

Substance Misuse Education Policy

Aims and objectives

There is a public perception that drug misuse is mainly an issue in disadvantaged inner-city areas. Drug misuse is just as much an issue in rural areas and affluent communities: it extends across socio-economic, geographical and cultural boundaries. Educationally successful young people are just as likely to put themselves at risk as low attainers. This is why we believe our policy in this area should be robust.

We aim to equip children with the knowledge, understanding and skills that enable them to make the sort of choices that lead to a healthy lifestyle. Our substance misuse education programme has the primary objective of helping children to become more confident and responsible young people. We teach children about the dangers to health posed by substance misuse, and we aim to equip them with the social skills that enable them to make informed moral and social decisions in relation to drugs and other substances in society. We also recognise that we have a duty for all stakeholders to be role models, therefore this policy also covers issues regarding substance misuse instances for all stakeholders.

The objectives of our substance misuse education programme are:

- to provide children with knowledge and information about legal and illegal drugs/substances and the harmful effects they can have on people's lives;
- to enable children to discuss moral questions related to substance misuse, and so provide a safe environment for young people to share their thoughts and ideas;
- to help children become more self-confident so that they are able to make sensible and informed decisions about their lives;
- to let children know what they should do if they come across substance misuse, or are aware of other people misusing substances;
- to help children respect their own bodies and, in so doing, reduce the likelihood that they will be persuaded to become involved in substance misuse;
- to show that substance misuse is a moral issue, and that choices about use of substances are moral choices;
- to ensure that all children are taught about substance misuse in a consistent manner, following guidelines that have been agreed by parents, governors and staff.

Definitions

Substances that should not be in school include those which, when taken, have the effect of altering the way the body works or the way a person behaves, feels, sees or thinks. These include:

- ***alcohol and tobacco (including E-cigs);***
- ***over-the-counter medication unless with parental permission and correct administration documentation;***
- ***Volatile substances, such as correcting fluid/thinner, gas lighter fuel, aerosols, glues and petrol;***
- ***Controlled drugs, such as cannabis, LSD, Ecstasy amphetamine sulphate (speed), magic mushrooms (processed), legal highs, heroin and cocaine***
- ***Other substances such as amyl/butyl nitrite (poppers) and unprocessed magic mushrooms.***

Organisation

We regard substance misuse education as a whole-school issue, and we believe that opportunities to teach about the importance of living a healthy lifestyle occur throughout the curriculum. Each class teacher answers questions about substances (including medicines) sensitively and appropriately, as they occur. In circle-time sessions we encourage children to discuss issues that are important to them, and we help children to be aware of the dangers of the misuse of substances. For example, if a child raises the issue of smoking, the teacher takes time to discuss its harmful effects with the whole class. In science lessons we teach children what different substances are, and how drugs are used in medicine. We also teach them the difference between legal and illegal substances.

The role of the Executive Headteacher

It is the responsibility of the Executive Headteacher to ensure that staff and parents are informed about this substance misuse education policy, and that the policy is implemented effectively. It is also the Executive Headteacher's role to ensure that staff are given sufficient training, so that they can teach effectively and handle any difficult issues with sensitivity.

The Executive Headteacher will liaise with external agencies regarding the school substance misuse education programme and ensure that all adults who work with children on these issues are aware of the school policy and work within this framework. The Executive Headteacher will monitor the policy and report to governors, when requested, on the effectiveness of the policy.

The role of governors

The governing body has the responsibility of setting down these general guidelines on substance misuse awareness. The governors will support the Executive Headteacher in following these guidelines. Governors will inform and consult with parents about the substance misuse education policy. Governors will also liaise with the LEA and health organisations so that the school's policy is in line with the best advice available.

The role of parents

The school is well aware that the primary role in children's substance misuse education lies with parents. We wish to build a positive and supporting relationship with the parents of children at our school through mutual understanding, trust and co-operation. In promoting this objective we will:

- inform parents about the school substance misuse education policy and practice;
- answer any questions parents may have about the substance misuse education their child receives in school;
- take seriously any issue which parents raise with teachers or governors about this policy or the arrangements for substance misuse education in the school;
- encourage parents to be involved in reviewing the school policy and making modifications to it as necessary;
- inform parents about the best practice known with regard to substance misuse so that the parents can support the key messages being given to children at school.

Management of Substance Misuse Incidents

It is the policy of the Unity that any substance misuse incident will be taken extremely seriously and should be dealt with immediately with the Executive Headteacher and/or Head

of School made aware. Appropriate medical advice should also be sought and a record of all decisions made in line with our Critical Incident protocols.

Substance Misuse (Staff)

Any substance misuse incident involving a member of staff should follow the Whistleblowing Policy and the Executive Headteacher will then take advice and follow the Disciplinary Policy as appropriate.

Substance Misuse (Parents and Carers)

Any substance misuse incident involving a parent or carer should be followed up with a referral to the Designated Safeguarding Lead who will then decide the course of action that should be followed.

Substance Misuse (Pupils)

Where a pupil has been discovered dealing or deliberately misusing substances, a full record should be kept and a decision regarding the pupil made in line with our Behaviour Policy with further reference to the latest Exclusion guidance where necessary. Contact with the parents should be made and further professional advice also sought. The pupil concerned must be isolated in the first instance for observation and also to ascertain the nature of the issue before further action is taken.

Substance Misuse (Discovery)

Where unidentified substances are found in school, pupils should be cleared away from the area and questioned by a member of staff about where they saw it and if anyone has taken anything. If they have, appropriate medical advice should be sought immediately. Further action can then be taken in line with the above advice.

Prescribed Medication

Prescribed medication in school is checked through monitoring and dispensing forms – any issues with these should be reported to the Head of School or Executive Headteacher immediately. It is not appropriate under any circumstances for a member of staff to give a pupil any medication without parental consent, unless specific medical guidance has been issued (e.g. auto-injectors in the case of anaphylactic shock).

Associated Policies:

Whistleblowing Policy
Disciplinary Policy
Unity Behaviour Policy
Safeguarding Policy
DfE Exclusion Guidance
First Aid Protocols