

Policy For Responding To Drug Related Incidents

Policy

Rationale

We support the stance agreed by Bedfordshire Secondary Heads. All secondary schools in Bedfordshire believe unequivocally that taking illegal drugs is wrong. It is against the law, hazardous to health and has other detrimental effects including a high correlation with crime rates and an impact on under-achievement in education. When responding to any incident involving drugs, schools need to be informed, sensitive, adopt a flexible approach and avoid panic. A range of incidents can occur in the school environment and all aspects of each situation should be considered before an action plan is adopted.

Some children may choose to mention instances of drug use in class or with individual members of the school community. While staff will want to be supportive, it must be made clear that they work within child protection guidelines and clearly state that they may not be able to guarantee confidentiality.

The promise of confidentiality is not realistic, especially when there is a risk to the safety of a pupil or other people. The students should always be told when information is to be passed on. Information concerning risk to the students must be passed to the Headteacher immediately and s/he will consult parents and other appropriate agencies.

We will consider each situation individually and recognise that a variety of responses may be necessary, in line with LEA and National Guidance ("The right responses – Managing and making Policy for drug related incident" by the Standing Conference On Drug Abuse (SCODA), 1999).

We will consider very carefully the implications of any actions we may take. We will inform the parents at the earliest opportunity so that we can work together to support the child. Our focus will always be on the student, not on the drug. However in responding to any situation, we seek to balance the interests of the individual, other members of the school and extended community.

Our normal practice would be to issue a fixed term exclusion to any student found in possession of an illegal substance. Students who provide drugs to other students, whether or not money exchanges hands, will face a permanent exclusion.

In medical emergencies, staff must follow the guidelines for dealing with Drug Incidents and complete the County Incident/Accident Report Forms.

Values and Aims

Set in the broader context of the development of the whole person, our policy for dealing with drug related incidents reflects whole school aims to provide a caring community in which young people can learn to respect themselves and others and take responsibility for their own actions. We are committed to the health and safety of all members of the school community and will take action to safeguard their well being.

The policy and procedures are implicitly and explicitly in line with the "Every Child Matters" agenda, particularly the following aims:-

Be healthy

- Physically healthy
- Healthy lifestyles
- Choose not to take illegal drugs

Stay safe

- Safe from maltreatment, neglect, violence and sexual exploitation

Make a positive contribution

- Engage in decision-making and support the community and environment
- Engage in law-abiding and positive behaviour in and out of school
- Develop self-confidence and successfully deal with significant life changes and challenges

- Parents, carers and families promote positive behaviour

At Sandy Upper School we are all committed to establishing a drug free environment within the school.

Some basic values that underline our actions in dealing with any incident include:

- Determining the precise nature of the incident and involvement of students before deciding on a response
- Focusing on the individual rather than on the substance
- Making sure the needs of the child are considered first; this may include referring them for specific support from professionals (including a counsellor)
- Putting the school pastoral system into action as an initial response to the incident
- Being confident in the professional skills, experience and expertise of staff to address these incidents and deal with young people and their problems
- Involving parents/carers, police and other agencies if appropriate
- Making sure there is continuing support for the young person in school
- Checking disciplinary aspects, including exclusions from school, within school behaviour/discipline policy and procedures
- Being aware of the legal constraints on gathering evidence and interviewing the suspect

Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy will be regularly monitored and evaluated by all stakeholders. All staff will support the Head of PSHCE, Key Stage Managers, Year Co-ordinators and the Senior Team in the collation of this information and so work towards establishing a drug free environment at Sandy Upper School Community School.

Implementation

This policy will be made available to all members of staff, through being placed on the school intranet and web site. However this policy is be linked to the drugs education policy and, through this, the PSHCE development plan. This will involve a rolling programme for the development and implementation of the schemes of work (including model lesson plans) and school special events.

Review

This policy will be reviewed bi-annually by all members of staff including the senior team, by the Headteacher, and finally by the Governors Curriculum committee.

Links to other policies

Due to the diverse nature of drug related incidents this policy should be read in conjunction with the policies on health and safety, drugs education, lunchtime rules, school trips, child protection and assertive discipline.

Procedures

We intend to achieve our aims through dealing with any drug related incident in the following fashion:-

1. Medical Emergencies

- The procedures for an emergency apply when a child or young person or others are at immediate risk or harm. A person who is unconscious, having trouble breathing, seriously confused or disoriented or who has taken a harmful toxic substance, should be responded to as an emergency.
- A teacher's main responsibility is for any student at immediate risk, but they also need to ensure the well being and safety of others.
- Put into practice the school's first aid procedures. **If in any doubt, call medical help.**

Always

- Assess the situation
- If a medical emergency, send for medical help and ambulance.
BEFORE ASSISTANCE ARRIVES:
If the person is **conscious**:

- Ask the person what has happened and to identify any drug used
- Collect any drug sample and any vomit for medical analysis
- Do not induce vomiting
- Keep the person under observation, warm and quiet
- If the person is **unconscious**:
 - Ensure that the person can breathe and place in recovery position
 - Do not move the person if a fall is likely to have led to spinal or other serious injury which may not be obvious
 - Do not give anything by mouth
 - Do not attempt to make the person sit or stand
 - Do not leave the person unattended or in the charge of another pupil
- WHEN MEDICAL HELP ARRIVES:
 - Pass on any information available including vomit and any drug samples.
 - **Please complete an incident/accident report form as soon as you have dealt with the emergency.**

After considering if medical needs require action, assessment of further students needs is important. Any assessment should be systematic.

The following questions may be helpful:

- Has the initial incident been addressed and are all students safe?
- Have any remaining drugs been confiscated and stored securely as evidence? **(A witness should be present for this)**
- Have you recorded carefully what happened, who was involved, where were they and when?
- Have you informed the teacher(s) with responsibility for child protection, and the Key Stage Manager who should inform the Deputy Head?

2. Non-Medical Emergencies

- The procedures for an emergency may not apply when a child or young person or others are not at immediate risk or harm. For example they may have been found with drugs on their person but may not have used them.
- A teacher's main responsibility is for any student at immediate risk, but they also need to ensure the well being and safety of others.
- If the incident becomes a medical emergency put into practice the school's first aid procedures. **If in any doubt, call medical help.**
- BEFORE ASSISTANCE ARRIVES:
 - Ask the person what has happened and to identify any drug used
 - Collect any drug sample and any vomit for medical analysis
 - Keep the person under observation, warm and quiet
- WHEN HELP ARRIVES:
 - Pass on any information available including any drug samples.
 - **Please complete an incident/accident report form as soon as you have dealt with the situation.**
- ASSESSMENT OF NEEDS

After considering if medical needs require action, assessment of further students needs is important. Any assessment should be systematic.

The following questions may be helpful:

 - Has the initial incident been addressed and are all students safe?
 - Have any remaining drugs been confiscated and stored securely as evidence? **(A witness should be present for this)**
 - Have you recorded carefully what happened, who was involved, where were they and when?
 - Have you informed both the teachers with responsibility for child protection, the Year Co-ordinator and key Stage Manager?

Finally, where students are able to do so, a full statement of their involvement should be taken to include the names of any other students who may have had access to the drug. This statement should be named, dated and signed by both the student and the adult present. Where students are reluctant to name other students remind them of the risk to their health and safety if we do not have a chance to see them.

3. Sanctions

Drugs should not be the only focus. Once safety is addressed pupils recklessness, ignorance, bravado, rebellion or susceptibility to a stronger influence may also need consideration. Teachers should learn from each incident and reinforce safety issues.

This should be clearly justified in terms of:-

- Appropriateness of response
- Proportion with the offence
- Needs of all
- Consistency with existing school rules
- Consistency with other disciplinary actions, events in the past

Consider if support from outside agency is required – if so Who? Why? What? When? Members of staff should always refer these types of decisions to members of the Senior Team.

However there are a number of key points to remember:

- It is the responsibility of the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher to take immediate action where there is a strong suspicion that dealing in an illicit substance is taking place on the premises.
- On receipt of information / knowledge about a young person's use of illegal drugs staff should discuss it with the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher, Assistant Headteacher or Key Stage Manager to decide upon a course of action.
Where matters of confidentiality are concerned you are not obliged in **LAW** to take any action on;
 - being told a young person has had an illegal drug
 - observing possession / use of illegal drug outside the schoolday / off school premises.
- In such cases any action that you take should be in the interests of young people concerned and the whole school community. However, all rumours regarding the use of illegal substances should be communicated to a member of the Senior Team (and thence to the Headteacher). Parents will usually be contacted when there is a further rumour.
- It is important that you use your common sense when dealing with hearsay and evaluate the rumour in the light of your own knowledge of the situation and young people concerned.
- An anonymous record of all substance misuse related incidents will be kept centrally by the Headteacher's Secretary.
- Training for tutors involved in Drugs Education through the pastoral programme will be provided.
- The active involvement of parents will be sought.

4. Contact With The Media

Contact with the media should be channelled through the LEA and dealt with by the Headteacher. In the event of any sensitive drug issue, staff should not have direct contact with the media, passing information to the Headteacher to ensure that any reporting is within the best interests of the young people, their families and the school. The following should be noted:-

- Prepare checklist of key facts beforehand;
- If contacted unexpectedly – call back;
- Keep consistent with police comments;
- Do not say more than you want to.
- Do not release information that could be prejudicial;
- Avoid commenting on issues which are outside the school's influence;
- Show the incident is managed efficiently and seriously;
- Do not make off the record comments (there is no such thing as "off the record");
- Be positive wherever possible;
- Treat media inquiries with respect.

Schools need to be aware of the specialised agencies available and this will become easier if local support networks can be formed.

This information has been further explored in "The Right Responses – managing and making policy for drug related incidents in schools" from the Standing Conference On Drug Abuse (SCODA, 1999).

5. Smoking

Information on the effects of legal substances such as tobacco and alcohol is included in the Drugs Education section of the PSHCE programme. However it is important to remember that

- Students are forbidden to bring or consume cigarettes or alcohol at school.
- The site is designated a 'NO SMOKING AREA'

Students found selling cigarettes will face a fixed term exclusion.

6. Drug Incidents Reported to the Police

Wherever possible, the police school liaison officer will respond to the report of a drug incident at school. They will advise the school on the handling and storage of substances found on school premises. If police attendance is delayed, secure the substance in the school safe in the presence of a witness until the police arrive. If the call is urgent and the police school liaison officer is unavailable, a local officer will attend.

The police officer will consult the Headteacher to agree what action should be taken. Ultimately, the investigation of offences under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 is a police responsibility

This range of possible actions is available to the police:-

- Provide advice/support.
- Seize and preserve the substance as evidence;
- Search the individual(s) and/or the school;
- Question anyone suspected of committing an offence or of being a potential witness;
- Deal appropriately with anyone suspected of committing an offence, which may include arrest.

Bedfordshire Police aims to deal sensitively with all incidents in consultation with the Headteacher and in full compliance with The Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 in relation to the involvement of parents or appropriate adults.

For further information, please contact the Police Liaison officer or the Community Action Department (Bedfordshire Police Headquarters, Woburn Road, Bedford MK43 9AX Tel: 01234 842803)

Author / date

Date; October 2008

Review:

Staff Responsible: AT/DS