

St Macartan's Primary School



DRUGS POLICY
(under consultation)

DRUGS

In St Macartan's Primary School we believe that the misuse of drugs endangers not only our pupils but also affects the wider community in which we live. It is the school's responsibility to ensure the child's health and safety while in our care and we strive to promote his/her personal and social well-being. We must all adopt a consistent approach to drug related issues. The school acts "in loco parentis." Drug misuse would have a derogatory effect on the health of our pupils. Our ultimate aim is to protect young people from the harm associated with the use and misuse of drugs.

This policy forms an integral part of our existing Health Education and Pastoral Care Policy. The Pastoral Care structure can then be implemented when responding to a drug related incident.

The Range of Substances

A drug is any substance which, when taken has the effect of altering the way a body works or the way a person behaves, feels, sees or thinks. As well as everyday substances, such as tea and coffee, drugs include:

1. Alcohol and tobacco
2. Over the counter medicines (e.g. paracetamol)
3. Prescribed drugs (such as antibiotics, tranquillisers, inhalers or ritalin.)
4. Volatile substances (such as glue, aerosols, correcting fluids or petrol.)
5. Drugs (such as cannabis, ecstasy, LSD, heroin and cocaine.
6. Other substances such as amytal butryal nitrate or unprocessed magic mushrooms.

A guideline for the administration of prescribed medicine.

Any medicine being used by a child should be handed over to the Principal, Class Teacher or School Secretary. Medicines may only be administered by them if it is accompanied by a letter containing parental permission. Medicines must be handed over by a responsible adult, and stored in a locked cupboard in the office.

This is also where confiscated drugs would be stored if necessary.

Procedures for handling and reporting incidents

A suspected drug related incident is described as:

- Suspect drugs found on the school premises
- A pupil suspected of being in possession of drugs
- A pupil found to be in possession of drugs
- A pupil suspected of being under the influence of drugs
- A parent or guardian who is suspected of being under the influence of alcohol and or other drugs. Where a parent or guardian may put a pupil at risk, staff should consider the school child protection procedures.

When an incident occurs, the staff will:

- Make the situation safe
- Send for support
- Administer first aid if necessary
- If an illegal drug is found it should be secured in a safe place in the office, until dealt with by the police
- Report the incident to the designated teacher.
- The Principal has ultimate responsibility for dealing with an incident appropriately. The Principal must consider how information about the incident is communicated to staff, pupils, parents, guardians and the media.

A teacher can be in “loco parentis,” as it is not necessary for a parent to be present.

Staff are not permitted to search pupil’s clothing or possessions unless permitted to do so by the pupil. However, it is acceptable to ask the pupils to empty their pockets and schoolbags. Staff may search desks.

When an incident is suspected, the following steps will be taken. (See also page 39 and 40 of Drugs Guidance for Schools in Northern Ireland 2004)

Individual Staff Member

- Assess situation and decide action
- Secure First Aid and send for additional staff support if necessary.
- Make situation safe for all pupils and other members of staff.
- Carefully gather up any drugs and or associated paraphernalia or evidence for the designated teacher for drugs.
- Write a brief factual report of the incident and forward it to the designated teacher for drugs.

Designated Teacher for Drugs

- Respond to the first aider's advice/recommendations regarding the incident
- In the case of an emergency inform parents/guardians immediately
- Take possession of any substance(s) and associated paraphernalia found
- Inform the Principal
- Take responsibility for pupil(s) involved in the suspected incident
- Complete an incident form (Appendix 14 in the Drugs Guidance File) and forward it to the Principal.

Principal

- determine the circumstances regarding the incident
- Ensure the following people are informed where relevant
 - ~ **Parents/guardians**
 - ~ **Community and Schools Involvement officer**
 - ~ **Board of Governors**
 - ~ **Designated officer in ELB/CCMS**
- Agree pastoral and disciplinary responses including counselling services and support
- Forward a copy of the incident form to the Chairperson of the Board of Governors and the designated officer within the ELB and CCMS
- Review procedures and amend if necessary

Extra Information

1. It is not the responsibility of the teacher to determine circumstances but s/he should deal with emergency if necessary.
2. The PSNI will be contacted.
3. One copy of the incident will be kept in the school's confidential file.

Confidentiality

If a pupil discloses to a teacher that he/she is taking drugs, the teacher must make it clear that he/she can offer no guarantee of confidential information or advice. The spirit of confidentiality is of primary importance to those who work professionally with young people. However, the legal requirements of drugs legislation will mean that in certain circumstances there will be a change in the convention of confidentiality. The children's Order (NI 1995) makes it clear that the welfare of the young person is paramount and therefore confidentiality must be included.

It is statutory requirements for schools to:-

- a. Have a Drugs Education Policy
- b. Publish the Drugs Policy in the School prospectus.
- c. Drug education should be taught as part of the health education cross-curricular theme. It should increase pupil's awareness of drugs and their effects.
- d. Inform the police where a pupil is found to be in possession of a controlled substance and enhance their ability to cope with pressures to experiment with or to use illegal substances.
- e. Inform the police where they suspect a pupil to be in possession of a controlled drug.

- f. There is an onus on the designated teacher to provide training to all staff to support the Policy implementation.
- g. We have fully trained members of staff with first aid training.
- h. A member of the Board of Governors is designated to have specific responsibility for drugs, Child protection and pastoral Care.

Procedures for handling alcohol misuse

Pupils are not permitted to bring alcohol onto the premises. Anyone breaking this rule will be referred to the Principal directly.

Procedures for handling tobacco misuse

The school is a restricted environment with no one being permitted to smoke on the school premises.

Visitors are not permitted to smoke within the building.

Adults breaking this rule will be advised by other members of staff.

Pupils breaking this rule will be referred to the Principal directly.

The Management of Solvents

Pupils are permitted to use Tippex pens, but not the Tippex container with brush.

Pritt sticks and similar are permitted.

Solvent based glues are not used, except for supervised activities.

Markers and felt pens are permitted.

Spray deodorants are permitted for occasions like swimming, P.E. etc.

All members of staff are responsible for the safe storage and use of solvents in their classroom. Where possible, they should be stored in a cupboard when not in use.

The caretaker and cleaners should also ensure that the solvents they use are kept in a secure place, under lock and key.

Drugs education is a whole school issue

In St Macartan's's Primary School the staff are regularly updated on changes in the curriculum and changes to policy, which have an effect on their delivery of the curriculum. Where possible, staff or the designated teacher, receive in service training on drugs issues. It is the responsibility of the classroom teacher to include drugs education in other subject areas if it forms part of the Northern Ireland curriculum and to spend an adequate amount of time delivering drugs education.

Drugs education is taught very specifically through the medium of Science in P7. It will also be discussed with the classes during Circle Time, talking and listening or in the event of the children hearing a local news bulletin or reading about incidents in local or national papers.

Alcohol, tobacco and solvent abuse are dealt with in easy to understand terms and give rise to a variety of discussions and written work. In the appendix of this policy there are guidelines regarding content of school curriculum.

Parents are encouraged to play an active role in homework tasks and to discuss drug issues with their child whenever possible.

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