



Bungay High School...

Dealing with Drug Related Incidents



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Opportunity and Excellence for All



Dealing with Drug Related Incidents

Terminology

For the purposes of this policy the following definitions apply:

- **Drug:** Any psychotropic substance: all legal drugs (including alcohol and tobacco), all illegal drugs, volatile substances, and over-the counter and prescription medicines.
- **Drug use:** Drug taking through which harm may occur, whether through intoxication, breach of school rules or the law, or the possibility of future health problems, although such harm may not be immediately perceptible.
- **Drug-related incident:** Evidence or suspicion of a specific event at school involving one or more unauthorised drugs, and requiring immediate action by school staff. (Examples include: pupil drinking alcohol at school; pupil discovered bringing slimming tablets secretly to school; pupil found intoxicated at school; named student reported having sold cannabis to friend at school „last week“).

(Definitions used in the document published by the Standing Conference on Drug Abuse – Managing and Making Policy for Drug-related Incidents in Schools – the Right Responses, 1999)

Legal Context

- Teachers are often described as being in loco parentis. This pre-Children Act 1989 concept is not clearly defined in Law but is usually interpreted as giving teachers the delegated authority to act as a wise, responsible and careful parent would.
- In dealing with drug-related incidents a school has a duty of care to the “whole school body”. This includes students, employees and members of the public with a legitimate right to be on the school premises.
- Under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, it is an offence to allow premises for which you are responsible to be used for smoking cannabis or opium, or the production or supply of controlled drugs.
- It is legally permissible to confiscate an illegal drug in order to prevent an offence being committed and then to destroy it or hand it to the police. Schools are allowed to dispose of illegal drugs by, for example, flushing them down the toilet. A witness should be present and the action recorded. A drug maybe handed to the police, though the law does not require this.

Geographical Boundaries

The remit of this policy applies to conduct whilst on the school premises, on journeys between school and home as well as on school visits, journeys and other activities, whether supervised by teaching staff or not.

Disclosure

If a student makes a disclosure that s/he has been using drugs or misusing substances, we must remember never to promise confidentiality. Disclosure usually indicates a need for help, and the student needs to be made aware straight away that we will need to talk to other adults



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who are able to help. Such disclosures should be discussed with the Learning Leader before action is agreed.

Suspicion/Rumour

Many schools and other organisations have been advised to assemble lists of possible symptoms of drug use to help staff "spot" potential offenders. Unfortunately it is not as straightforward as this because many of the signs and symptoms listed are perfectly normal aspects of adolescent (and adult) behaviour. However, the following lists of warning signs are offered to assist staff in their work. They are not, of course, in themselves, conclusive!

Warning signs in individuals:

- Excessive spending or borrowing of money
- Stealing from parents
- Attendance pattern changes, or sudden unwillingness to participate in school activities
- Unusual outbreaks of temper
- Disregard for physical appearance
- Lack of appetite
- Being the subject of rumours

Warning signs in groups:

- Being the subject of rumours
- Exchanging money/objects in suspicious circumstances
- Talking to strangers/ex-students near school premises
- Associating briefly with an older student who is not normally part of the group
- Use of drugs slang

Objects or signs which may indicate drug use:

- Foil containers – perhaps discoloured by heat
- Metal tins
- Heat-discoloured spoons
- Cigarette rolling papers with ripped packaging
- Plastic bags or butane gas containers
- Stamps or similar small items
- Hand rolled cigarettes
- An aromatic smell
- Cardboard or other tubes
- Paper (2" square) folded to form a square
- Small bottles, pill boxes

All suspicions must be reported to the Learning Leader who will consider appropriate action. If we have suspicions it is always very difficult to decide if parents should be made aware of them and/or if students should be confronted. We always have to be mindful that we could be



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accused of victimisation. However, the vast majority of our parent body would want to know of any suspicions we may have. Such conversations would have to be handled with great sensitivity and best be held where there is already an excellent parent/school relationship. The Learning Leader would probably be the person best placed to have such a conversation.

Possession

Students found to be in possession of an illegal drug on the school premises or whilst engaged in a school activity may be excluded for a fixed term. A repeat of such an offence may lead to a permanent exclusion. If a student was found to be supplying illegal substances on the school premises a permanent exclusion may be considered.

The discovery of an illegal substance should be reported immediately to the Deputy Head who will contact the police and recommend appropriate action to the Headteacher.

Students found to be in possession of an unauthorised drug (e.g. alcohol) on the school premises or whilst engaged in a school activity will be punished as appropriate. Such matters should be reported to the Deputy Head who will recommend appropriate action to the Headteacher.

Parents will always be informed in cases of possession of unauthorised drugs in school.

Intoxication

If a student's unusual, irrational or inappropriate behaviour gives staff a strong suspicion that s/he is under the influence of an unauthorised/illegal substance, the Learning Leader or Deputy Head will contact the parents and ask for the young person to be collected and taken home. In such cases we have to be careful not to make false accusations or be in a position where we could be accused of victimisation. Sometimes it will be most appropriate to tell a parent that their child "appears to be unwell" and ask for him to be collected rather than being more specific about our suspicions. On other occasions when, for example, we have good evidence that a student has been drinking alcohol we can tell the parent of our strong suspicions when asking for him/her to be collected.

Involvement of the Police

- If an illegal substance is found on school property (or whilst staff/students are engaged in a school activity) the item(s) will be secured, and preferably this should be witnessed, then the local police (01986 835300) will be advised as soon as is practicable. Careful physical handling is recommended and protective gloves should be worn where necessary. The school will co-operate fully with the police in any subsequent investigation.
- The Headteacher and Deputy Head will liaise with the local police on a regular basis as appropriate.
- The Police Education Partnership Link Officer (Currently P.C. Kevin Stephenson) will work with the PSHE team in the delivery of drugs education.



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Action

It is important that no member of staff acts in isolation. This will mean, for example, that a student should not be interviewed in these matters without a staff witness.

Relationship to other School Policies

This policy has been drawn up within the context of the school's Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural Policy Statement. It has a close association with a number of other school/county/ policies, namely:

- Learning Expectations
- Child Protection/Safeguarding
- Drugs Education
- Personal, Social and Health Education
- Health and Safety

Recording Incidents

- Matters of suspicion should not be recorded on a students file.
- Specific incidents will be recorded in a student's file by the tutor/Learning Leader/Student Support Worker as appropriate.

First Aid

The School's First Aid Policy and Procedures are detailed in the Health and Safety Policy.

Revised April 2010