

TOBERMORE PRIMARY SCHOOL



DRUGS POLICY

Date Reviewed: November 2021

Due for Review: November 2023

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.

Tobermore 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 several groups and agencies which must play a part in the education of young people, and we make use of their expertise where possible in the delivery of the programme.

Ethos

In Tobermore Primary School the welfare and safety of our pupils is paramount. We feel that our drugs education programme will promote that sense of wellbeing, as well as the safety and security of the pupils 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://ccea.org.uk/sites/default/files/docs/curriculum/area_of_learning/pdmu/drugs/Drugs_Guidance_for_Schools.pdf

Tobermore Primary School promotes the rights of the child based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child. This policy therefore takes into account 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, ecigarettes, 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 school governors have responsibility for Tobermore Primary School and 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 / careers. 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, but 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 her 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 Designated Teacher for Drugs: -

The duties of the designated teacher will include the oversight and co-ordination of the planning of curricular provision, in compliance with the statutory requirements and liaison with other staff responsible for pastoral care.

The designated teacher is responsible for the co-ordination for the school's procedures for handling suspected drugs-related incidents and the training and induction of these procedures with new and existing staff.

The designated teacher 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 designated teacher a deputy 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 designated teacher for drugs. A brief factual report of the suspected incident should be forwarded to the designated teacher for drugs.

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.

Drugs Education in the Curriculum/Preventative Curriculum: -

The drugs education programme in Tobermore Primary School will be included in teachers' planning and will form part of the curricular area of Personal Development and Mutual understanding (PDMU). Within PDMU our school follows the Living Learning Together Programme from P1-P7. 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 the PSNI to deliver specialised drugs education lessons. School assemblies and outside agencies and charities are used to promote health and wellbeing.

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 designated teacher for drugs. 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 designated teacher for drugs 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 designated teacher for drugs receives an allegation of possession, he/ she may need to search a pupil's desk or belongings, if he has cause to believe it contains unlawful items, including controlled drugs. However, teachers cannot search personal belongings without consent. Staff should only search the pupil's personal belongings, including school bag, coat and other items with the pupil's consent. Staff should carry out this search in the presence of the pupil and another adult witness.

If the school suspects pupils of concealing controlled drugs on their 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, unless there is compelling evidence that the pupil has committed an offence. 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.

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 attempt to take possession of the substance and escort the pupil(s) to the designated teacher for drugs who will deal with the incident as outlined in the school policy.

Staff Policy on Smoking and Alcohol

Tobermore 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). A no smoking sign is displayed on the school pillar at the school gate.

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 take into account 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 into 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 (eg 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 view these to ensure they are appropriate and 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 residentials 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.

Appendix 1

Managing an Incident

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 designated teacher for drugs; and
- write a brief factual report of the incident and forward it to the designated teacher for drugs.

The designated teacher for drugs 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;
- inform the principal;
- take initial responsibility for pupil(s) involved in the suspected incident; and
- complete a Drugs Incident Report Form and forward it to the principal.

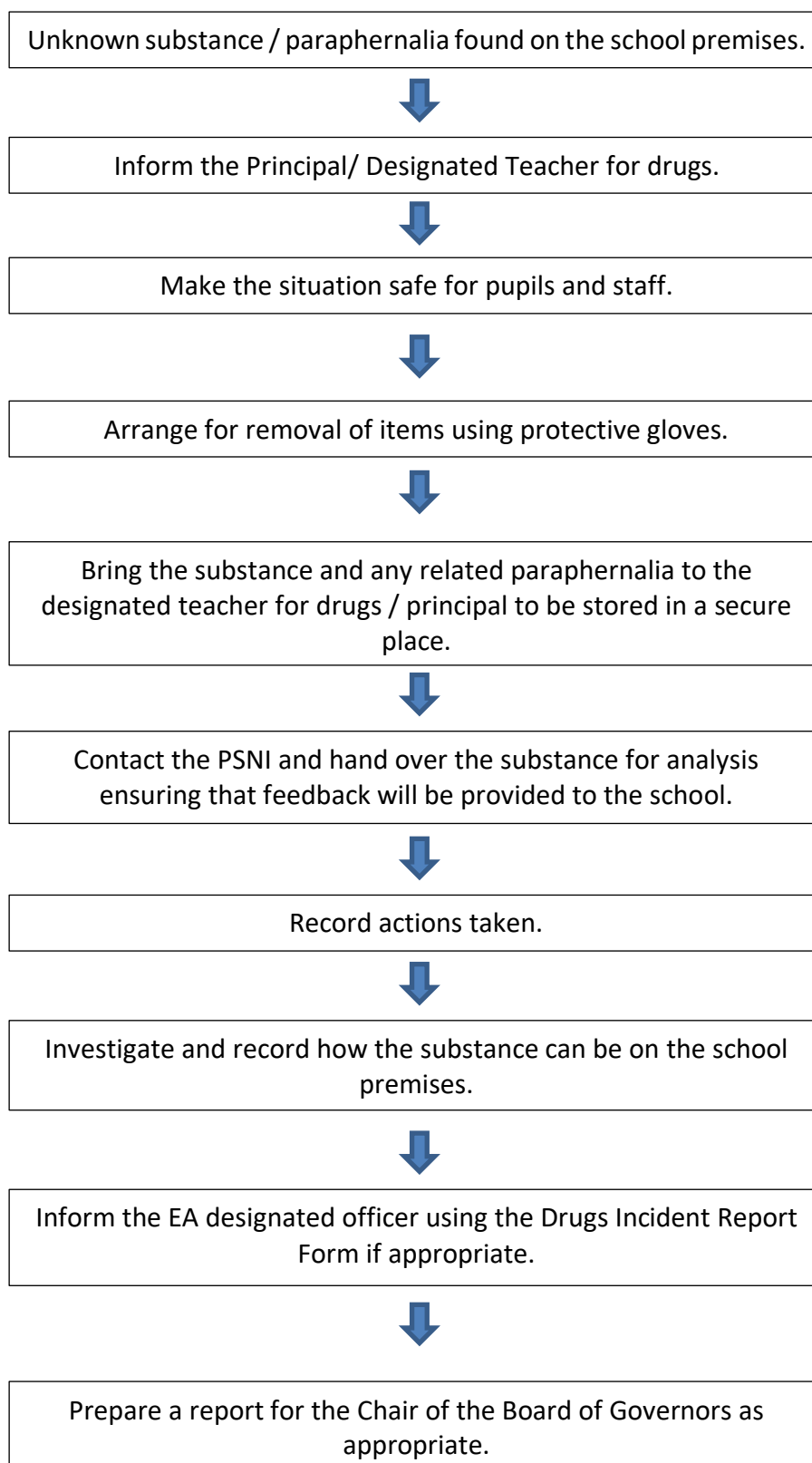
The principal should:

- 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.

Appendix 2

Handling Drug-Related Incidents

Finding a suspected substance or drug-related paraphernalia on or close to the school premises.



Appendix 3

Recognising Signs of Substance Abuse

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:

The first things you should do are:

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

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.

Appendix 4

Emergency Procedures

The following guidance can be found in 'CEA Drugs Guidance for Schools in Northern Ireland (Revised Edition 2015)' page 44.

This is the current best advice on what to do if someone is in difficulty because of misusing drugs.

- It is important to find out what they have taken as this could affect emergency aid, for example, it will help the ambulance crew. Loosen clothing and call for an ambulance immediately.
- If the person has taken a depressant substance, for example solvents, alcohol, sleeping pills or painkillers, it is likely that they will be drowsy or unconscious. If the person is drowsy, it is important to try to keep them awake by talking to them or applying a cool damp cloth or towel to the back of their neck. You should not give them anything to eat or drink as this could lead to vomiting or choking.
- If they are or become unconscious, put them into the recovery position, clear their airway if blocked and keep checking on any changes to pulse and breathing rates.
- If they stop breathing, begin mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, starting with chest compressions. (If you have not been trained in CPR or are worried about giving mouth-to-mouth resuscitation to a stranger, you can do chest compressions only (or hands-only) CPR).
- Stay with the person until the ambulance crew arrive and then tell them all the facts, including what the person has taken. This is very important as it could save his or her life.
- If the person has taken a stimulant, such as amphetamines (speed) or ecstasy, they may show various signs of distress. If the person is panicking, try to reassure them. It is important that they calm down and relax. Get them to breathe in and out, deeply and slowly. Help them by counting aloud slowly. If they start to hyperventilate – that is they can't control their breathing – ask them to breathe in and out of a paper (not plastic) bag, if there is one available.
- If the person has taken a hallucinogen, such as LSD, magic mushrooms or cannabis in combination with ecstasy, they may become very anxious, distressed and fearful. They may act in an unusual way. It is very important to reassure the person – tell them that you will look after them, that they are in no danger, that it is the effects of the substance and that these will soon wear off. You may want to take them to a quiet place, keep other people away and continue to reassure them. Just stay with them and talk calmly to them until the ambulance arrives.

Appendix 5

Drugs Incident Report Form

Pupil Details Name, Address, DOB	
Incident Details Date, Time, Location	
Reported by:	
First Aid Given: Yes/ No Administered By:	
Ambulance / Doctor called: YES / NO Time of Call	
Parent / Carer informed: YES / NO Date/ Time	
Where substance(s) retained:	
Date passed to PSNI:	
PSNI Informed: YES / NO Date/ Time	
Education Authority Designated Officer informed: YES / NO Name of EA Officer: Date/ Time:	
Form Completed by: Position: Date	
Description of the Incident:	
Actions taken:	
Incident form completed by:	Signed: _____ Date: _____
Countersigned by School Principal:	Signed: _____ Date: _____