



# **Mitchell House School Drugs Policy**

## Drugs Policy

*This policy is based on the drugs guidance document "Drugs: Guidance for schools in Northern Ireland" provided jointly by CCEA and the Department for Education (2015).*

### Rationale

Our school mission statement commits us to encouraging mutual respect, trust and individuality with the goal of nurturing learning to help our pupils to achieve their full potential. Part of this responsibility is an effective drugs policy. It is important that all of our pupils are protected from harmful drugs and the drug trade. Our Drugs Policy, PDMU and Personal Development Programme aim to raise pupil awareness of the effects of drugs and other substances on emotional, physical and social well-being

### Definitions

For the purpose of this policy, the terms drug and substance include any product that, when taken, has the effect of altering the way the body works or how a person behaves, feels, sees or thinks.

As well as everyday products such as tea and coffee, substances include:

- Alcohol, tobacco and tobacco-related products, including nicotine replacement therapy (NRT), and electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes);
- Over-the-counter medicines such as paracetamol and cough medicine;
- prescribed drugs, such as antibiotics, painkillers, antidepressants, antipsychotics, inhalers and stimulants such as Ritalin;
- Volatile substances such as correcting fluids or thinners, gas lighter fuel, aerosols, glues and petrol;
- Controlled drugs such as cannabis, LSD, ecstasy, amphetamine sulphate (speed), magic mushrooms, heroin and cocaine;
- New psychoactive substances (NPS), formerly known as legal highs, which contain one or more chemical substances that produce similar effects to illegal drugs and are sold as incense, salts or plant food and marked 'not for human consumption' to avoid prosecution; and
- Other substances such as amyl or butyl nitrite (known as poppers) and unprocessed magic mushrooms.

## Electronic cigarettes on school premises

Electronic cigarettes are battery-powered vapour inhaler devices that generally contain nicotine, along with propylene glycol and glycerine. They were developed as an alternative to tobacco products and have become increasingly popular. The Chief Medical Officer (CMO) for Northern Ireland has advised that schools prohibit electronic cigarettes on their premises, in line with tobacco products.

### Aims

The aims of the school are:

- To ensure that the school is free from illegal drugs;
- To provide a safe and secure learning environment;
- To protect and support vulnerable students and those at risk;
- To inform and educate students;
- To provide students with a range of personal, social and other skills;
- To work cooperatively and supportively with parents/guardians;
- To work cooperatively with external support agencies including the PSNI; and
- To ensure that members of staff are aware of their pastoral and legal responsibilities.

### Roles and Responsibilities

The **Designated Teacher in charge of Safeguarding and Child Protection (Mrs Collins)** has responsibility for overseeing and monitoring this policy and managing incidents of suspected drug use.

The roles and responsibilities of individual staff members, the Designated Teacher, the Principal and the Board of Governors are clearly set out on pages 12 - 13 of the CCEA/DE guidance document. These various groups are aware of their particular roles and responsibilities and will fulfil them when dealing with drugs-related incidents.

### Legal responsibilities

Staff members of Mitchell House School must notify the PSNI in all instances where there is an allegation or suspicion that a crime has been committed. Failure to notify the PSNI is a criminal offence.

## **Offences under the Misuse of Drugs Act (1971)**

These include:

- Possession - to knowingly be in possession of a relatively small quantity of a controlled substance for personal use.
- Possession with intent to supply another person a controlled substance.

## **Drugs Education in the Curriculum**

The issues of drugs is dealt with in the curriculum through:

- The taught Personal Development programme, which is delivered both in primary and secondary school, initially through PDMU and later through Personal Development.

The Drugs Education Programme is subject to curriculum review.

## **PROCEDURES FOR MANAGING SUSPECTED DRUGS-RELATED INCIDENTS**

### **What constitutes a drug-related incident?**

For the purposes of this policy, a drug-related incident may include:

- A pupil displaying unusual or uncharacteristic behaviour;
- An allegation;
- Suspicion of possession, possession with intent to supply and/or supply of any substance as defined as a drug; and
- Finding substance-related paraphernalia.

### **Staff Responses**

It is important that members of staff respond to drugs-related incidents in a manner that:

- Ensures the safety and protection of the student/students in their care;
- Is within the law; and
- Follows the school's agreed procedures.

## **PLEASE REFER TO APPENDIX ONE AND TWO FOR PROCEDURES IN DEALING WITH DRUGS-RELATED INCIDENTS**

### Carrying out a search

If the Designated Teacher in charge of Safeguarding and Child Protection receives an allegation of possession, he may need to search a pupil's belongings, if he has cause to believe they contain unlawful items, including controlled drugs.

However, **teachers cannot search the personal belongings of a pupil without consent**. Staff should only search the pupil's personal belongings, including schoolbag, coat or other items with the pupil's consent. Staff should carry out this search in the presence of the pupil and another adult witness.

**Members of staff should never carry out a physical search of a pupil.**

### Confiscating a suspected controlled substance and/or associated paraphernalia

School staff can take temporary possession of a substance suspected of being a controlled drug to protect a pupil from harm and prevent the pupil committing the offence of possession. The teacher should, using appropriate safety precautions, take the suspected substance and any associated equipment to the **Designated Teacher in Charge of Safeguarding and Child Protection** as soon as possible. No staff member should attempt to analyse or taste an unidentified substance. An adult witness should be present when the staff member confiscates the substance and a record should be kept of the details, using the **Drug Incident Report Form (see Appendix Three)**.

### Reporting and Recording a Drugs-Related Incident

All drugs related incidents will be reported to the Principal and the **Designated Teacher in charge of Safeguarding and Child Protection**.

If the Principal or Designated Teacher in charge of Safeguarding and Child Protection considers an incident to be serious the school should call the Education Authority Northern Ireland to alert them to the incident and then make a full written factual record of the incident.

Staff members are expected to complete a **Drug Incident Report Form (see Appendix Three)** and the relevant **Incident Book** in all cases of drug -related incidents. Records of statements provided by students and staff involved in or witness to such an incident will be carefully stored as they may be required by

the police if the incident becomes a criminal investigation. The following points should be taken account of when drugs-related incidents are being recorded:

- Statements must be factual;
- Sensitive information about students should be treated in confidential and secure manner; and
- Reports provided by witnesses should be recorded carefully and accurately.

### **Involving Parents/Guardians**

Mitchell House School values its links with parents/guardians. Consequently, the Principal and staff will keep parents informed of any drugs-related incident/s involving their children and will work cooperatively with them in resolving matters.

### **Confidentiality**

Dealing with a drugs-related incident calls for considerable sensitivity and, on occasions, confidentiality. The school staff dealing with any such instances will maintain the necessary levels of confidentiality to protect students involved in any way, together with their parents/guardians. However, the welfare of the students and demands of the law take precedence over confidentiality, thus absolute confidentiality can never be guaranteed to either students or their parents/guardians.

### **Dealing with the Media**

If a staff member receives an enquiry from the media, only the Principal or Designated Teacher in charge of Safeguarding and Child Protection should respond to the call. When responding to the media, it is essential that the school respect the privacy of pupils and their families. The Principal should prepare a checklist of the appropriate key facts and decide whether to liaise with the PSNI before issuing a statement. Any statements made should be positive, short, factual and without elaboration. Concluding statements should be reassuring and restate that the school has managed the incident effectively. If any further comments are necessary, the Principal should reiterate the original statement.

## **Disciplinary and Pastoral Care Responses**

The Principal and Designated Teacher in charge of Safeguarding and Protection will align their response to drugs-related incidents alongside the school **Behaviour for Learning Policy** and **Pastoral Care Policy**. In all cases the welfare of the pupil/pupils involved will be a priority, where necessary pupils and parents/guardians will be referred to Family Works Counselling Service. In dealing with drugs-related incidents, the school will, as appropriate involve external statutory and voluntary support agencies. In addition guidance will be sought from the PSNI.

## **Guidance for Administering Prescribed Medication**

In Mitchell House School the school nurse administers prescribed medications or delegates a trained member of staff to do this on her behalf, for example on a school trip.

## **Emergency First Aid procedures**

In the event of a drug-related incident emergency staff members are expected to follow the school's **First Aid Policy and Procedures for dealing with drugs-related incidents (see Appendix One and Two)**.

## **Health and Safety of Students: Premises Issue**

If it becomes known that the school premises or grounds are being used out of hours for drugs-related incidents, the PSNI will be notified and the Principal will ensure that arrangements are in place to check the premises and grounds for signs of misuse.

## **Monitoring, Evaluation and Review**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the **Designated Teacher in charge of Safe Guarding and Child Protection (Mrs Collins)**. If there is a suspected substance-related incident then this policy will be amended to ensure we use what we learn from actual incidents to inform future practice, by doing this the policy will reflect changing circumstances and trends in substance use.

## **Staff Training**

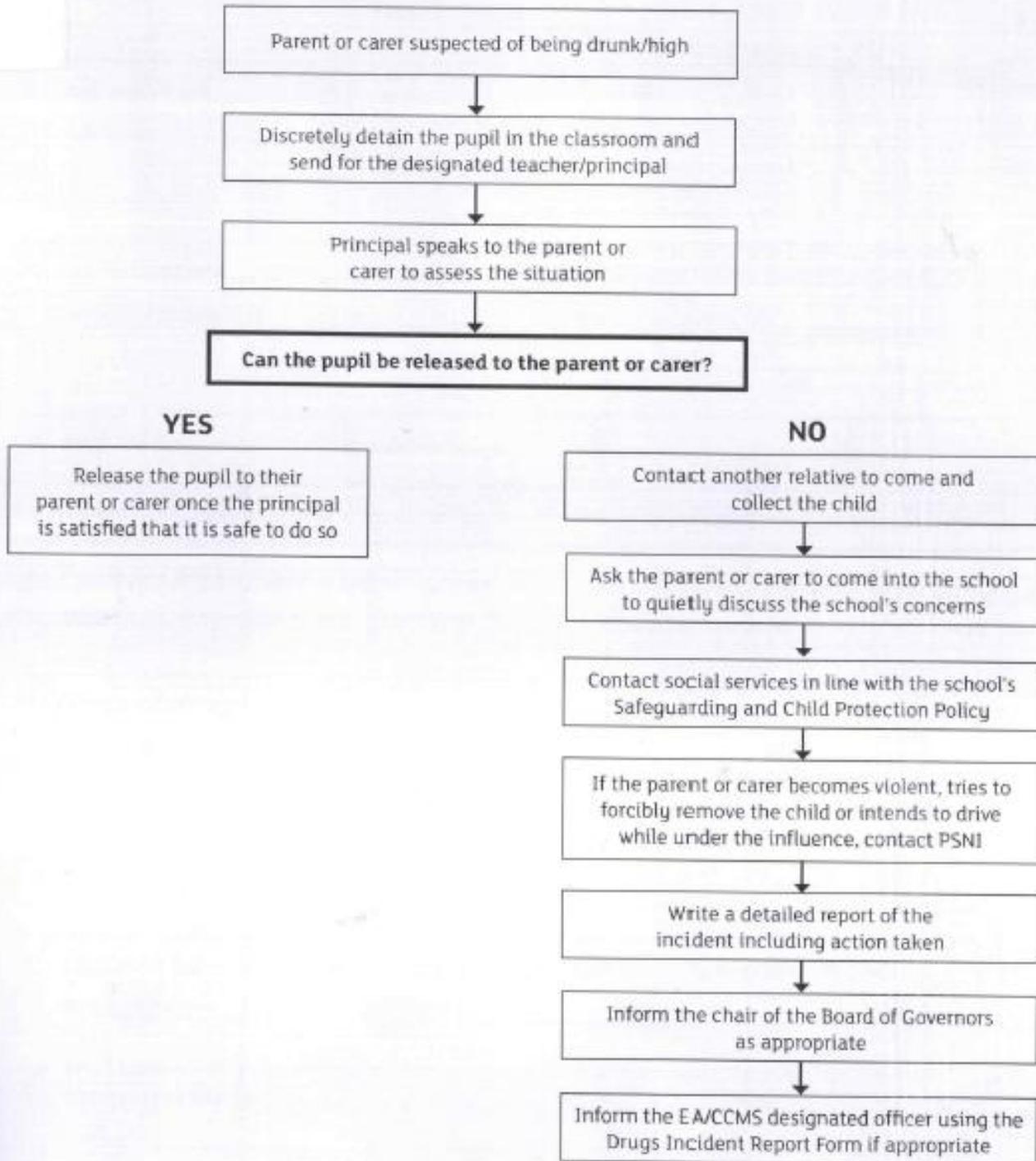
The school will maintain a programme of staff development in relation to drugs education to ensure that all staff members are well equipped to undertake their curriculum, pastoral and legal responsibilities. Identified staff members will also attend appropriate in-service courses provided by voluntary and statutory agencies.

## **Complaints Procedure**

Parents/guardians who have a complaint in relation to a drugs-related issue or incident should contact the Principal in writing. If they are not satisfied with the outcome, they may refer the matter in writing to the Board of Governors. The Complaints Policy is available from the website and school office on request.

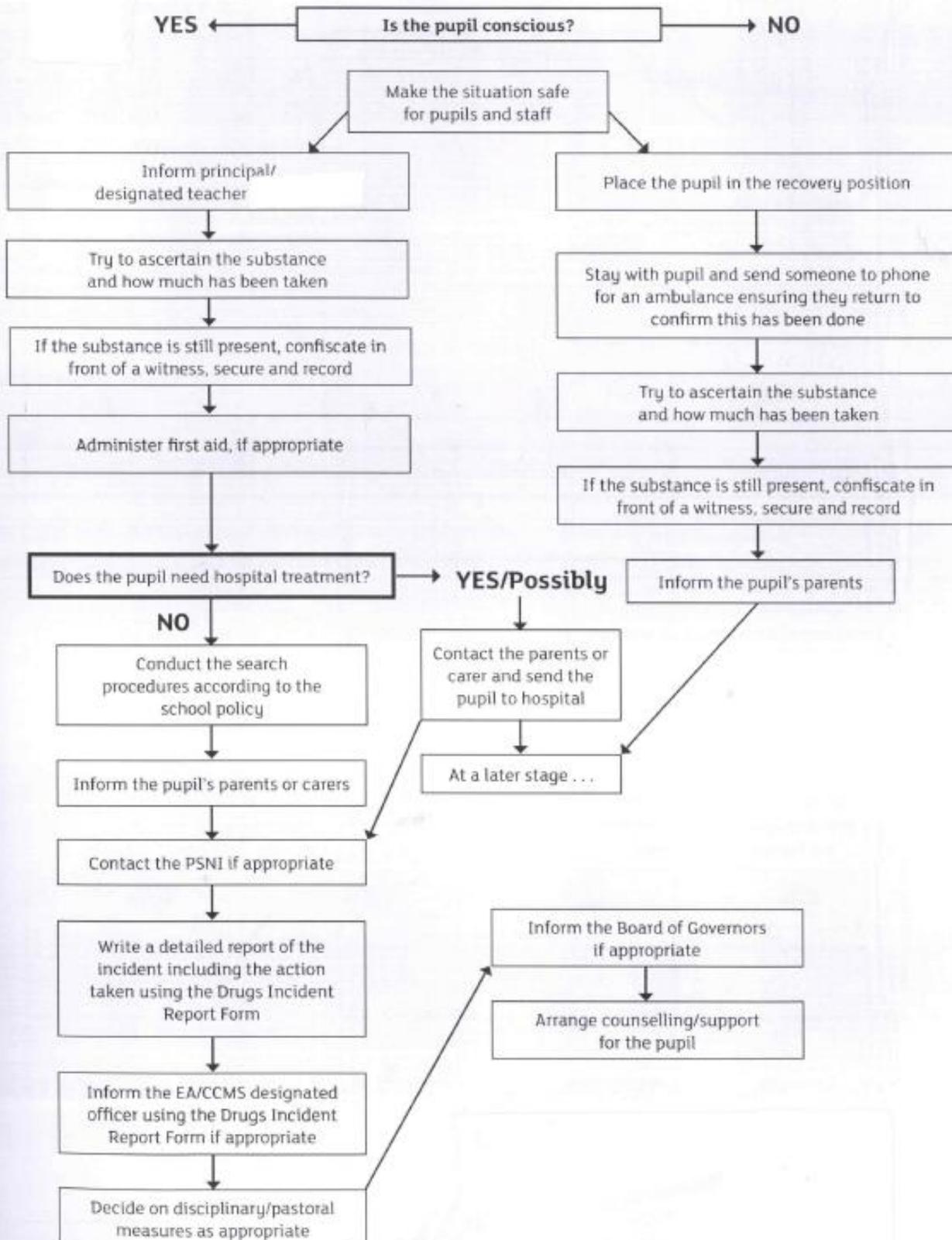
## Appendix One

A parent or carer arrives at school to collect a child and appears to be under the influence of alcohol or another substance



## Appendix Two

### Pupil suspected of having taken drugs/alcohol on school premises



## Appendix Three

### Drugs Incident Report Form

1.	Name of Pupil _____ DOB _____ Address _____ _____
2.	Date of Incident _____ Reported by _____ Time of Incident _____ Location of Incident _____ _____
3.	First Aid given YES/NO Administered by _____ Ambulance/Doctor Called YES/NO Time of Call _____
4.	Parent or carer informed YES/NO Date _____ Time _____
5.	Where substance is retained _____ or Date substance destroyed or passed to PSNI _____ Time _____
6.	PSNI informed YES/NO Date _____ Time _____
7.	Education Authority or CCMS Designated Officer informed, as appropriate YES/NO Date _____ Time _____
8.	Form completed by _____ Date _____ Position _____