

DRUG EDUCATION POLICY



FEARNHILL SCHOOL

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Ratified by	
Ratified by Full Governors	
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Signatures: Chair of Governor Headteacher	

Drug Education Policy

This school defines the term 'drug' as:

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

and this therefore includes tobacco, alcohol, solvents, over-the-counter and prescribed medicines as well as illicit substances.

Rationale:

We believe that the purpose of drug education should be to give pupils knowledge, skills and attitudes to appreciate the benefits of a healthy life-style and to relate these to their own actions, both now and in the future.

Set in the broader context of a programme for Personal, Social, Health and Economic education, Citizenship and Science, our drug education 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.

Fundamental to our school's values and practice is the principle of sharing the responsibility for drug education with parents and carers. We strive for effective communication and co-operation.

The possession, use or supply of all non-medical drugs on school premises is unacceptable. The school is legally required to be smoke-free, following changes to legislation (July 2007).

This policy will apply on the school premises and beyond, wherever pupils are within the care of school staff. This includes school trips and educational visits. The school will also have an interest in the health and well-being of the pupils beyond these school boundaries and we would encourage parents and others in the community to adopt the same principles.

Whilst we acknowledge that a number of young people may choose to use or misuse substances, it is important to recognise that the majority of young people are choosing not to do so. We will support their differing needs.

Aims:

We aim to:

- Enable young people to make healthy, informed choices through helping them to increase their knowledge, challenging and exploring attitudes and developing and practising skills.
- Help young people to develop further a sense of self-worth and self-esteem.
- Increase understanding about the implications and possible consequences of drug use and misuse.
- Help young people to distinguish between different substances, consider their use, misuse, benefit and harm.
- Listen to young people's thoughts, feelings and concerns and to ensure that drug education responds to their needs.
- Counter any inaccurate messages and myths which young people may receive about drugs with accurate information.
- Encourage an understanding for those experiencing or likely to experience drug use (including those dependent on medicinal drugs).
- Widen understanding about related health, social and legal issues.
- Enable pupils to identify where help and support can be found, by offering a Common Assessment where appropriate, or signposting to other options.
- Develop as a Health Promoting School.

Systems and Processes

We intend to achieve our aims through:

- A co-ordinated, integrated and consistent approach to the curriculum and to possible drug related incidents.
- An appropriate teaching programme which responds to pupils' needs.
- Clearly defined learning outcomes for lessons and other inputs.
- Reinforcement of key messages at different ages and stages and in different situations.
- Content and teaching approaches which match the needs and maturities of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and / or English as an additional language.
- Involvement of the whole community, including staff, governors, parents/carers, pupils and visitors, in order to promote a united and cohesive approach to substance education and misuse.
- Working in an integrated way with other local professionals.
- Training and support for staff in the planning and implementation of drug education.
- Regular revision of policy and practice.
- Recognising that adults are role models for pupils and committing ourselves to a smoke-free environment; not using alcohol on premises; working in partnership with parents and carers and finding ways to avoid the need for over-the-counter drugs, such as finding a quiet room or corner for headache sufferers.

Planning

Opportunities for drug education will be clearly identified on long, medium and short-term plans.

Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities

In planning drug education for pupils with SEND, our teachers consider a range of responses. For example:

- Additional support given by staff;
- Activities may be differentiated or adapted;
- Programme aspects may need to be emphasised or expanded;
- Revisiting knowledge and skills in different contexts;
- Using strategies to increase access to drug education, such as theatre projects, ICT, school visits and specialist equipment.

Teaching – curriculum, materials and approaches

Drug Education opportunities include:

- Through planned elements of National Curriculum subjects, including Science, Religious Education, History, Drama, Media Studies, Psychology / Sociology or Physical Education / Activity
- Personal Social Health and Economic education lessons
- Pastoral time
- Assemblies
- Through occasional planned visits from school nurse, police officer or other appropriate people/local organisation.
- Through tutor group time
- Through informal curricular / extra-curricular activities

A wide range of teaching approaches is used and we particularly encourage active and accelerated learning methods, which involve children's full participation. Ground rules will be negotiated when appropriate and the sensitivity of the work will be recognised, safeguarding the interests of the pupil and everyone.

The work will be regularly monitored and evaluated by all staff and pupils.

Confidentiality

Some pupils may choose to mention instances of drug use in class or to individual members of the school community. While staff will want to be supportive, they need to follow our Child Protection guidelines and clearly state that they may not be able to guarantee confidentiality.

Working with visitors

We subscribe to the code of practice recommended by the Department for Children, Schools & Families and by the Hertfordshire Drug Education Forum (DEF).

Visitors can make a valuable contribution to drug education provision but do not constitute a comprehensive programme. The rationale for bringing in a visitor must be clear. It must enhance the overall educational experience and must educate rather than sensationalise. It must fit with the stated aims and objectives of our PSHE education, Science curriculum and school drug policy. School staff must always be present and the educational outcomes evaluated. Outside visitors should automatically be offered a copy of the school's drug policy. Further details of visitor involvement can be obtained from www.hertsdef.org.

Liaison between schools, with parents and the wider community

We will work with other schools in the area to develop consistent practices to support young people. This includes paying attention to the needs of young people as they transfer from primary to secondary school. We recognise that this and other aspects of community liaison is an important area to which we can contribute with the support of colleagues throughout CSF, the Police, the local authority and other agencies. Our work is developing. The school ensures that the views of all parents are considered in the planning and delivery of drug education. This school is part of a local community that tries to work with local partners to meet the needs of the local population.

Roles and responsibilities

This policy relates to all members of the school community. All staff have a responsibility for drug education and must be fully aware of this policy and its implications for themselves and for others in the community. Whenever adults interact with children, they recognise that they may be influencing attitudes and behaviour.

All staff should consider themselves as role models whose behaviour the children are likely to notice and often follow. Staff also have a responsibility to know how they should respond to any possible drug related incidents. They will receive training and support in delivering their responsibilities.

Teaching and support staff have a responsibility to contribute to the taught curriculum for drug education. They listen to the pupils and determine their specific needs. These needs are met in specific drug education inputs as well as through a wider programme of personal and social skills development.

The Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team (SLT) have the ultimate responsibility for ensuring that policy and practice in this area are fulfilled, including appropriate curriculum content and response to drug related incidents.

Responses to possible drug related incidents

Our definition of a drug includes medicines (both prescription and OTC), alcohol, tobacco and solvents, and it is therefore important that all aspects of an incident are considered. The needs and circumstances of the pupil are paramount.

We will consider each situation individually and recognise that a variety of actions in response may be necessary to drug related incidents as recommended by CSF and national guidance. (Ref: "*Drugs: Guidance for Schools*" DfES, February 2004).

If the situation leads to a medical emergency the school emergency aid procedures will be followed immediately.

In the absence of a medical emergency, the Headteacher must be informed and an appropriate response considered. We will refer to the Department for Education guidelines on responding to drug related incidents to determine the necessary response. The implications of any action we take will be carefully

considered. **The focus of any response will be the pupil not the substance and we will seek to balance the interests of the individual, other members of the school community and the wider community.**

Should a substance suspected of being illicit be found on the school premises it will be handed to the Headteacher and, in the presence of another member of staff, placed in a sealed container and both signed and dated. It should then be safely stored until it can be collected by a police officer. S/he will also be involved in advising the school on the most appropriate response to the situation. All such incidents will be recorded.

Responses will be cross-referenced with related school policies such as:

- Behaviour for learning
- Health and Safety
- Child Protection
- Educational Visits
- SEN policy

Unless there are exceptional circumstances, we will inform parents/carers or guardians at the earliest opportunity so that we can work together to support the pupil and resolve any difficulties.

The pupil/s will always be told when information is being passed on, in accordance with the school's policy on confidentiality.

Our aim is to enable all pupils to fulfil their potential. We will work with the pupil, their parents / carers and colleagues from other agencies to remove barriers to achievement and resolve any difficulties that exist. Drug related situations will be considered alongside other circumstances in the young person's life and not in isolation. Permanent exclusion, whilst it remains an option, will be used as the very last resort.

Appendix 1: - Sources of support and guidance

We have a range of professional colleagues who can give / obtain advice, support and information in drug or alcohol related situations. These may include:

- The school's Attendance Improvement Officer
- The county PSHE education Advisor
- The county Drug Education Consultant
- A Hertfordshire Healthy Schools Advisor
- The school nurse
- A Youth Connexions Personal Adviser
- The local police Youth Crime Reduction Officer (YCRO) / Police Community Support Officer (PCSO)
- Representatives of the local Youth Offending Team (YOT), whose role include supporting young people at risk of offending
- Local Drug and Alcohol agencies and counselling services
- The FRANK campaign at 0800 77 66 00 or talktofrank.com (to register as a school go to: **www.drugs.gov.uk/campaign**)
- The Chairperson of the Herts Drug Education Forum (DEF)

These colleagues can provide guidance and information, and may be able to help with a needs assessment to support us in developing an appropriate response. This may be through the Common Assessment Framework. Contact details can be found on the DEF website: www.hertsdef.org

Appendix 2: - Compliance with national guidelines and practice

The school aims to always adhere to the guidance from the Hertfordshire County Council Drug Education Guidance document and national guidance, specifically "*Drugs: Guidance for Schools*" (DfES, February 2004) which states:

“Schools should develop a range of responses in line with local protocols and consider all the factors outlined in section 5.3 before determining their response. Given that drug problems rarely occur in isolation, responses may need to take a holistic approach rather than focus solely on drugs.”

Fixed-period exclusion:

“Exclusion should only be considered for serious breaches of the school’s behaviour policy, and should not be imposed without a thorough investigation unless there is an immediate threat to the safety of others in the school or the pupil concerned. It should not be used if alternative solutions have the potential to achieve a change in the pupil’s behaviour and are not detrimental to the whole school community.”

[Section 5.4.6]

Permanent exclusion:

“A decision to exclude a child permanently is a serious one. Permanent exclusion should usually be the final step in the process for dealing with disciplinary offences after a wide range of other strategies have been tried without success. Supplying an illegal drug is a serious breach of school rules and it may be one of the exceptional circumstances where the Headteacher judges that it is appropriate to permanently exclude a pupil, even for a one-off or first-time offence.”

“Where pupils are permanently excluded for supplying an illegal drug, repeated possession and/or use of an illegal drug on school premises, the Secretary of State would not normally expect the governing body or an independent appeal panel to reinstate the pupil.”

[Section 5.4.9]

Appendix 3: - Dealing with substances

Reporting incidents & destroying substances

“National guidance states that schools have no legal obligation to report an incident involving drugs to the police. Nevertheless, not informing the police may prove to be counter-productive for the school and the wider community. The police should, however, be involved in the disposal of suspected illegal drugs. The disposal of any such drug should be in line with local police protocol.”

“It is strongly recommended that staff do not attempt to destroy substances they believe to be illegal drugs, for the following reasons:

- The Environment Protection Act 1990 no longer permits the flushing of drugs into the water system.
- If a person is taken ill, the medical services will need to know what has been taken. If the drugs are destroyed this could seriously hinder treatment.
- If parents/carers wish to appeal against school sanctions, any substance seized may be required to be sent for analysis by their legal representative.
- The substance is evidence and could be used in any future proceedings.”

“In circumstances of straight possession the interests of the pupil should be fully taken to account. In cases of supplying controlled drugs or possessing with intent to supply, there is less discretion and teachers have responsibility to other pupils and the community in general. The police should be informed at an early stage and formal action may be the only appropriate way to deal with the circumstances.”

- *Guidance for partnership working in schools’ (Herts Constabulary June 2010)*

Confiscation of drugs

The school has the power to confiscate inappropriate items, including substances it believes to be legal, in line with the schools Behaviour Policy. The school does not have to return such confiscated substances. As with school discipline and pupil behaviour policies, the Drug Guidance for Schools makes clear that schools may choose not to return an item to the pupil. This includes items of value which the pupil should not have

brought to school or has misused in some way and might – if the school judges this appropriate and reasonable – be stored safely at the school until a responsible family adult can come and retrieve them.

Items which the pupil should not have had in their possession – particularly of an unlawful or hazardous nature – may be given by the school to an external agency for disposal or further action as necessary. This will always be followed by a letter to the parents confirming that this has taken place and the reasons for such an action. Staff are also aware of the protocols surrounding the safe disposal of drug paraphernalia , such as needles, which may be found on the premises. All staff will be made aware of the legal constraints on gathering evidence (including personal searches), and questioning those involved. They will not take action without involving the Headteacher and/or Drug Co-ordinator.

This policy will apply to parents/carers and other visitors to the school.

Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed by governors every three years, or sooner if legislation changes or a particular situation arises that indicates a review is needed to ensure we are following best practice.