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Non Statutory Policy
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Birchwood High School Drug Education Policy

Values and aims

Set in the broader context of a programme for Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education, Citizenship and Science (Personal Development), our drug education reflects whole school aims to provide a caring community in which young people can learn to respect themselves and others and take responsibility for their own actions. We are committed to the health and safety of all members of the school community and will take action to safeguard their well being.

The possession, use or supply of all non-medical drugs on school premises are unacceptable (the exception being the availability of alcohol at social functions for staff and other adults over the age of 18.) The minimum age for smoking is 18 and schools are subject to the same smoke free legislation as other premises.

Disciplinary action will be taken towards students who commit an offence whilst on school property or whilst in school wherever students are within the care of school staff. This includes school trips and educational visits.

The school defines the term 'drug' as:

'A substance people take to change the way they feel, think or behave' and, therefore, includes tobacco, alcohol, solvents, illegal drugs, medicines, new psychoactive substances ('legal highs') and volatile substances, unless otherwise specified.

Rationale

We believe the purpose of drug education should be to give students knowledge, skills and attitudes to appreciate the benefits of a healthy life-style and to relate these to their own actions, both now and in the future.

Students study the topics as part of the Science National at KS 3 and 4, and the PD programme looks at addressing the social, emotional and personal awareness of the dangers of drugs misuse.

Confidentiality

Some students may choose to mention instances of drug use in class or to individual members of the school community. While staff will want to be supportive, they need to follow our Child Protection guidelines and clearly state that they cannot guarantee confidentiality.

Roles and responsibilities

This policy relates to all members of the school community. All staff have a responsibility for drug education and must be fully aware of this policy and its implications for themselves and for others in the community. Whenever adults interact with children, they recognise that they may be influencing attitudes and behaviour. A change in a child's behavior or other students raising suspicions may lead to a member of staff becoming concerned about potential drug use.

Responses to possible drug related incidents

We will consider each situation individually and recognise that in response a variety of actions may be necessary to drug related incidents as recommended by Children, Schools and Families and national guidance. There are very clear guidelines regarding the searching of students who are suspected to have drugs on them. In summary:

Searching without consent:

- Searches for weapons, alcohol, illegal drugs, tobacco and cigarette papers, fireworks and pornographic images and stolen items can take place (plus any article that the member of staff reasonably suspects has been, or is likely to be, used to commit an offence, or to cause personal injury to or damage to property; and Any item banned by the school rules which has been identified in the rules as an item which may be searched for).
- The Principal and any member of school staff authorised by the Principal may search.
- You must be the same sex as the student being searched and there must be a witness (only exception is if the student is at immediate risk of serious harm).
- Teachers can only undertake a search without consent if they have reasonable grounds for suspecting that a student may have in his or her possession a prohibited item.

In the event of seizing a drug the Principal or senior Designated Senior Person (DSP) for safeguarding, (Melinda Mulley) should be informed. (Birchwood's other DSP's are Chris Heydinger and Sally Feather Levey). The substance should be placed in a sealed container, signed, dated ready to be collected by the police. The student should be isolated, mobile phone having been removed, parents / carers to be made aware and a signed and dated statement should be taken by the member of staff.

If it is suspected that a student has taken a drug then the relevant medical emergency services must be informed immediately.

If the situation leads to a medical emergency the school emergency aid procedures will be followed immediately.

In instances involving drug possession, use or supply on the premises or during the school day, the person/s involved will be interviewed by a senior member of staff and will immediately be considered for permanent exclusion. This also includes instances involving drug related equipment.

This response is in line with that held by the local secondary schools' consortium, established in consultation with the police. Parents and police will be informed of the incident. Any decision regarding reinstatement will be made by the governing body disciplinary committee. Similar action will be taken if a student is proven to be under the influence of drugs while on the school premises. Again, police and parents will be informed.

We refer to the Department of Education guidelines on responding to drug related incidents to determine the necessary response. The implications of any action we take is carefully considered. **The focus of any response will be the student not the substance and we will seek to balance the interests of the individual, other members of the school community and the wider community.** Drug use can be a symptom of other problems and the school will look to involve or refer students to other services when needed. Any students involved in drug use will have a pastoral plan and be monitored upon their return to school.

Responses will be cross-referenced with related school policies such as:

Behaviour for Learning
Health and Safety
Child Protection
Offsite Visits
Inclusion
Supporting Students at School with Medical Conditions Policy

We will inform parents/carers or guardians at the earliest opportunity so that we can work together to support the student and resolve any difficulties.

In the event of a member of staff suspecting that a parent/carer is under the influence of drugs or alcohol on school premises or a member of staff is concerned about a student's safety due to parental drug or alcohol misuse (or the child themselves has raised this concern), staff should alert the Senior DSP for Safeguarding.

We have a range of professional colleagues who can give/obtain advice, support and information in drug or alcohol related situations. These may include:

Local Drug and Alcohol agencies and counselling services such as ADASH - 01992 531917
Youth Connexions Personal Adviser
Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) – 01707 354192
Representatives of the local Youth Offending Team (YOT)
The FRANK campaign at 0800 77 66 00 or www.talktofrank.com
NHS Smoking Services for tobacco – www.nhs.uk/smokefree

The student/s will always be told when information is being passed on, in accordance with the school's policy on confidentiality.

Regarding the welfare of staff please refer to the Alcohol, Drugs and Gambling at Work Policy.

Some students may require medicines that have been prescribed for their medical condition during the school day. These substances are kept safe and monitored under the students' IHPs, as per the Supporting Students at School with Medical Conditions Policy.