

Appendix A to Drugs Policy

Our policy seeks to ensure that young people at Alec Hunter Academy:

- receive an education that enables them to grow up confidently, knowledgeably, competently and safely in a drug using world.
- get consistent messages about living a healthy lifestyle and the inappropriateness of drug misuse
- know that drug related incidents are addressed throughout our school in a consistent manner.

Definitions

We define a drug as being:

‘A substance people take to change the way they feel, think or behave’.
(United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime)

Throughout this policy ‘drug’ refers to all drugs:

- Illegal drugs (Misuse of Drugs Act 1971)
- All legal drugs, including alcohol, tobacco and volatile substances
- Prescribed medicines
- Over-the-counter medicines

We define drug misuse to be:

‘...the taking of a substance which harms or threatens to harm the physical or mental health or social well-being of an individual, or of other individuals, or society at large, or which is illegal. Within this definition can be placed the use of legal substances such as alcohol, solvents, the use of prescribed medicines and the taking of illegal drugs’.
(Adapted from the Royal College of Psychiatrists 1987 – County Child Protection Guidelines)

Education

Under the terms of the National Curriculum we are required to meet two aims:

1. The school curriculum should aim to provide opportunities for all students to learn and to achieve
2. The school curriculum should aim to promote students’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and prepare all students for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life

Young people are growing up in an increasingly drug using world. During their early childhood they are exposed to messages about drug use from the media, their peers, their families and our wider society, they may experiment with drugs whilst still of school age and will be confronted by opportunities to use drugs throughout their lives.

If we are to prepare our young people for living in a ‘drug-using world’ we need to ensure all young people in our school receive an appropriate curriculum matched to their age and readiness. We recognise that many of the aspects of the curriculum contribute towards enabling young people not only to know how to stay safe from substance misuse, but also to have the high self esteem and interpersonal skills that enable them to stay safe and in control.

Our school is committed to working towards the principles of the health promoting school and the National Healthy School Standard both to raise achievement and to support those young people living with the risk factors that increase their vulnerability to future drug misuse.

The raising of every student's self-esteem is a fundamental aim of our school.

Welfare

Problems with drug use can affect any of our young people, from the youngest to the eldest.

These can range from:

- accidental exposure to a substance (medicines) or drug equipment (discarded needles)
- inappropriate experimental or recreational use of a drug
- developing a drug habit or losing control of their drug use
- a sudden, catastrophic health problem (sudden illness or collapse)
- living in drug using families or in circumstances that might make them vulnerable to future drug misuse

A young person's own problem drug use can be:

- the main cause for concern
- a symptom of a deeper more complex difficulty
- one of a number of interrelated issues or concerns

It is rare for problem drug use to be isolated from other pastoral difficulties.

In all cases our guiding principle will be that *the welfare of the young person and their peers is paramount.*

Confidentiality

Whilst every effort should be made to enable constructive dialogue to take place between young people requiring support and school staff, no staff member can or should offer confidentiality, as per our Child Protection policy.

Teachers must be able to honour their professional responsibilities in relation to:

- child protection
- co-operating with a police investigation
- referral to external services

All staff and any expert visitors to the school are subject at all times to child protection (SET) procedures. No visitor will work with young people in any unsupervised capacity unless they have been checked through the Disclosure and Barring Service.

The Taught Curriculum

The aim of our taught drug curriculum is to support the Essex vision for drug education:

"In Essex, every learner has the knowledge, problem solving and decision making skills necessary to be able to make informed choices about drug use and that they have the interpersonal skills and high self-esteem required to enable them to enact their decision with the least possible harm to themselves or others."

Our curriculum will be taught in the following ways:

1. Through classroom investigation, it will take account of the young people's current level of language and understanding.
2. As part of a spiral programme of personal, social, moral and health education it will build on concepts that the young people already know and understand. It will link with work on safety, relationships and communication skills. Young people will have opportunities to discuss, have challenged and clarify their attitudes and beliefs about drug use.
3. It will use language appropriate to their age, readiness, culture, ethnicity and vulnerability.
4. It will be relevant to the backgrounds, cultures, ethnicity and needs of our young people and will focus on the drug use and surrounding issues most relevant to our young people.

5. It will focus on relevant situations and the subsequent emotions that influence choice, thinking skills, especially risk assessment and problem solving and interpersonal skills especially assertiveness and the language of assertion.
6. It will offer accurate rather than sensationalised information.
7. Whilst fully exploring the possible consequences of drug misuse, it will avoid 'shock/horror' which can serve to glamorise drug use.
8. It will ensure that all young people regardless of background and ability can equally access the programmes of work.

Our school will work to inform parents in order to ensure that messages about drug misuse are consistent.

Where possible we will seek to work with other local schools in order to harmonise the curriculum to ensure that young people receive comparable drug education at the same times as their peers. We will also work with partner schools in other phases to ensure continuity and progression between key stages and especially at transitions.

Drug education will be monitored and assessed as part of the overall PD programme and the science element in accordance with requirements of the National Curriculum.

Use of external contributors to drug education

External contributors should not be used as substitute teachers and should contribute to the broad drug education programme. Any visitor to the school who has unsupervised access to students will be subject to Disclosure and Barring Service checks.

A teacher will always be present in the classroom for the whole of each lesson where external contributors are present. The responsibility for learning always remains with the teacher.

All visitors to our classrooms will work to the principles outlined within our policy.

Procedures

The school is prepared for incidents where drug misuse is a significant or contributory factor in relation to the immediate or long-term safety or welfare of an individual student. Our school is aware of the risks posed to young people by parents, carers or staff members who misuse drugs.

Many 'over-the-counter preparations' such as paracetamol and so called 'legal highs' are potentially lethal if misused. Drug related incidents in schools are extremely rare. The majority of young people who use drugs are 'experimental' or 'recreational users' rather than 'habitual users'. All drug use carries risks, and these should neither be inappropriately exaggerated nor inappropriately minimised.

The school's response will be measured and balanced against the extent or nature of the incident. Our aim will always be to engage or re-engage young people with learning.

We deem a drug incident to be within our boundaries of responsibility if it occurs;

- on school premises
- on a school trip
- on a residential visit
- on a work experience placement
- residential trip

If a young person is sent home from a school trip related to any aspect of poor behaviour their parents or carers will be responsible for any additional cost of transport etc.

At all other times all staff still have a duty of care and any student deemed to be at risk will be reported to the designated person for child protection.

A young person thought to have misused any substance by intent or by accident will always be treated as a serious medical emergency and medical advice and treatment will be swiftly sought.

The use of recreational drugs (including alcohol) or the bringing of recreational drugs onto the school premises will not be tolerated. The same principle will apply to school trips.

Our school is at all times a 'no smoking establishment'.

All staff have a duty to support young people who approach them with problems related to drug use. Prior to any further investigation any such approach will always be *considered* as a request for help and a pastoral rather than a disciplinary matter. (See scenario below.)

When dealing with any incident, in priority, staff will consider:

1. medical support – immediate first aid/ambulance if required, then appropriate referral to health services;
2. immediate safety/welfare support – is the young person 'at risk' from their own behaviour or the behaviour of others?
3. pastoral support – counselling and guidance;
4. discipline – as appropriate

All staff will ensure that senior staff are informed swiftly about any such problem.

The school, including the grounds, will be regularly checked for signs of drug misuse (including discarded drug taking equipment).

Any possession or use of illegal drugs, the actual supply or the offer to supply illegal drugs on school premises or on school trips will always be reported to the police.

Vulnerable young people.

Young people living with risk factors associated with future problem drug use will receive ongoing support through the school's pastoral care systems. Their welfare will be subject to regular monitoring.

Involving parents.

As a general principle, parents will always be notified of the school's concern over a drug-related incident. The only exception to this is when the Headteacher feels that the welfare of the young person would be placed in greater jeopardy by this action, in which case the Child Protection Team will be consulted.

Incident Management

The three principle areas of difficulty with drug use are:

1. health difficulties – long term damage to health (e.g. tobacco) or a sudden catastrophic incident (e.g. solvent) – many substances can have both effects (e.g. alcohol);
2. social/financial difficulties – conflict with parents, education etc.;
3. legal difficulties – some drug use is illegal and this can effect freedom, career and travel.

Staff have a professional duty to investigate and take appropriate action, either individually or by referral if they have reason to believe that any young person is at risk.

The school has a legal duty to ensure that illegal drug use or the making or supply of controlled drugs does not take place on our premises or on school trips.

School staff may take possession of an unknown substance, placing it securely in the school safe. The law states:

“provides that if a person took possession of a drug to prevent another committing an offence or continuing to commit an offence and then took speedy action to destroy the drug or hand it to an authorised person, this shall be a defence to the charge, of possessing a controlled drug”.

Sec 5 Misuse of Drugs Act 1971

SCENARIOS

Drugs or equipment are discovered on the school premises

Staff are required to:

1. take possession and store securely in the school safe;
2. inform a member of senior staff immediately;
3. a senior staff member will seek police advice re identification of substance and safe disposal;

In the event of a syringe being found it will be placed in a safe container (screw top coffee jar) and placed in a safe location prior to safe disposal (eg: medical disposal box)– under no circumstances will a used syringe be placed in a waste bin.

A student is found in possession of drugs

Staff are required to:

1. take possession of the substance and store securely in the school safe;
2. inform a senior member of staff immediately;
3. a senior member of staff will seek advice from police re identification of substance and safe disposal/other legal actions;
4. inform the parents or carers, if appropriate.(see ‘involving parents)

A student is thought to be in possession of a drug

Staff are required to:

1. isolate the student from peers and supervise at all times;
2. inform a senior member of staff immediately;
3. a senior member of staff will inform the police;
4. a senior member of staff will inform parents or carers, if appropriate.

The school reserves the right to search the student, their bag and locker if they are suspected of being in the possession of drugs; if the young person refuses, the student will be isolated until advice has been sought from the police, and the search may then be undertaken by a police officer.

A member of staff suspects a pupil is under the influence of a drug

Staff will never treat intoxication lightly. The effect of any drug (including alcohol) on a young person can be highly unpredictable. Intoxication or a suspected overdose (even if the young person appears fit and well) will always be deemed a medical emergency.

Under no circumstances will an intoxicated young person be disciplined until medical advice has been sought. Intoxication from solvent can be lethal if the young person is suddenly shocked or alarmed. The unpleasant (even horrific) effects of psychedelic drugs can be exacerbated by disciplinary actions with potentially catastrophic results.

Staff are required to:

1. seek medical advice (999 –if urgent);
2. perform appropriate first aid measures, if they are qualified to do so or seek assistance from a qualified first aider;
3. keep the young person as calm as possible;
4. inform a senior member of staff;

5. ensure no other pupils are at risk (if appropriate call an emergency whole school registration);
6. inform parents or carers if appropriate;
7. inform child protection, if child is 'at risk';
8. inform police, if appropriate.

A student discloses that they are using drugs

Staff are required to:

1. inform a senior member of staff who will;
2. inform child protection staff, if the child is 'at risk';
3. inform parents or carers if appropriate;
4. seek advice from Community Drug and Alcohol Team or EYPDAS (Essex Young Peoples Drug and Alcohol Services) and if appropriate refer to the Initial Response Team (IRT).

Student discloses that their parents or carers misuse/supply drugs

Staff are required to:

1. inform a senior member of staff;
2. inform child protection staff, if the child is 'at risk';
3. retain the child and notify senior staff if a parent collecting a child from school (especially by car) appears intoxicated, (if unable to retain the child – telephone 999 and inform police);
4. inform the child protection staff.

The school discovers that a student is suspected of dealing drugs in the school

Staff are required to:

(see above on "a pupil thought to be in possession of drugs")

1. inform a senior member of staff immediately;
2. inform police;
3. secure as much evidence as possible in the school safe;
4. work with police to construct an action plan.

Parents or carers under the influence of drugs on school premises

The focus of action will be to maintain the welfare of the child. If a parent is violent or abusive they will be asked to leave the premises. No member of staff will place themselves or a young person at risk. If necessary the police will be informed.

If the parent or carer is collecting the child and the welfare of the child is deemed to be at risk, the child will be retained on school premises, senior staff will be informed and the school will consider whether to invoke child protection procedures or call the police.

Monitoring and record keeping

We will record all drug related incidents. We will make no entry on the young person's permanent record until all the evidence has been gathered and corroborated. Only factual information will be recorded. The school will regularly follow up drug related incidents in order to monitor progress.

Discipline

The majority of young people who misuse drugs are experimenting with them. This behaviour is still potentially dangerous and young people must understand that the possession, use of illegal drugs and the misuse of any substance in all circumstances is inappropriate.

Young people need to understand that the school will try to support anyone who voluntarily seeks our help with drugs related problems.

They also need to know clearly that bringing drugs into school or on school visits for any purpose will be dealt with severely; as will using the school or educational visits to make deals for the supply of illegal drugs.

As a general principle young people who are found in possession of, or have been supplying drugs will be suspended from school for up to five days in the first instance, to allow a thorough investigation to take place. During or immediately following this suspension a meeting will be held to decide the most appropriate action, once the Headteacher and senior staff have reviewed all of the evidence.

It is our policy;

- that young people who bring drugs (e.g. tobacco, alcohol or solvent) to school will be disciplined and their parents informed;
- that young people who knowingly bring illegal drugs into school will be reported to the police;
- that young people who are found in possession of illegal drugs will be reported to the police (unless in exceptional circumstances e.g. where a young person has been coerced or bullied in to carrying a substance).

The principal goal of the school will be to attempt to re-establish a working relationship with young people who are sanctioned for drug related issues, if appropriate, but the school reserves the right, to exclude permanently a young person who through their behaviour is placing themselves, other young people or staff at risk. In this case the reason for the exclusion will be the endangerment to themselves or others caused by their actual behaviour rather than their drug use per se.

Media

All media involvement will only be dealt with by the head teacher of the school or the member of staff delegated by the head teacher.

Sharps or needle-stick injuries

Some young people will encounter the use of injecting equipment in their community. Although the curriculum should include work on safety and emphasise the importance of not touching any suspicious sharp or dirty object, curiosity or simple accident may still result in a needle stick injury.

If this should happen or even if it is suspected that it might have happened it is **vital** that the following protocol is followed.

- Immediately encourage the wound to bleed and wash thoroughly with hot soapy water.
- Do not suck or allow the child to suck the wound.
- Dress wound as normal.
- A senior member of staff will immediately contact the parents or carers if appropriate.
- **Medical attention should be sought as a matter of extreme urgency** because Hepatitis B requires the treatment to be started within 24 hours of exposure.

NHS Direct 0845 46 47 can give advice.