

St. Comgall's Primary School.



A Policy for Drugs

Last Reviewed January 2019

Drug Policy

Ratified by Board of Governors

Date: _____

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Rationale

For the purpose of this document the term 'drugs' includes tobacco, alcohol, over-the-counter and prescribed medication, volatile substances and controlled drugs. St Comgall's 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 St Comgall's has a vital preventative role to play in combating the misuse of drugs by young people and we therefore include a Drug Education Programme in our curriculum.

St Comgall's Primary 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 drugs problem; the school is only one of a number of groups and agencies which must play a part in the education of young people in and we make use of their expertise where possible in the delivery of the programme.

"There is a public perception that drug misuse is mainly an issue in disadvantaged inner city areas The misuse of drugs and other potentially harmful substances is just as much an issue for young people in rural areas and affluent communities and educationally successful young people are just as likely to put themselves at risk as low attainers". (DENI 2004/9)

All staff (teaching and non-teaching), should familiarise themselves with the information included in this policy and further copies may be obtained from the Designated Teacher for Drugs (Mrs McIntyre)

Copies of the guidance on which this policy is based (Drugs: Guidance for Schools in N. Ireland 2004) are available from the Department of Education website www.deni.gov.uk

Definitions

For the purpose of this document and in line with the guidance issued to all schools by the Department of Education drugs will include any substance which, when taken, has the effect of altering the way the body works or the way a person behaves, feels, sees or thinks.

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

- **alcohol and tobacco;**
- **“over-the-counter” medicines, such as paracetamol;**
- **prescribed drugs, such as antibiotics, tranquillisers, inhalers and Ritalin;**
- **volatile substances, such as correcting fluids/thinner, gas lighter fuel, aerosols, glues and petrol;**
- **controlled drugs, such as cannabis, LSD, Ecstasy, amphetamine sulphate (speed), magic mushrooms (processed), heroin and cocaine; and**
- **other substances such as amyl/butyl nitrite (“poppers”) and unprocessed magic mushrooms.**

Drugs Paraphernalia you may find: -

- Drugs themselves**
- Cigarette papers**
- Pipes, buckets, Bongs and plastic bottles**
- ‘Wraps’, (square folds of paper which contained powder)**
- Cling film, foil and small plastic bags to hold small quantities of drugs**

A drug-related incident includes: –

- **Drug-related litter on or near school premises**
- **Suspicion or allegations made in or out of school**
- **Disclosure of drug misuse taking place**
- **Pupils displaying symptoms of drug misuse**
- **Pupils or adults with drugs on school premises**
- **Pupils or adults taking drugs on school premises**
- **Pupils or adults selling drugs on school premises**

Any of the above whilst on school transport, a school trip, a school minibus or authorised school related activities

The above are just examples and are not an exhaustive list.

Roles and Responsibilities

Pupils

- Be aware of and adhere to school rules in relation to drug use/misuse, including tobacco, alcohol, over-the-counter and prescribed medication, volatile substances and controlled drugs.

All staff (teaching and non-teaching)

- Be alert to the possibility of drug use/misuse.
- Be familiar with the school's procedures in the handling of suspected drug-related incidents.
- It is not the responsibility of the individual staff member to investigate the circumstances surrounding an incident, however he/she should deal with any emergency procedures if necessary.
- Any information, substance or paraphernalia received should be forwarded to the designated teacher for drugs who may have to take immediate action.

Teachers delivering the Drug Education programme

In addition to the above:

- Deliver the school's drug education programme.
- Try to create an atmosphere in the classroom in which pupils can freely contribute to discussion, safe in the knowledge that the comments, ideas and feelings of the group are valued.
- Support pupils in their class if necessary.
- Liaise with the designated teacher for drugs regarding any aspect of the programme/policy, as necessary.

The Designated Teacher for Drugs (Mrs McIntyre)

- Ensure that all staff and parents are aware of and have access to a copy of the policy. (website)
- Have oversight and co-ordination of the planning of curricular provision in compliance with the statutory requirements including periodic update and review of the policy.
- Liaise with other staff responsible for pastoral care in coordinating the delivery of the drug education programme.
- Co-ordinate training and induction of all staff in the procedures for dealing with incidents of suspected drug misuse.
- Be responsible for coordinating the school's procedures for dealing with incidents of suspected drug misuse.
- Determine the circumstances surrounding the incident
 - Complete a suspected incident report form and forward to principal.

- Ensure the engagement and active participation of parents in all aspects of drug education.
- Act as the point of contact for outside agencies working with the school.

The Principal

- Ensure that members of the Board of Governors have been consulted on and ratified the policy.

In the case of incidents of suspected drug misuse:

- Ensure the welfare and wellbeing of the pupil(s) involved in the incident and the rest of the school community.
- Ensure that the following people are informed (where relevant):

- * Parents/Guardians
- * PSNI - preferably the Community and Schools Involvement Officer (CSIO)
- * Board of Governors
- * Designated Officer in EA/CCMS
- * Members of staff
- * Other pupils and parents informed within the confines of confidentiality
 - Agree, in consultation with the Board of Governors, appropriate pastoral and disciplinary responses in relation to the incident, including counseling services/support.
 - Retain written records of the incident and ensuring a copy of the reports are submitted to Board of Governors, EA/CCMS as appropriate.
 - Review procedures and amend.

The Board of Governors

- Examine and approve the completed policy and education programme, prior to their implementation in the school.
- Ensure the policy is published in the school prospectus and that it is reviewed at regular intervals.
- Be fully aware of and adequately trained to deal with suspected incidents of drug misuse, including tobacco and alcohol, and their appropriate disciplinary response.
- Agree in consultation with the principal appropriate pastoral and disciplinary responses in relation to suspected drug related incidents.

It is recommended that there should be a designated Governor to work with the principal and designated teacher for drugs in relation to drug related issues. In this case at St. Comgall's it will be our Child Protection Governor.

Parents/Guardians

- **Support your son/daughter if they have become involved with drugs.**
- **Support the school in the development and implementation of this policy, including the school's procedures for handling incidents of suspected drug misuse and the drug education programme.**

The Building Supervisor- Mr. McDonnell

- **Be vigilant around and conduct regular checks of school grounds for drug-related paraphernalia. Inform the designated teacher for drugs should any be found.**
- **Ensure the safe storage, handling and disposal of potentially harmful substances such as solvents and cleaning fluids.**

Training and Information

All staff (teaching and non-teaching) and Governors will be provided with training to support the full implementation of this policy including the delivery of the drug education programme (Information awareness sessions will be offered to parents/guardians).

The Drugs Education Programme

The drug education programme in St Comgall's Primary School is just one part of the whole school response to drug use/misuse. The programme provides opportunities for pupils to:

- acquire knowledge and understanding in relation to drug use/misuse;
- identify values and attitudes in relation to drug use/misuse;
- develop skills to enable them to consider the effects of drugs on themselves and others; and
- make informed and responsible choices within the context of a healthy lifestyle.

(This will be a rolling programme which is generic. For now, we have PSNI community Liaisons working within the school on these issues. See publications Pathways to Life and Drugs Awareness Guidance in Schools documents DENI)

Procedures for dealing with suspected drug related incidents

Fundamental to dealing with incidents of suspected drug misuse is the principle of '*in loco parentis*', and St Comgall's Primary School will always take the steps that would reasonably be expected of any parent to safeguard the wellbeing and safety of all the pupils in their charge.

The following headings need to be addressed when procedures for handling drug-related incidents are being developed:

- *Outline the school rules with regards to drugs, including tobacco, alcohol, over-the-counter and prescribed medication, volatile substances and controlled drugs.*
- *Outline legal responsibilities of all staff and the involvement of the police.*
- *Outline the procedures for responding consistently to any incidents of suspected drug use/misuse.*
- *Outline the emergency First Aid procedures for incidents of suspected drug misuse (see First Aid Policy).*
- *Make explicit the school's position in relation to the issues of searching, detaining and confidentiality.*
- *Describe the range of pastoral and disciplinary responses that may be put in place, ensuring that the responses match the needs and seriousness of the situation. Every incident should be dealt with on its own merit (a graded response addressed within the Discipline Policy).*
- *Identify support strategies and/or services which are available to young people, staff and families. The Pastoral Support for pupils and their families will be contained within our Pastoral Care Policy.*

Within our school, we will consider and develop all these issues as the process of consultation develops with staff and interested parties within the school (beginning with SLT).

The school will at all times give careful consideration as to how any information relating to an incident of suspected/confirmed drug use/misuse is communicated to staff, pupils and parents/guardians.

The parents/guardians of the pupil(s) directly involved in an incident of suspected drug use/misuse will be informed of the incident recognizing that the future of a child or adult can be adversely affected. Confidentiality is of paramount importance in drug related incidents and subsequent outcomes.

Dealing with the Media

If the school receives an enquiry from the media the caller will only be referred to the principal or, in the absence of the principal, a designated nominee.

When responding to the media the privacy of the pupil(s), his/her family and/or any staff members will be respected at all times.

Monitoring and evaluation

St Comgall's Primary School will ensure that procedures are put in place to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of all aspects of this policy. Information will be regularly collected from pupils and staff as part of the monitoring process, and this will then be evaluated against the aims and objectives of the policy at appropriate intervals.

The following issues need to be addressed:

- *What exactly is to be monitored/evaluated?*
- *How precisely will this be monitored/evaluated?*
- *When will monitoring/evaluation happen?*
- *By whom will the monitoring/evaluation be undertaken?*
- *Implications of the outcomes e.g. review of policy, including changes to the drug education programme.*
- *Action to be taken.*
- *Links to other school Policies/Guidelines It may be appropriate to refer to other specified school policies e.g. Behaviour Management/Discipline Policy, Pastoral Care Policy, Guidelines for administering prescribed medication etc. where they have a direct impact on the school's drug policy.*

Communication and Dissemination of Policy

(It is a statutory requirement for schools to include a description of their drug policy in their prospectus)

CHECKLIST FOR HANDLING DRUG INCIDENTS IN SCHOOLS

This is a guide on the key procedures to undertake when a drug incident occurs in schools.

1. Ensure the safety of the individual pupil involved, of other pupils, yourself and other staff. On finding a situation with a suspected substance: -

- Get help immediately from another adult
- Assess situation, to see if this is a life-threatening situation or no

If an emergency: -

- If necessary, contact an ambulance
- Put person under the influence of the drugs in the recovery position
- Ensure airways are cleared
- Remove any other bystanders from the immediate vicinity

Then in all cases: -

- Carefully gather up any drugs / paraphernalia / evidence lying around and keep safely
- Ascertain which substances / drugs have been taken and how much
- Secure all drugs and paraphernalia and give to the Principal / Designated teacher immediately, and lock them away
- Contact the parents as soon as possible

2. Ensure all incidents are properly investigated and recorded: -

- Never accuse pupils of drug dealing/possession, these are alleged illicit substances until substantiated by the PSNI
- Conduct search procedures according to school policy. (Never search personal belongings without permission. It is okay to search school property such as lockers, cupboards or desks)
- Ensure all drugs are safely and securely stored or destroyed, making sure that this is witnessed by another adult and recorded
- Gather details and data from all the eye-witnesses at the scene
- All statements and phone calls should be recorded, signed and dated
- Record all information on official incident form and sign and date, or ensure accurate details are given to whoever is writing the form and co-sign
- Ensure the EA incident form is filled in and returned to the Advisor for Pastoral Care (and CCMS documentation if appropriate)
- Ensure that you follow all the procedures in your Schools Drugs Policy

3. Ensure appropriate individuals and agencies are informed and contacted as needed: -

- Principal and Designated drug teacher
- Parents / Guardians
- PSNI (CSIO or Uniform Branch)
- EA Pastoral Care Advisor (and CCMS if appropriate)
- Chairperson initially and subsequently the Board of Governors
- The Education Welfare Officer
- No media statements, only the Principal should do this
- Other pupils, parents and staff are only told on a need-to-know basis

A pastoral / disciplinary response needs to be made by the school, balancing the need for compassion and the pupil's welfare with the need to send a clear message about illegal actions and behaviour and the impact on the school community.