

# **BALLYORAN PRIMARY SCHOOL**



## **Drugs Policy**

**Reviewed April 2024**

## **Rationale**

Children and young people are exposed to messages about drug use from an early age. Their exposure to the use and misuse of drugs may come through parents/ guardians, older siblings, friends, television, the media and popular music.

Ballyoran Primary School does not condone the misuse of drugs but recognises that there has been a considerable increase in the abuse of drugs in recent years in Northern Ireland. Drug misuse appears to be affecting an ever-younger population and the so-called 'recreational' use of drugs can lead to a dangerous acceptance of illegal and harmful drug misuse as part of everyday life.

We believe that this school has a vital preventative role to play in combating the misuse of drugs by young people and we therefore include a drugs education programme as part of the statutory curriculum for Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU).

This school sees its role as that of a caring community committed to the physical, mental, social, emotional, moral and spiritual health, safety and wellbeing of our pupils and staff. We want our pupils to make informed and responsible decisions about drugs, by increasing their knowledge and by developing in them appropriate values, attitudes and skills. However, we recognise that drug misuse is a whole community issue and that schools alone cannot solve the problem. The school is only one of a number of groups and agencies which must play a part in the education of young people. We make use of their expertise where possible in the delivery of the programme.

## **Ethos**

In Ballyoran Primary School, the welfare and safety of our pupils is paramount. We feel that our drugs education programme will promote a sense of wellbeing, as well as the safety and security of the pupils and staff within our school.

This policy is based on the guidance provided by the Department of Education for Northern Ireland in the following documents:

- DE Circular 2015/23 Drugs Guidance
- CEA Drugs Guidance for Schools in Northern Ireland (Revised Edition 2015)  
[http://cea.org.uk/sites/default/files/docs/curriculum/area\\_of\\_learning/pdmu/drugs/Drugs\\_Guidance\\_for\\_Schools.pdf](http://cea.org.uk/sites/default/files/docs/curriculum/area_of_learning/pdmu/drugs/Drugs_Guidance_for_Schools.pdf)

Ballyoran Primary School promotes the rights of the child based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child. This policy therefore considers Article 3 which states:

***'The best interests of the child must be a top priority in everything we do.'***

### **Definitions**

For the purpose of this policy, the term **drug** and **substance** include any product that, when taken, has the effect of altering the way the body works or how a person behaves, feels, sees or thinks.

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 medicines;
- 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 marked 'not for human consumption' to avoid prosecution; and
- other substances such as amyl or butyl nitrite (known as poppers) and unprocessed magic mushrooms

\*The term 'legal high' is no longer used as it is misleading. The public perceived that 'legal' meant safe, but as these substances are not regulated there is no way of knowing what chemicals they contain.

### **Aims and Objectives**

- To provide a clear statement of the school's view on drug education.
- To ensure a consistent approach from staff to drug education and in the handling of drug related incidents.
- To safeguard good practice in the future.
- To inform pupils of the effects of drug use and abuse.
- To provide a drug education programme which:

- Develops pupils’ self-esteem and promotes positive attitudes in their relationships with others;
- Gives pupils opportunities to develop the values, skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to make informed and responsible decisions about the use/ misuse of drugs, including tobacco, tobacco related products, alcoholic, e-cigarettes, volatile substances etc. within the context of a healthy lifestyle; and helps pupils develop the skills necessary to assert themselves confidently and resist negative pressures and influences.
- To provide appropriate support and assistance for those pupils affected by drug-related issues.
- To inform parents / guardians of the content of this policy and the procedures to be implemented in the management of incidents of suspected drug misuse.
- To establish an environment in which the school is free from the misuse of all drugs.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **The Role of the Board of Governors**

The Governors will foster and support the development and on-going review of the Drugs Policy and education programme by collaborating with appropriate staff, pupils and parent /carers. They will facilitate the consultative process where the school community can respond and contribute to the effectiveness and quality of the policy and programme, which the governors will examine and approve prior to their implementation in school. They will ensure that the policy is referred to in the school prospectus and reviewed at regular intervals. All governors should be fully aware of and one member will be trained to deal with suspected drug-related incidents and their appropriate disciplinary response.

### **The Principal**

It is the Principal’s responsibility to determine the circumstances of all incidents although it is the responsibility of the PSNI to investigate any criminal or suspected criminal offence. In any suspected drug related incident, the Principal should contact the parents / carers of those pupils involved. The Principal must ensure that in any incident involving a controlled substance there is close liaison with the PSNI. Failure to inform the PSNI of a suspected incident involving controlled drugs is a criminal offence.

After contacting the PSNI, the Principal should confine his responsibilities to:

- the welfare of the pupil(s) involved in the incident and the other pupils in the school;
- health and safety during the handling, storage and safe disposal of any drug or drug-related paraphernalia, using protective gloves at all times;
- informing the Board of Governors;
- agreeing any appropriate pastoral or disciplinary response;
- reporting the incident to the EA if appropriate, for example if an incident:
  - is serious enough to require PSNI involvement;
  - requires that a child protection procedure is invoked; or leads to the suspension or exclusion of a pupil; and
- completing a written report and forwarding a copy to the Board of Governors and the Designated Officer in the EA.

The Principal will act as a contact point for outside agencies that may have to work with the school or with a pupil(s). In the absence of the Principal, the Vice Principal/ Designated Teacher for Child Protection will be available. It is the responsibility of the designated teacher for drugs to take possession of any substance(s) and associated paraphernalia found and complete a factual report.

### **All Staff (teaching and non-teaching)**

Individual staff members are likely to be the first to encounter a suspected drugs related incident. It is not their responsibility to determine the circumstances surrounding the incident. However, they should deal with any emergency procedures, if necessary (see Appendix 1, 3 and 4). Any information, substance or paraphernalia received should be forwarded to the Principal. A brief factual report of the suspected incident should be forwarded to the Principal. This information will be shared with the Safeguarding Team.

### **The Role of Parents / Carers**

All parent / carers should be made aware that the school has a 'Drugs Policy' and how it applies to them and their children. Parents / carers form part of the consultative process through questionnaire.

### **Drugs Education in the Curriculum**

The drugs education programme in Ballyoran Primary School will be included in teachers' planning and will form part of the curricular area of Personal Development and Mutual understanding (PDMU).

It will also be supported by the pastoral care programme and policy throughout the school and will link with other subject areas such as Religious

Educations, health education and PE. When available, the school will use outside agencies to deliver specialised drugs education lessons.

The programme is a preventative one and is pupil centred, delivered through active learning. The aims of the programme are:

- to promote positive attitudes towards personal health;
- to inform pupils of the effects of drug use and abuse;
- to help pupils acquire skills to resist peer pressure;
- to build up the self-esteem of pupils;
- to help pupils acquire decision making and problem-solving skills that will empower them to take responsibility for their own health and safety.

### **Responses in the Event of a Suspected Drugs-related Incident**

Dealing with a suspected incident requires extreme sensitivity on the part of all those involved. All staff should be aware of the procedures for:

- dealing with substances found on the school premises;
- finding / suspecting a pupil / adult of possessing / distributing an illegal substance;
- pupil suspected of having taken drugs in school.

These procedures are outlined in the '***CEA Drugs Guidance for Schools in Northern Ireland (Revised Edition 2015) Section 3: Responding to Drug-related Incidents***'.

### **Illness, Unusual or Uncharacteristic Behaviour**

Young people's behaviour may be unpredictable and bizarre for many reasons during their time at school. Changes in behaviour may indicate a range of difficulties and problems and may be related to a medical condition, rather than substance misuse. It is, however, important to note that intoxication, physical collapse or unconsciousness can also result from initial experiment with drugs.

Staff should bring any indications of illness, unusual or uncharacteristic behaviour because of suspected substance misuse to the attention of the Principal. They should not make any judgement until they have determined the circumstances surrounding the incident.

Where staff believe a pupil may have taken a substance they suspect is a drug, they should seek medical assistance immediately after following the recommended emergency procedures. The school must inform parents and the PSNI.

### **Taking Possession of a Suspected Controlled Drug and / or Associated Paraphernalia**

The law permits school staff to take temporary possession of a substance suspected of being a controlled drug to protect a pupil from harm and prevent the pupils committing the offence of possession. The teacher should, using appropriate safety precautions, take the suspected substance and any associated equipment and/or paraphernalia to the Principal as soon as possible. They should arrange for its safe storage until the school can hand it over to the local PSNI officer to identify whether it is a controlled substance. School staff should not attempt to analyse or taste an unidentified substance. An adult witness should be present when staff confiscate the substance and the school should keep a record of the details using the school's Drug Incident Report form.

### **An Allegation of a Suspected Controlled Drug-related Incident Carrying Out a Search**

If the school suspects pupils of concealing controlled drugs in person or in their personal belongings, staff should make every effort to encourage them to produce these substances voluntarily. Staff should ask pupils to turn out their pockets or schoolbags. If the pupils refuse, staff should contact their parents or carers and the PSNI to deal with the situation.

***A member of staff should never carry out a physical search of a pupil.*** If staff recover a substance or object that they suspect has a connection with drugs, they should take possession of it and make a full record using the schools' Drug Incident Report Form with the Principal.

### **Possession, Possession with Intent to Supply and Supply of Controlled Drugs**

Schools must be aware that pupil involvement in suspected controlled drug-related incidents may take several forms. These could include:

- possession;
- possession with intent to supply; and/or
- the supply of controlled drugs.

It is illegal for pupils to be in possession of a controlled drug. If a member of staff comes across a pupil(s) in possession of what they believe or suspect to be a controlled drug, they should immediately escort the pupil(s) to the Principal who will deal with the incident as outlined in the school policy.

### **Staff Policy on Smoking and Alcohol**

Ballyoran Primary School is a smoke (including e-cigarettes) and alcohol-free zone. For further information refer to the Health and Safety Executive's website ([www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)).

### **Confidentiality**

Should a pupil reveal any personal drugs information, which puts them or any other pupil at risk, this must be passed on to the Designated Teacher / Principal. Confidentiality can never be guaranteed, as we are responsible for all of the pupils in our school.

### **Disciplinary / Pastoral Care Responses**

The Principal will retain responsibility for deciding how to respond to a particular incident and will consider factors such as:

- The age of the pupil
- Does the pupil admit or deny the allegations?
- Is this the first or subsequent offence?
- Is the drug legal or illegal?
- Quantity of the drug involved?
- What was the pupil's motivation?
- Does the pupil know and understand the school policy and school rules?
- Where does the incident appear on a scale from possession of a small quantity to persistent supply?
- If illegal supply is suspected, how much was supplied and was the pupils coerced to buy for others, or is there evidence of organised or habitual supply?

At all times, the needs of individual pupils will be considered and appropriate intervention and support mechanisms will be put in place. Any sanction imposed will be justifiable in terms of:

- the seriousness of the incident;
- the identified needs of the pupil, other pupils and the community;
- consistency with published school rules;
- consistency with disciplinary actions for breaches of the school rules (e.g. theft, violence and bullying).

### **Procedures for Using Outside Agencies**

Any visitor providing an input to the drugs education programmes will be given a copy of the 'Drugs Policy'. They will have a clear set of aims and objectives as well as a lesson plan. The teacher will remain in class with the visitor.

### **Guidance for Confiscation and Storage of Harmful Substances**

Any confiscated drugs or drug-related items should be given to the Principal for storage in a locked cabinet in the principal's office and then given to the PSNI.

### **Guidance on the Administration of Medication in School**

Please refer to the school policy on the Administration of Medications. Medication will only be given on school trips and/or residential trips if the parent/carer has signed a consent form. If the child needs any other medication, he/she will be taken to the nearest hospital.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

This policy will be reviewed every two years and/or after any drug related or suspected drug related incident to see if there are improvements to be made.

# Appendices

## Appendix 1

### Main Types Of Controlled Substances by Class

#### The Misuse of Drugs Act (1971)

Class	Substance	Possession	Supply and production
A	Crack cocaine, cocaine, ecstasy (MDMA), heroin, LSD, magic mushrooms, methadone, methamphetamine (crystal meth)	Up to 7 years in prison, an unlimited fine or both	Up to life in prison, an unlimited fine or both
B	Amphetamines, barbiturates, cannabis, codeine, methylphenidate (Ritalin), synthetic cannabinoids, synthetic cathinones (for example mephedrone or methoxetamine)	Up to 5 years in prison, an unlimited fine or both	Up to 14 years in prison, an unlimited fine or both
C	Anabolic steroids, benzodiazepines (diazepam), gamma hydroxybutyrate (GHB), gamma-butyrolactone (GBL), ketamine, piperazines (BZP)	Up to 2 years in prison, an unlimited fine or both	Up to 14 years in prison, an unlimited fine or both
Temporary class substance*	NBOMe and Benzofuran compounds	None, but police can take away a suspected temporary class substance	Up to 14 years in prison, an unlimited fine or both

[www.gov.uk/penalties-drug-possession-dealing](http://www.gov.uk/penalties-drug-possession-dealing)

Please note the above table refers to some commonly available drugs. It is not a complete list of controlled drugs.

***Individual staff members should:***

- assess the situation and decide the action;
- make the situation safe for all pupils and other members of staff, secure first aid and send for additional staff support, if necessary;
- carefully gather up any drugs and/or associated paraphernalia or evidence and pass all information or evidence to the principal; and
- write a brief factual report of the incident and forward it to the Principal.

***The Designated Teacher/Principal should:***

- respond to the first aider's advice or recommendations;
- inform parents or carers immediately, in the case of an emergency;
- take possession of any substance(s) and associated paraphernalia found;
- take initial responsibility for pupil(s) involved in the suspected incident; and
- complete a Drugs Incident Report Form.

***The Principal should:***

- determine the circumstances surrounding the incident;
- ensure that the following people are informed:
  - Parents or carers;
  - Designated Officer in the local PSNI area;
  - Board of Governors; and
  - Designated Officer in EA.
- consult and agree pastoral and disciplinary responses, including support;
- forward a copy of the Incident Report Form to the Chairperson of the Board of Governors and the Designated Officer in the EA; and
- review procedures and amend, if necessary.

The following guidance can be found in 'CEA Drugs Guidance for Schools in Northern Ireland (Revised Edition 2015)' page 42.

### **What to look out for:**

If someone is having a bad time on drugs, they may be:

- Anxious
- Tense
- Panicky
- Overheated and dehydrated
- Drowsy
- Having difficulty breathing

### **What to do:**

- Stay calm
- Calm the young person and be reassuring, don't scare them or chase after them
- Try to find out what they have taken
- Stay with the young person

If they are anxious, tense or panicky, you should:

- Sit them in a quiet and calm room
- Keep them away from crowds, bright lights and loud noises
- Tell them to take slow deep breaths and
- Stay with them

If they are **really drowsy**, you should:

- Sit them in a quiet place and keep them awake
- If they become unconscious or don't respond, call an ambulance immediately and place them in the recovery position
- Don't scare them, shout at them or shock them
- Don't give them coffee to wake them up and
- Don't put them in a cold shower to 'wake them up'.

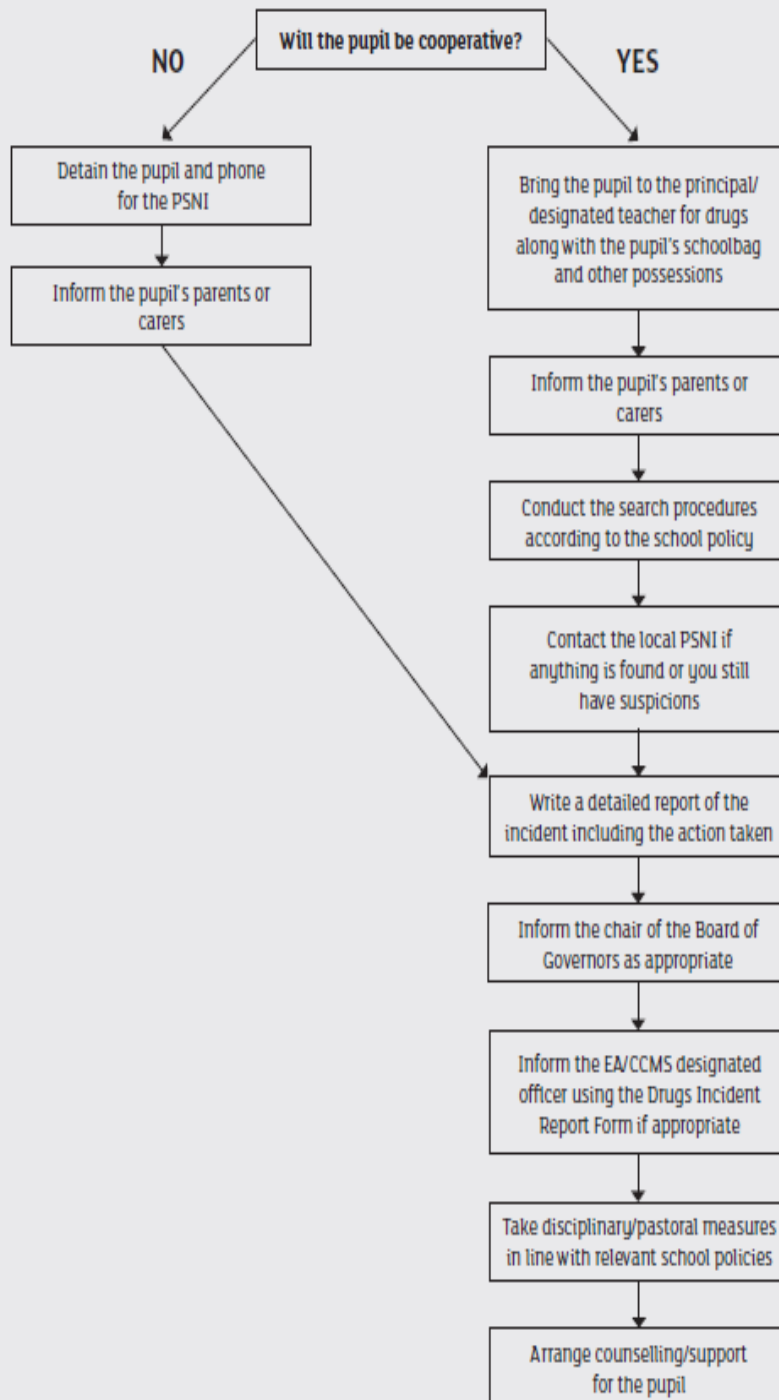
If they are **unconscious** or having difficulty breathing, you should:

- Immediately phone for an ambulance
- Place them in the recovery position
- Stay with them until the ambulance arrives and
- If you know what drug they've taken, tell the ambulance crew; this can help make sure they get the right treatment straight away.

The following forms  
and screenshots are  
taken from:

[https://ccea.org.uk/learning-  
resources/drugs-education-  
revised-guidance](https://ccea.org.uk/learning-resources/drugs-education-revised-guidance)

#### 4.3 Pupil suspected of possessing/distributing an illegal substance



#### 4.5 A parent or carer arrives at school to collect a child and appears to be under the influence of alcohol or another substance

