

- Any pupil in possession of substance such as alcohol, solvents and/or tobacco will have their parents/guardians contacted and be dealt with under the school's Positive Behaviour Policy.

#### Dealing with Parent/Guardian who is under the influence of alcohol and/or other drugs

In such circumstances, the staff involved should attempt to maintain a calm atmosphere. If a member of staff has concerns about discharging a pupil into the care of a parent/guardian under such circumstances, then alternative arrangements should be discussed with the parent/guardian. The focus for staff should be the pupils' welfare and, if this is at risk, then the Designated Teacher or Principal should be contacted and child protection procedures may be implemented.

#### School Responses

The school will assess the pupil's future needs and ensure that appropriate support is given. This may include Education Welfare Services, referral to Social Services and BST, liaison with Youth Diversion and Youth Justice. These services will augment the support given by in-house counselling offered through the REACH Team and our School Counselling service.

A range of sanctions which include suspension and expulsion may be deemed necessary in the case of drug abuse.

Information will only be disclosed to those members of staff concerned with the pastoral needs of the individual pupil.

In the event of the Press becoming aware of an incident, the Principal will deal with all matters in relation to the media. The privacy of the pupil and their family will be maintained. Contact with the press in relation to such an incident is outlined in the Critical Incident Policy.