

RATHMORE GRAMMAR SCHOOL

DRUGS POLICY

Value Statement

This policy has been created by the Board of Governors of the school following consultation with pupils, parents and staff. Through it the school seeks to create a safe and caring environment for all pupils and staff. It recognises that drug misuse is a whole-community issue and the school, together with families and other agencies, must play a part in the education of young people. The school realises that drug abuse by its very nature is contrary to the values upheld in its Mission Statement and, if it becomes aware that any pupil is exposed to the risks of drug misuse, will take immediate action.

Rationale

This policy is part of a holistic approach to the development and well-being of the child, recognising that knowledge alone will not change behaviour but taken in context, an effective pastoral programme can shape attitudes, values and aspirations that bring about resilience in young people. The school's Pastoral Care strives to develop the pupils' sense of school connectedness and their ability to assess risk thereby providing pupils with the protective factors required to help them make healthier life choices.

According to Drugs: Guidance for Schools in Northern Ireland (CCEA, Revised Edition 2015), 'In today's society, most people will be exposed to and/or use some sort of drug at some time in their lives. Substance misuse affects all communities in Northern Ireland, crossing gender, cultural and social boundaries. No school, parent or carer can afford to be complacent or think that children and young people are not at risk.'

Research continues to show that by post-primary school age a significant number of young people are engaging with substances such as alcohol, cigarettes, including electronic cigarettes, solvents and/or have misused prescribed medicines or other substances.'

Links to Other School Policies

The policy is linked to other pastoral and curriculum policies and, like them, seeks to create a safe and caring environment in which all pupils are given the opportunity to develop to their full potential.

- Pastoral Care;
- Positive Behaviour;
- Child Protection;
- Anti-Bullying;
- Curriculum;
- First-Aid.

Definition

In line with Drugs Guidance for Schools in Northern Ireland (2015), the terms **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.

Drug Misuse: refers to legal, illegal or illicit drug taking or alcohol consumption, which leads a person to experience social, psychological, physical or legal problems related to intoxication or regular excessive consumption and/or dependence. Drug misuse is therefore, taking drugs, including prescribed drugs and NPS (new psychoactive substances, formally known as legal highs), that cause harm to the individual, their significant 'others' or the wider community.

Aims of the Policy

- to ensure understanding of what constitutes drug misuse and abuse;
- to protect all pupils from misuse and abuse;
- to ensure that pupils, staff and parents are aware of the school's drug education policy;
- to create an environment where pupils feel safe to disclose matters relating to drug misuse and abuse;
- to establish procedures for managing specific instances of drug misuse and abuse;
- to enable pupils to develop their life skills, enhancing their ability to adopt safer behaviours and perceive the risks associated with lifestyle choices.

Roles and Responsibilities

In exercising the school's responsibilities for child protection and pastoral care, the Drugs Education Policy will have regard to any regulations/guidelines issued by the Department of Education (DENI) and the Education Authority (EA) and will cooperate with the relevant statutory agencies in relation to the protection of individual pupils.

The policy covers all pupils up to and including the age of eighteen. In it the:

- 'Designated Teacher' refers in the first instance to the Vice Principal responsible for Pastoral Care and Discipline who is the school's designated teacher for child protection, currently Mrs McKeogh, but also covers, in the event that she is absent or otherwise unavailable, Miss Miskelly and/or Dr Donnelly who are the school's deputy designated teachers;

- 'parent' includes a guardian and every person who has actual custody of the child;
- 'Principal' includes, where the Principal is absent or otherwise unavailable, the Vice Principal or other person for the time being performing the duties of Principal;
- 'staff' includes teachers, support staff, peripatetic Music staff and sports coaches;
- 'other personnel' includes members of the contract staff (cleaning and catering) who work in school.

All Staff

In accordance with Drugs: Guidance for Schools in Northern Ireland (CCEA, Revised Edition 2015), all staff (teaching and non-teaching) should be familiar through INSET training with the content of the school's Drugs Policy. They should also be aware of their legal responsibilities and the school procedures, should a suspected drug-related incident occur. They should know who to contact and what to do when a student is suspected either of being in possession of drugs or being under the influence of drugs, including alcohol. It is not the member of staff's responsibility to determine the circumstances surrounding the incident but he/she should:

- assess the situation and decide on the appropriate actions to take;
- notify the Principal/Designated Teacher for Drugs at the earliest opportunity;
- deal with any emergency procedures to ensure the safety of students and staff;
- forward any information, substance or paraphernalia received to the Designated Teacher for Drugs;
- write a brief factual report on the suspected drug related incident and forward this to the Designated Teacher for Drugs.

Staff must be aware of the legal implications of:

- receiving information about a controlled drug;
- discovering a student in possession of a controlled drug;
- discovering a student is involved in supplying a controlled drug.

Designated Teacher

The Designated Teacher is responsible for:

- responding to advice from first-aiders, in the event of an incident;
- informing the Principal, who should contact the student's parent(s) immediately;
- training and inducting new and existing staff in these procedures;
- being the contact point for outside agencies that may have to work with the school or with the student(s) concerned;

- taking possession of any substance(s) and associated paraphernalia found in a suspected drug related incident;
- dealing with the student/students involved in a suspected drug related incident;
- completing the Incident Report, which she forwards to the Principal.

The Principal

The Principal is responsible for:

- determining the circumstances of all incidents;
- contacting the parent(s) of those students involved in any suspected drug-related incident;
- liaising with the PSNI with regards to any incident involving a controlled substance;
- ensuring the welfare of the student(s) involved in the incident and the other students 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, reporting the incident to the Education Authority, if appropriate;
- deciding any pastoral or disciplinary response.

Action to Prevent and Deal with Suspected Drug Abuse and Misuse

Drugs Education in the Curriculum

The Pastoral Care programme promotes the overall development and welfare of all pupils and seeks to ensure that they are protected from harm. It incorporates personal, social and health education and provides pupils with opportunities to develop self-confidence and personal life skills. It contributes to the creation of a supportive atmosphere in which pupils are encouraged to share any concerns they may have with their tutor, class teacher, Year Head, Vice Principal, Principal or any member of staff.

Drug and Alcohol Awareness Education will be promoted through a Life Skills Training Programme delivered through the Pastoral Programme, Assemblies and Outside

Agencies. Pupils will explore related themes on personal health and well-being across the curriculum including English, Drama, Home Economics, Science, PE and Religious Education.

Procedures for Managing Suspected Drugs Related Incidents

A drug-related incident, whether in school, travelling to and from school or on a school-related activity, may include:

- a student displaying unusual or uncharacteristic behaviour;
- an allegation;
- suspicion of possession;
- finding substance-related paraphernalia.
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Appendix 1	The procedure for ensuring pupil and staff safety when a pupil is suspected of having taken drugs or alcohol.
Appendix 2	As outlined in Appendix 2, the procedure for ensuring pupil and staff safety when a pupil is suspected of being in possession of drugs or alcohol or when an illegal substance is found.

Confidentiality

The school will explain to pupils that they can never guarantee confidentiality and will pass on any information about suspected criminal activity associated with drugs to the designated teacher, PSNI and the Education Authority.

Pastoral and Disciplinary Responses

During and after any incident, the school will consider the individual needs of any student involved. Where appropriate, this may involve discussion with the student, his/her parent(s), a PSNI officer, the Designated Teacher for Drugs and appropriate pastoral care staff. A referral to counselling or a referral pathway to specific support agencies may be part of a pastoral care response.

In all cases, the Principal, having taken account of various factors, reserves the right to apply what she considers to be the most appropriate sanctions in relation to any incident/behaviour which is deemed unacceptable. The sanctions outlined below apply to a student who is on school premises, travelling to and/or from the school and/or engaged in authorised school-related activities.

- Any pupil found to be in possession of and/or possession with the intent to supply or under the influence of a controlled drug/new psychoactive substances

will be suspended. The PSNI will be notified and he/she will be recommended for immediate expulsion.

- Any student found to be in possession of or under the influence of alcohol, cigarettes or electronic cigarettes will be suspended. He/she may be recommended for expulsion.

Training for Staff, Volunteers and Other Personnel

The school will provide staff with training on:

- Implementation of the school's Drugs Education Policy;
- How to respond to a suspected drug related incident;
- Life Skills training for all teaching staff to facilitate the delivery of the Drugs and Alcohol Education programme.

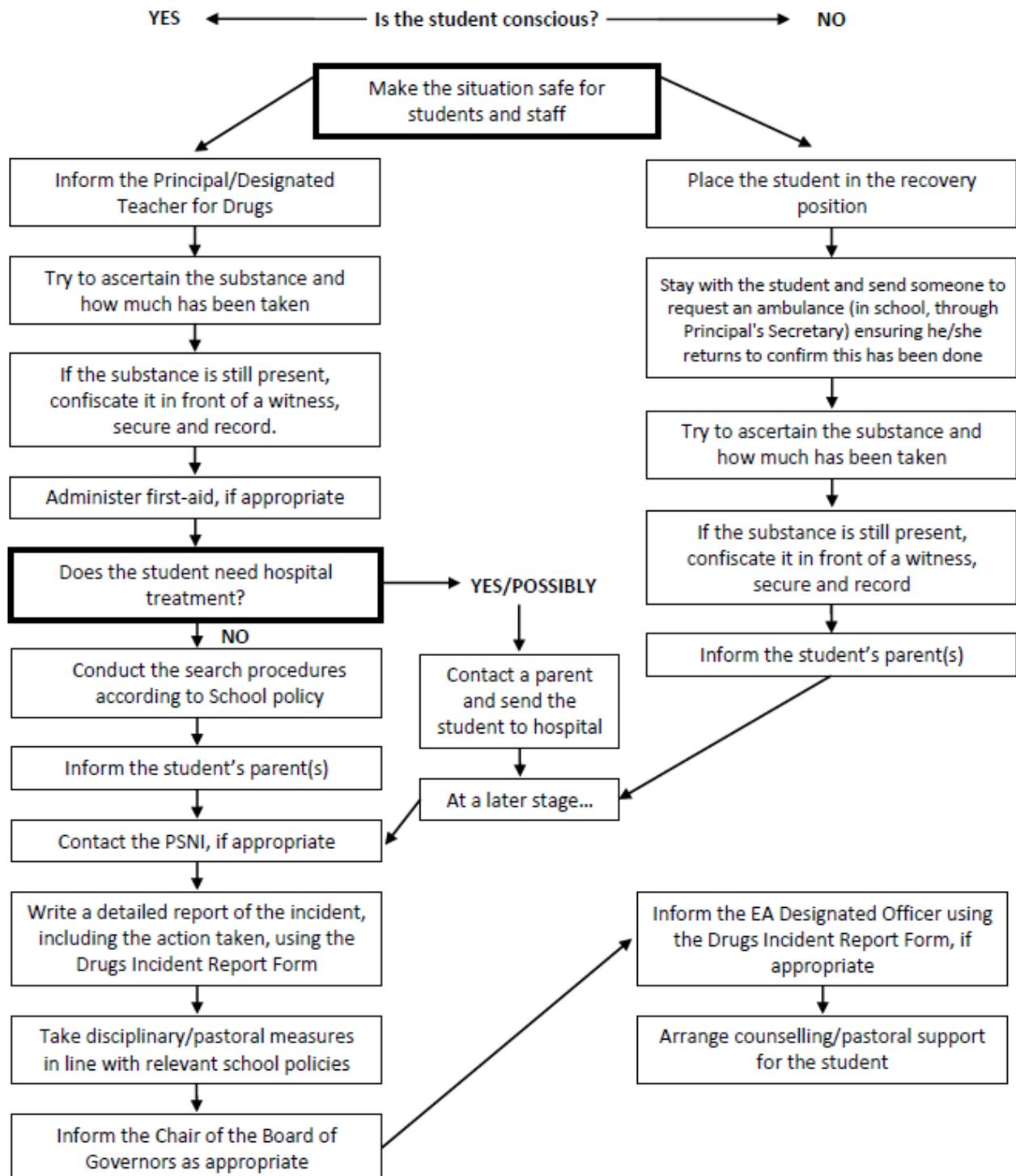
The school will also provide training to the Board of Governors and provide information for parents/carers.

Monitoring and Review of Policy

The Board of Governors will keep this policy under review and monitor its implementation.

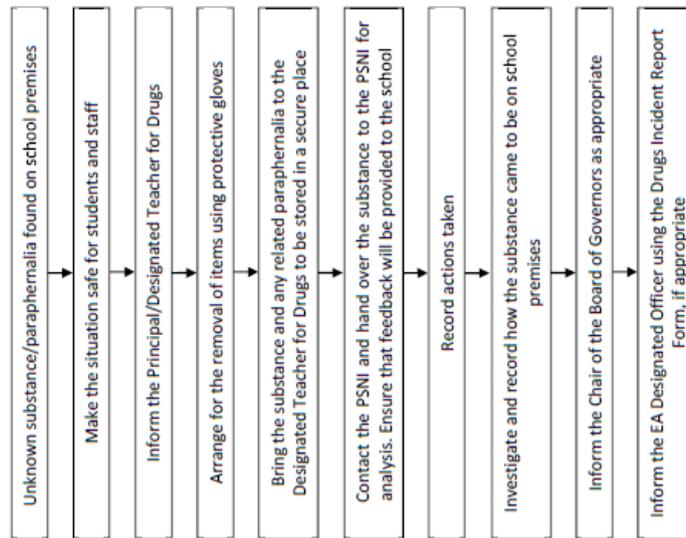
Appendix 1

Student suspected of having taken drugs/alcohol on school premises, when travelling to and/or from the school and/or when engaged in authorised school-



related activities.

Procedures for dealing with suspected possession/ distribution of Illegal Substance



Appendix 2

Procedures for dealing discovery of an Illegal Substance

