

ST BARTHOLOMEW'S SCHOOL

POLICY ON SUBSTANCE USE AND MISUSE

Approved by Learning & Achievement Committee, Spring 2009

To be approved by Full Governing Body, Spring 2009

To be reviewed Spring 2012

Statement of Policy on Substance Use and Misuse -

(the word substance is taken to include those that are legal, such as alcohol, tobacco and solvents over the counter and prescribed drugs, and illegal drugs, such as cannabis, ecstasy, heroin, crack/cocaine and LSD).

St. Bartholomew's School

- condones neither the misuse of drugs and alcohol by members of the school, nor the illegal supply of these substances;
- is committed to the health and safety of its members and will take action to safeguard their well-being;
- acknowledges the importance of its pastoral role in the welfare of young people, and through the Tutorial Programme and the general ethos of the school, will seek to inform and educate pupils on the consequences of drug use and misuse;
- takes a pro-active stance on this matter, believing that health education is a vital part of the personal and social education of every pupil;
- shares the responsibility for the education of its pupils with their parents, and will keep parents informed and involved at all times;
- acknowledges that the numbers of young people who use and misuse substances is rising, but recognises also that a larger number choose not to do so. The school will support their differing needs.
- believes that the possession and use of drugs in school, or during the school day, or on school activities, is inappropriate. None of the drugs covered in this policy are permitted to be bought, sold or otherwise obtained on school premises, or during the school day, including when pupils are on school activities or visits. These rules apply to adults working at, or for the school. Individual exceptions may be made for pupils who need to take prescribed medicines, where appropriate.

Educational Aims in respect of Substance Use and Misuse

In line with the overall Aims of the school, St. Bartholomew's will -

- enable pupils to make healthy, informed choices by increasing knowledge, challenging attitudes, and developing and practising personal skills;
- provide accurate information about substances;
- increase understanding about the implications and possible consequences of use and misuse
- encourage an understanding for those experiencing, or likely to experience, substance use
- widen understanding about related health and social issues, eg. sex and sexuality, crime, HIV and AIDS;
- seek to minimise the risks that users and potential users face;
- enable pupils to identify sources of appropriate personal support.

These aims are fulfilled through aspects of the Tutorial Programme, the taught curriculum and through extra-curricular activities.

The school actively cooperates with external agencies such as the Police, Social Services, Health and Drug Agencies to deliver its commitment to Drugs Education and to deal with incidents of substance use and misuse. Visitors who support the school will be informed of the values held within this policy.

The Implementation of the Policy - The Roles of Staff, Substance Coordinator, Headteacher, Governing Body & Parents

The Headteacher takes overall responsibility for the policy and its implementation, for liaison with the Governing Body, parents and appropriate outside agencies. The Headteacher will ensure that all staff dealing with substance issues are adequately supported and trained. Only the Headteacher will make statements to the media about cases of substance use or misuse.

The Deputy Head Learning & Achievement is the Substance Coordinator, who has general responsibility for handling the day-to-day implementation of this policy.

The prevention of substance use and misuse is a whole-school issue in which each staff member has a part to play. Staff must be aware that personal conduct has a significant impact on the readiness of pupils to adopt responsible attitudes and behaviour.

Where a pupil discloses to a member of staff that (s)he is using or misusing substances, the member of staff should make clear to the pupil that no guarantee of confidentiality can be offered. Follow-up is at the discretion of the staff member and will depend on the gravity of the situation.

All staff should be alert to the warning signs which may indicate that a pupil is misusing substances. The main signs are summarised in Appendix 1. Staff should also be aware of the Law on Drugs published as Appendix 2.

The school will consider each substance incident individually, and recognises that a variety of responses will be necessary. Careful consideration will be given to the implications of any action, seeking to balance the interests of the pupil involved, the other school members and the local community. Permanent exclusion is seen as the last resort as it may only transfer the problem.

There is no legal obligation on the school to inform the police, although they may be contacted for advice and support.

In the event that the school could be a crime scene, staff will ensure procedures are taken to preserve it.

The Governing Body will be involved in substance education and substance related incidents in the same manner as any other matter concerning the direction of the school.

Dealing with Incidents of Substance Use and Misuse

In instances involving misuse or supply on the premises, following discussion between staff members who know the pupil well, parents will be informed at the earliest opportunity by the Headteacher, so that all parties can work together to support the pupil. Investigations will follow the “Guidance on Undertaking Investigations into Serious Incidents involving the School” (published separately).

In an emergency situation involving substance misuse, once professional medical help has arrived and the situation is in hand, the Headteacher and/or Substance Coordinator should be notified and the parents contacted.

A member of staff may search a pupil’s locker where there is reasonable cause to believe it contains unlawful items, including illegal drugs. In all cases, a senior member of staff should be called to help as a witness. Where pupils are suspected of concealing illegal substances on their person, every effort should first be made to secure the voluntary production of the substances, by asking them, for example, to turn out pockets. If a pupil refuses, the police may be called to deal with the situation. Intimate physical searches must never be made by a member of staff.

If illegal drugs are found on a pupil, the police will be informed. The law permits school staff to take temporary possession of a substance suspected of being a controlled drug for the purposes of protecting a pupil from harm and from committing the act of possession. The substance should be handed to the police for identification. School staff should not attempt to analyse or taste an unidentified substance.

Pupils will only be interviewed by police on school premises in very exceptional circumstances, with the Headteacher’s agreement, with a member of staff present, and provided efforts have been made to inform the pupil’s parents.

The Headteacher may exclude a pupil for behaviour outside school involving substance use or misuse, if there is a clear link between the misconduct in questions and the promotion of good behaviour and discipline on the part of the school’s pupils. This will be a matter of judgement for the Headteacher, who will take into account the likely impact of the misconduct on the life of the school. Pupils behaviour on school trips and school activities is also subject to the school’s normal code of discipline.

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Signed by Chairman

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Date