**St Macartan’s PS: Drugs Education Policy**

**Section 1: Introduction**

1. **Ethos Statement**

In Saint Macartan’s Primary School the welfare of every child is of paramount consideration and so we aim to create a caring, happy, secure, supportive and stimulating environment where children can develop socially, emotionally and physically at their own rate. The Principal, and staff endeavour to provide an atmosphere of care and respect within the curricular and extra-curricular life of the school community.

1. **Rationale**

The Board of Governors of each school is required by the Department of Education to establish and maintain a Drugs Policy. The school drugs policy is based on guidelines as follows and has been developed as a response to the growing concerns about the use and misuse of drugs in Northern Ireland.

* DE Circular 2015/23
* CEA Drugs: Guidance for schools in `Northern Ireland (Revised Edition 2015)
* <https://ccea.org.uk/downloads/docs/ccea-asset/Curriculum/Drugs%20Guidance%20for%20Schools%20in%20Northern%20Ireland.pdf>

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.

Saint Macartan’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 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 a number of 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.

1. **Drug Definitions**

A drug is any substance which when taken has the effect of altering the way a person behaves, feels, sees or thinks.

Drugs include:

1. Alcohol, tobacco and tobacco related products, including nicotine replacement therapy
2. Electronic cigarettes
3. Over the counter medicines such as paracetamol and cough medicines
4. Prescribed drugs, such as antibiotics, painkillers, antidepressants, antipsychotics  
     
   **d) Aims of Drugs Education Policy**
5. To provide a clear statement of the school’s view on drugs education.
6. To ensure a consistent approach from staff to drugs education and in the handling of drug related incidents.
7. To safeguard good practice in the future.

**Section 2: Development and Implementation**

1. **Roles and Responsibilities**

The Board of Governors and Principal will have overall responsibility for ensuring the effective implementation of the Drugs Policy in Saint Macartan’s Primary School.

The Drugs Education Co-Ordinator will ensure an appropriate programme of study is being delivered for all pupils within the school. Duties will include:

1. Liaising with the Principal on the implementation of the policy.
2. Contacting and liaising with outside agencies.
3. Offering support and training where necessary for the Board of Governors, staff and parents on drug education matters.
4. Helping to promote an awareness of drug education within the school.

All other teaching staff will be responsible for putting into practice the policy and ensuring that appropriate lessons are taught to ensure that children are developing positive attitudes towards a healthy way of life. Non-teaching staff will support teachers where necessary and will report all drug related incidents to the Drugs Education Co-ordinator.

1. **Staff Training**

Periodically drug education programmes may be organised for staff to meet training needs, in order to implement the drugs education policy. This will take the form of ‘in-house’ training although specialist drug education staff may also attend in-service training to inform staff of new developments.

Parents will be informed about certain drug issues if appropriate by receiving information leaflets from the school produced by statutory agencies. Parents will also be encouraged to contact the school if they have concerns about drug issues.

1. **Overview of Drugs Education Programme**

Drugs education will be an integral part of our Personal Development and Mutual Understanding programme, incorporating the personal and social development of pupils in their environment. Aspects covered will be relevant to their age and will take account of their present knowledge and experience of drugs. Adequate and suitable resources will be used in lessons of Living and Learning Together. The approach adopted will be mainly preventative and teaching methods will include pupil centred activities e.g. role play, drama and group work. Where appropriate links will be made with other relevant areas of learning e.g. Religious Education, Physical Education and PDMU. On occasion outside agencies may be asked for specialist help. E.g. PSNI, nurse, etc. if this is the case the class teacher will remain with the children at all times.

**Aims of your Drug Education Programme:**

1. To promote positive attitudes towards personal health.
2. To inform pupils of the effects of drug use and abuse.
3. To help pupils build up the self-esteem of the pupils.
4. To help pupils acquire skills in managing the pressures of the youth culture in which they live.
5. To help pupils acquire decision-making skills.
6. To create a climate where a young person feels comfortable to discuss problems around substance misuse.
7. To encourage a participate approach in which each pupil is actively involved.
8. To encourage a healthy and critical respect for all substances taken into the body.
9. To equip pupils with skills that will empower them to take responsibility for their own health and safety.

**d) Staff Use of Smoking and Alcohol**

Saint Macartan’s Primary School is a smoke-free zone. This means there will be no smoking on the premises or outside any of the school doors. Consumption of alcohol is also not permitted during the school day.

**e) Communicating the Policy to Parents and Other Relevant Agencies**

The Drugs Education Policy will be made available to all new parents and in the event of the policy being updated new copies will be issued to all parents. A draft copy of the policy will be sent to parents at a consultation stage and responses will be taken into consideration before the policy is finalised.

**Section 3: Management Issues**

1. **Procedures for Managing Drug-Related Incidents**

For all those involved in dealing with incidents of drug misuse, the experience is likely to be traumatic. This will be true not only for the Principal, teachers, other members of staff and Governors of the school but also for the pupil involved in the incident, their parents and other pupils in the school. Dealing with suspected incidents of drug misuse will require extreme sensitivity on the part of those involved.  
  
During instances where a pupil or pupils are suspected of, or found in possession of drug, their names and identities will be passed on to the PSNI. Any suspicious substance found in school or in the possession of a pupil will also be given to the police for analysis. If a pupil is suspected of being under the influence of drugs parents will be notified immediately and appropriate medical action will be taken. Parents will be encouraged to make the school a drug free zone. Confidentiality in drug related incidents cannot be guaranteed.  
  
In cases where an incident has occurred and the school is approached by the press, a prepared written statement will be made by the principal. This statement will include the fact that the school is dealing with the incident. Pupils involved in the taking of drugs will be encouraged to attend counselling sessions.

1. **A Range of Disciplinary Measures**

The Board of Governors, Principal and staff have a duty to protect every pupil from the drug culture and will follow EANI/DE procedures to protect all pupils from the danger of drugs. Pupils suspected of possessing, supplying or using drugs on the school premises will be dealt with in a serious manner. Incidents involving drugs may lead to suspension, after investigation of the incident and in extreme cases expulsion may be recommended. The school in these cases will act in accordance with DE and EANI Guidelines.

The school expects parents to support these measures and to cooperate with the school in encouraging the child to lead a healthier lifestyle. Parents need to be aware of the school’s discipline policy on drugs as:

* It reassures parents that the school treats drug related matters very seriously, thus providing protection for pupils.
* It informs parents on what to expect if their child becomes involved in a drug related incident.

At all times the needs of each individual child involved in such incidents will be considered and appropriate intervention and support mechanisms will be put in place.

1. **Confidentiality**

Confidentiality can never be guaranteed to any pupil. Any criminal activity disclosed must be passed on to the designated teacher, PSNI and EA.

1. **Procedures for Using Outside Agencies**

If an outside agency is to be used the following checklist will be consulted:

* Does the individual/agency have a specified Child Protection Policy?
* How will the issue of confidentiality be dealt with?
* Are the teaching resources being used appropriately?
* Has the individual/agency worked with any other schools?
* Does the individual/agency have a clear set of aims and objectives as well as lesson plans?
* Has the individual/agency read the school’s Drugs Policy and are they prepared to adhere to it?
* Do parents/guardians know that an individual/agency is being used by the school?
* Will the input by the individual/agency be monitored?
* Will the pupils be asked how the session/class with the individual/agency went?
* Can the school terminate the work of the individual/agency if the classes or sessions are deemed inappropriate?
* Are evaluations carried out by the individual/agency and if so will the school have access to them?

1. **Emergency First Aid**

Ref. Appendix 3

1. **Guidance for Confiscation and Storage of Harmful Substances**

If a harmful substance is found it will be stored in a secure place and the relevant authorities notified as outlined in Appendices 1-3.

1. **Guidance on Storage, Handling and Disposal of Hazardous Substances**

Within many classrooms’ materials are required and used which are toxic and emit intoxicating fumes e.g. solvent-based glues, aerosol sprays, paint thinners, felt-tipped pens. These materials will be kept to a minimum and need to be carefully monitored and stored in locked cupboards to which only staff have access. Classrooms where such materials are used will be kept in locked cupboards when not in use. Materials of a similar nature which are used by caretakers and cleaning staff will be kept in locked storerooms and used with care.

**Section 4: Monitoring, Evaluation and Review**

The drugs education policy and programme will be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis as part of the School Development Plan to take account of the needs of staff and pupils. It will also be reviewed in light of particular incidents or local circumstances. Account will be taken of the views of the Board of Governors, staff, parents and pupils and any necessary changed will be made.

**Section 5: Appendices**

* Appendix 1: Finding an illegal substance on PPS premises.
* Appendix 2: Pupil suspected of distributing an illegal substance.
* Appendix 3: Pupil suspected of taking drugs in PPS.

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**Finding an illegal substance on Saint Macartan’s Primary Premises (Appendix 1)**

Carefully lift it using the plastic gloves in the first aid kit – do not taste it

If found by a pupil – report to any member of staff

Bring it to Mrs A. Mc Guinness or Principal

Hand the substance to the police for analysis – ensuring feedback  
Clogher Police 0845 600 8000

Investigate how the substance came to be on school premises

Prepare a report for the Board of Governors

Unknown substance found on the school grounds

Inform Education Authority

Record action taken on appropriate

Child Protection Concern Sheet

**Pupil suspected of possessing or distributing an illegal substance (Appendix 2)**

Is the pupil cooperative

Inform pupil’s parents

Arrange for counselling of the pupil

Inform Board of Governors

Decide on disciplinary measures

Contact the police 0845 600 8000

Ask pupil to voluntarily ‘turn out’ belongings

Inform pupil’s parents

Write a detailed report of the incident, include action taken

YES

Bring him/her to Mrs A Mc Guinness or Principal along with possessions

Detain the pupil and phone the police

NO

Inform Education Authority

**Pupil suspected of taking drugs in Saint Macartan’s Primary School (Appendix 3)**

Is the pupil conscious?

NO

YES

Inform Mrs A Mc Guinness

Place in recovery position

Stay with pupil and send someone to phone for an ambulance

Try to find out what substance has been taken and how much

Try to find out what substance has been taken and how much

Inform pupil’s parents

Does pupil need hospital treatment

YES

NO

Contact parents and send to hospital

Ask pupil to voluntarily ‘turn out’ belongings

Inform pupil’s parents

Contact the police 0845 600 8000

Inform Education Authority

Write a detailed report of the incident and action taken

Decide on disciplinary measures

Inform Board of Governors

Arrange for counselling for pupil