

Ashbury Meadow Primary School Drug and Drug Related Incidents Policy



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This policy was reviewed and updated by Lucy Thomas in March, 2024

Date of next review: March, 2027

Introduction

This policy should be seen as one of a triumvirate of policies within this school including Health and Safety and RSHE policies.

Context of the policy

Although at this school there has been no experience of substance or drug misuse, the staff and Governors recognise that pupils may be exposed to risks in the drug-using society in which they are growing up. In 1994 the Government published a white paper "Tackling Drugs Together". This policy is our contribution to the national initiative, which this white paper began, involving police, health and educational services.

Formation of the Policy

In formulating the policy, a variety of issues were considered, including:

- RSHE curriculum throughout the school
- Science education (that part related to drugs, medicines and body functions)
- Local Authority initiatives and directive, including Healthy Schools
- Police initiatives
- The local situation
- Involvement of local community

The school viewpoint

A drug is any substance which affects the way in which the body functions either physically, emotionally or mentally. It includes legally available substances such as alcohol, tobacco, caffeine and solvents; over-the-counter and prescribed medicines and illegal drugs.

- The school neither condones the misuse of drugs and alcohol by members of the school, nor the illegal supply of those substances.
- The school is committed to the health and safety of its members and will make every effort to safeguard their well-being.
- The school acknowledges the importance of its pastoral role in the welfare of young people and, through the general ethos of the school, will seek to support all pupils.

Aims and Expectations

Our school operates within the statutory, legislative and local policy framework in relation to the use and/or misuse of all drugs.

Through our Personal Development curriculum, we aim to develop our pupils' sense of self-respect and self-worth and to enable them to have the knowledge, skills and attitudes to enable them to make informed and responsible choices about living a healthy lifestyle now and later in life. Through providing a comprehensive drugs education, we aim to develop pupils' awareness of the possible consequences of drug use and misuse and the negative impact this can have on their physical and mental wellbeing. We also aim to further develop our pupils' resilience of character through drug education so that they are able to face life's challenges and pressures from a position of knowledge and confidence.

We believe that the presence of unauthorised drugs in our school is not acceptable as their presence represents a threat to health and safety for our staff, pupils, visitors and school community. We want our school to be a safe

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place for us all to work, for pupils to learn and to ensure the safety of visitors. Through this policy, we aim to clarify procedures to minimise risks involved in the handling of legal drugs or in the event that illicit drugs are brought onto or found on the premises.

Values and Ethos

We believe in

- Providing a nurturing culture throughout school in which our pupils can develop their social and emotional skills to enable them to manage life's challenges in a supportive environment, and to prepare them for their next stage. As a Nurture school, we recognise that everyone has different life experiences. We build trusting relationships through shared experiences to promote positive wellbeing, resilience and self-confidence to support our pupils to make healthy life choices.
- Respecting the rights of our pupils, staff and visitors to feel safe on site and are committed to health and safety of all children and young people and taking action to safeguard their wellbeing, including the misuse of medicines by pupils.
- Emphasising the importance of the school's pastoral role in the welfare of all children and young people, to include seeking to provide appropriate support for members of the school who are in need or referral to an appropriate specialist agency.
- A commitment that drug incidents, such as drug use or possession, should only result in exclusion when all other possible responses have been explored.
- Awareness that whilst members of the school may choose to use and misuse substances, it is recognised that the majority may choose not to use or misuse substances. As part of their social inclusion responsibilities schools will be expected to continue to support the differing needs of all members of the school community.

Definition

Drugs are defined broadly and include any substance that has the potential to affect how a person thinks, feels or behaves. This includes legal as well as illicit drugs, medicines, tobacco, alcohol and solvents. A drug incident occurs when there is evidence, discussion or suspicion of a specific event at school involving one or more unauthorised drugs.

The role of the governing body

- To ensure that this policy complies with the latest guidance and reflects the needs of the school and local community.
- To monitor, through observation, visits and/or questioning that the policy is being complied with.
- To support the headteacher in dealing with drug related incidents and support the headteacher in any case conferences, or in appeals against exclusions.

The role of the headteacher

The headteacher will:

- ensure that staff and parents are informed about this drugs policy
- ensure that the policy is implemented effectively
- manage any drug-related incidents with the support of the senior Designated Safeguarding Officer
- ensure that staff are given sufficient training so that they can teach effectively about drugs, and handle any difficult issues with sensitivity
- liaise with external agencies regarding the school drugs education programme
- monitor the policy, and report any amendments to governors

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The role of teachers

- To deliver Drugs Education programme in accordance with the RSE and Health Education curriculum in line with the approach chosen by the school, regardless of their personal views.
- To monitor pupils' progress.
- To respond to the needs of individual pupils.
- To apply staff training. Should any staff identify any training needs this should be reported to the Personal Development Curriculum leader.

How drugs education is delivered

Our drugs education programme forms part of the PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education) curriculum which is delivered through CORAM SCARF. The content delivered complies fully with the statutory guidance for the teaching of Drugs & Alcohol Education expectations as set out in the *'Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education: Statutory Guidance'* DFE, (2020) which stipulates that by the end of primary school, *'pupils should know the facts about legal and illegal harmful substances and associated risks, including smoking, alcohol use and drug-taking'*.

Teaching about drugs begins in Key Stage 1, when pupils are taught about seeing the doctor, visiting the chemist, and the importance of medicines and their safe handling.

In Key Stage 2, pupils learn that alcohol is the most widely used drug, and that its dangers can be overlooked. We ensure that our pupils are aware of the risks associated with drinking. We teach pupils that smoking is a minority habit, and encourage them to consider its effects and risks. We also teach pupils about the dangers of volatile-substance abuse, because of the high risk of accidental death, especially for first-time and occasional abusers.

We acknowledge that by the time pupils are in Year 6, some of them may have had some experiences with drugs already, so we must help to equip pupils to handle risky situations, before they actually meet them.

We recognise that learning is most effective when it addresses the development of knowledge, attitudes and skills together and when teaching and learning are participative and active. We use a variety of teaching styles that are characterised by active learning. We find out what the children know already, we pose dilemmas and scenarios, and we get the children to discuss choices. Wherever possible, the information we give is visually reinforced. We work with outside agencies, such as Manchester Healthy Schools, Manchester City in the Community and Crucial Crew, to engage pupils and increase their understanding and awareness. We encourage them to listen to the views of others, and we ask them to explore why drugs are such a problem for society.

We aim to teach all pupils about drugs regardless of their attainment levels or diverse requirements. We recognise that pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities may be more vulnerable, that different communities have different attitudes towards drug abuse, and that some pupils may have drug-abusing parents. We are sensitive to the various needs and adapt the delivery accordingly.

Drugs education takes place during normal lesson time. Sometimes, a class teacher will seek support from the school nurse or another health professional. The resources and materials that we use to support teaching are provided by the CORAM SCARF curriculum and Manchester Healthy Schools. Lessons that focus on drugs education form part of a sequence of lessons that are designed to promote a healthy lifestyle. Our full drugs education programme can be viewed on our website in the Personal Development Curriculum page.

The role of parents

The school is well aware that the primary role in children's drugs education lies with parents. We wish to build a positive and supporting relationship with the parents of our pupils, through mutual understanding, trust and cooperation. To promote this objective, we will inform parents about the school drugs policy and invite parents to view the materials used to teach drugs education in our school and answer any questions that parents may have about the drugs education that their child receives in school. We take seriously any issue which parents raise with teachers or governors about this policy, or about arrangements for drugs education in the school and take these issues into account when reviewing the policy. We inform parents about the best practice known with regard to drugs education, so that the parents can support the key messages being given to children at school.

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When an incident concerning unauthorised drugs has occurred in school, and a pupil is involved, we will inform the parents, and explain how we intend to respond to the incident.

Staff will be cautious about discharging a pupil to the care of an intoxicated parent, particularly when the parent intends driving the pupil home. Staff will suggest an alternative arrangement. The focus will be the pupil's welfare and safety. Where the behaviour of an intoxicated parent repeatedly places a child at risk, or the parent or carer becomes abusive or violent, staff should consider whether the circumstances of the case are serious enough to invoke child protection procedures, and possibly the involvement of the police.

Confidentiality

Teachers cannot, and should not promise, total confidentiality. The boundaries of confidentiality should be made clear. If a pupil discloses information which is sensitive or not generally known, and which the pupil asks not to be passed on, it should be discussed with one of the designated safe guarding team. It is essential for teachers to fulfill their professional responsibilities in relation to:

- Child protection
- Co-operating with a police investigation
- Referral to external services.
- Every effort will be made to secure the pupil's agreement to the way in which the school intends to use any sensitive information.

It may be necessary to involve local child protection procedures if a pupil's safety is under threat.

The Management of Drugs Related Incidents

Today's children are under increased influences and pressures and their knowledge of drugs in society have been accelerated by constant media coverage. Although we feel that drug related incidents are likely to be rare, we do realise the importance of having a policy that outlines the management of such incidents should they occur. All adults within the school need to be aware of how to deal with such situations and their effect on the pupil, family school and themselves. The overall welfare of the children involved and their parents will be kept in mind at all times.

1. Suspicion/hearsay

Any hearsay/rumour about pupil drug use will be carefully evaluated in the light of the school's own knowledge about the pupil and sensitively investigated before any action is taken. Next, steps will be taken to challenge the rumour and its effects, e.g. challenging the behaviour that might have led to the rumour and challenging the source of the rumour. If the rumour is found to be true, the Head Teacher will follow steps 3 and 4 outlined below.

2. Possession

If a child is found with, or suspected of possessing a harmful substance, it will be removed by the member of staff who discovered it. Ideally, another adult should witness this transfer. This is to ensure that there is no accusation of a member of staff being in possession of the substance rather than the pupil. The situation will be investigated promptly and thoroughly and a written record made.

3. Consultation

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The Head Teacher will be informed immediately and the pupil will be taken to the Head's office. The Head will then explain the seriousness of the incident to the pupil before informing the parents, who will be asked to come to the school. The Police will be called if the substance is believed to be an illegal one.

4. Contacting Parents

Parents will always be informed when a case of substance misuse has been positively identified. A three-way discussion will occur between all parties to ascertain the best way forward. This may include the involvement of outside agencies and the Police, especially in the case of drugs and solvents.

5. First Aid

Pupils deemed to need first aid at the time of the incident will be assessed by our qualified member of staff, who will decide if any further assistance is required.

5. Recording Incidents

All drug related incidents will be recorded on CPOMS.

6. Disposal of Substances

Unprescribed drugs and solvents will be disposed of in the manner advised by the Police.

7. Disclosure about Substance Abuse

The Head Teacher will follow up and deal with any information about substance abuse that is disclosed by a pupil. The school recognises that some of its pupils may have a parent whose drug use (legal or illegal) may be problematic. The pupil's welfare in this case is paramount and any information disclosed about substance abuse, within a pupil's home environment or local area, would be followed up by the Head Teacher. It may be deemed necessary to inform the Multi Agency Referral Hub (MASH) and/or the Police. The school will act within the legal limits that it can, to support the pupil in a variety of ways, practically and emotionally.

8. Background Issues

The public could gain access to the site, so it is feasible that evidence of drugs misuse may be found on site. The Site Manager and /or staff supervising playtimes check the playground and grassy area to ensure they are safe for the children. When handling any substances that are believed to be harmful or drugs related, no direct contact should be made. Syringes should be placed in a heavy plastic container until advice can be sought about their safe disposal.

Drugs and Alcohol in School

Use of Alcohol in School

There may be occasions when the school may consider it appropriate to sanction the use of alcohol on the premises, i.e. an adult social function. On such occasions the following guidelines should be followed:

- the alcohol should be stored in a safe and secure location
- the Governing Body should approve functions where alcohol is served

Staff members do not take alcohol on site during the school's opening times or when they are off site leading day trips.

Tobacco and Vapes

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The school is a designated non-smoking or vaping area.

Medication in school

Prescribed drugs will only be administered for the benefit of the child's long-term health medical condition such as Asthma, Diabetes and Epilepsy.

Prescribed medication must be in the original packaging together with parental authorisation confirming the dosage and the time to be administered.

A care plan will be drawn up (should it be required) between the School and the Parent/Carer.

Parent/Carer are required to administer any short term medication such as antibiotics, antihistamine and paracetamol to their child prior to the start of the school day, this includes prescribed and non prescribed medication. Should your child require another dose during school hours this will be agreed between School and the Parent/Carer a care form will need to be completed.

Person(s) selling drugs to others for gain

All evidence must be retained. Contact should be made with the School Liaison Officer/PCSO for further advice. The action, which the police will take, will depend on the nature of the substance, the quantity involved and surrounding circumstances. This action will need to be agreed in consultation with the school. In this type of situation, on the first occasion a young person is involved in selling drugs, a fixed-term exclusion may be appropriate, as well as referral to support services as appropriate.

If the young person persists in selling drugs in school or to pupils, then a permanent exclusion may be considered appropriate. The police action may include advice, reprimand of the person(s) involved or arrest.

In the case of incidents involving medicines, tobacco, alcohol and volatile substances (solvents, glues and gases) each case should be taken on its specific merits. Whilst these substances are legal to possess in most instances, the procedures outlined above for responding to drug-related incidents concerning illegal drugs will be applied to these substances.

Dealing with the Media

In our dealings with the media on drug-related issues, the Head Teacher will take responsibility for liaison with the media. The school will take appropriate advice and guidance from the LA Press Office and Legal Department to ensure that any reporting of incidents remains in the best interests of the young person, their families or carers and the school.

Wider Agencies

The following organisations will be involved in our work on drugs:

- Community police
- School nurse
- Manchester Healthy Schools Partnership
- Youth Offending team
- Crucial Crew
- Manchester City in the Community
- Change, Grow, Live (CGL)

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Monitoring and review

The Head Teacher, with the support of the Safeguarding team and the Personal Development Curriculum leader, will monitor the implementation and impact of this drugs policy and report any amendments to governors. Any feedback or comments from parents about the drugs education programme will be monitored. Monitoring outcomes will be used to inform future review.

Related Policies: Health and Safety; Relationships & Sex Education (RSE) policy; Rights Respecting Behaviour Policy; Safeguarding Policy; Equality Policy; Exclusions Policy; SEND Policy; Code of Conduct; Medical Policy, Search, screening and confiscation policy.