



HUNTERHOUSE COLLEGE

DEALING WITH SUSPECTED OR ACTUAL DRUG/SUBSTANCE ABUSE POLICY

Date/Date Reviewed: 2020

Date Ratified: 15th June 2020

Previous: 2017

Next Review due: 2023

This policy is available in pdf format from the school website

www.hunterhousecollege.org.uk

or on request from the School Office 028 9061 2293

info@hunterhouse.belfast.ni.sch.uk

Inclusion & Diversity:

The College aims to establish an inclusive community where all students and staff are treated with dignity and respect, regardless of individual differences including, but not limited to, culture, race, religion, beliefs, sexual or gender orientation, appearance, ability or disability.

Rationale:

Hunterhouse College does not condone substance abuse or the misuse of drugs or substances but recognises that there has been a considerable increase in the misuse of drugs in recent years in Northern Ireland. Drug misuse appears to be affecting an ever-younger population and the so-called 'recreational' use of drugs can lead to a dangerous acceptance of illegal and harmful drug misuse as part of everyday life. Research continues to show that, by post-primary school age, a significant number of young people are engaging with substances such as alcohol, cigarettes, including electronic cigarettes or solvents, and/or have misused prescribed medicines or other substances.

Ethos:

The College is committed to the physical, mental, social, emotional, moral and spiritual health, as well as the safety and well-being, of our students and staff.

We believe that the College community has a vital role to play in combating the misuse of substances and drugs by young people and we therefore include a Drugs Education Programme in our Curriculum. We aim to deal with every incident of substance or drugs abuse sensitively and with a focus on support, enabling our students to make informed decisions which will keep them safe.

Definitions:

For the purpose of this document, 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. Substances include:

- alcohol, tobacco and tobacco-related products, including nicotine replacement therapy (NRT), and electronic 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
- Other substances such as amyl or butyl nitrite (known as poppers) and unprocessed magic mushrooms.

Drug Use refers to taking a drug: there is no value judgement, although all drug use has an element of risk.

Drug Misuse refers to legal, illegal or illicit drug taking or alcohol consumption, which leads a person to experience social, psychological, physical or legal problems related to intoxication or regular excessive consumption and /or dependence.

Drug use is therefore taking drugs, including prescribed drugs and NPS, that cause harm to the individual, their significant others or the wider community.

Aims and objectives:

- Ensure the well-being and safety of students
- Promote and develop the ideals, values and beliefs of the College as set out in the Mission Statement

- Provide a framework through which to deal with incidents of drug/substance abuse and drugs use/misuse
- Have a clear and agreed understanding among everyone in the College community about the implications and possible consequences of substance/drug use/misuse
- Ensure that the framework is sensitively and consistently applied in all situations
- Provide appropriate support and assistance for those students affected by drug-related issues
- Inform parents/carers of the content of this policy and the procedures to be implemented in the management of incidents of suspected drug misuse
- Establish an environment in which the College is free from the misuse of all drugs

Matters relating to drug/substance abuse are to be seen within the context of the College's Drugs Education Policy, Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy and Student Progress Policy.

Procedures for managing suspected or actual drug/substance-related incidents:

For the purpose of this document, a drug/substance-related incident may include:

- a student displaying unusual or uncharacteristic behaviour
- an allegation
- suspicion of possession, possession with intent to supply and/or supply of any substance as defined on page 2
- finding substance-related paraphernalia
- any of the above whilst on a school trip, school minibus or any authorised College activity.

Procedures relating to drugs and substance-related incidents are intended to be clear and familiar to all staff (teaching and non-teaching) and for Governors. All staff have a responsibility to respond appropriately to any incident of substance abuse and to be vigilant for the signs of drug/substance use/misuse/abuse.

The Designated Teacher for Drugs Education is responsible for co-ordinating the arrangements to deal with suspected or actual drug/substance abuse. S/he will act on behalf of and in liaison with the Principal and keep him informed at all stages in matters relating to the use/misuse of drugs/substances on the College site.

Procedures should be carried out in line with the College's Positive Behaviour Policy. The Student Progress Team will be involved in setting up appropriate support strategies.

Should an incident occur in College where drugs/substances have been misused/abused the following procedures will apply.

Incidents involving Legally Held Drugs/Substances:

Where there has been misuse of legally held drugs/substances, the member of staff who discovers the incident should call the Designated Teacher for Drugs Education and a member of the school's qualified First Aid team (names are published on the staffroom notice board). The Designated Teacher for Drugs Education and First Aider will:

- Assess the situation
- Take steps to ensure the safety of the student(s)
- Give emergency aid and seek medical attendance if necessary
- Inform parents/carers
- Inform the Principal

The member of staff should carefully record in writing the place, date and time and circumstances of the incident. The issue should be dealt with confidentially at all times.

Legally held drugs/substances include:

- adhesives glues, nail polish remover
- typing correcting fluids and thinners
- gas lighter fuel
- aerosols
- paint stripper
- petrol
- anabolic steroids and related substances
- Over the counter medicines eg paracetamol
- Prescribed drugs eg antibiotics and tranquillisers eg Valium, Librium, Temazepam

Incidents Involving Illegally held drugs/substances:

These include, but are not limited to:

- Possession of drugs/substances in College
- Use/misuse/abuse of drugs/substances in College
- Offering, supplying, selling drugs/substances/cigarettes in College
- Use/misuse/abuse of drugs/substances outside of College whilst in College uniform

Actions by members of staff (teaching and support):

1. Assess the situation and decide on action. Ensure the safety of the individual student(s) involved, of other students, yourself and other staff
2. Secure first aid and send for additional staff if necessary. Put the person(s) under the influence of the drugs in the recovery position if necessary. Ensure airways are cleared. Send for an ambulance if necessary
3. Gather details and data from all the eye-witnesses at the scene
4. Remove any other bystanders from the immediate vicinity
5. Make the situation safe for all students and other staff
6. Carefully gather up any drugs/paraphernalia/evidence lying around and keep safely. College staff are not permitted to search students' clothing or possessions. However, it is acceptable to ask the student to empty pockets and school bags. Staff may search College property such as lockers or desks
7. Ascertain which substances/drugs have been taken and how much
8. Secure all drugs and paraphernalia and give to the Designated Teacher immediately who will ensure that they are placed in a locked cabinet in the Principal's office
9. Write a factual account, sign and forward this to the Designated Teacher

Actions taken by Designated Teacher:

1. Respond to first aider's advice and recommendations
2. Inform parents/carers immediately
3. Take possession of any evidence
4. Inform Principal
5. Inform the relevant Education Authority (Belfast Region) officer
6. Take initial responsibility for students involved in the suspected incident
7. Complete an incident report form (Appendix 2) and forward this to the Principal
8. All statements and phone calls should be recorded, signed and dated

Actions taken by the Principal:

- Determine the circumstances from the reports
- Contact the PSNI
- Verify that the following people have been contacted: parents/carers, Education Authority (Belfast Region) Officer
- Ensure the incident form is filled in and returned to the Advisor for Pastoral Care
- Inform the Board of Governors

- Agree pastoral and disciplinary responses including counselling services support
- Forward a copy of the incident report to the Chairman of the Board of Governors and the designated Education Authority (Belfast Region) Officer
- Review policy and procedures if necessary in the light of experience

Confidentiality:

Staff cannot and should not promise confidentiality. They should make the boundaries of confidentiality clear to students. Members of staff will carefully consider their response if a student approaches them for individual advice on drug/substance use/misuse/abuse. In the case of controlled substances, the staff member should explain to the student that they cannot offer a guarantee of confidentiality. If the student discloses information concerning controlled substances, the staff member must pass this on to the Designated Teacher for Drugs Education.

Communication following a suspected or confirmed drug-related incident:

Staff, students and parents or carers

The College will, at all times, give careful consideration as to how any information relating to an incident of suspected/confirmed drug substance use/misuse is communicated to staff, students and parents/carers.

Information will only be disclosed to staff concerned with the needs of the individual student. Only the parents/carers of the student or students directly involved will be informed of the incident and of the subsequent outcomes.

Staff will not discuss individual cases with other students. The College may, however, need to make a general statement informing the school community after an incident where rumours may create a negative atmosphere.

Dealing with the Media

If the College receives an enquiry from the media, the caller will only be referred to the Principal or, in the absence of the Principal, the Designated Teacher for Drugs Education. When responding to the media the privacy of the student(s), their family and/or any staff members will be respected at all times.

Incidents Involving Alcohol:

Consumption of alcohol by students is forbidden in any connection with the College. It is not to be brought into the College, consumed on the College site or on any College activity. Any instance where alcohol is brought onto the College site by a student(s) and/or consumed on the College site by a student(s) will be managed through the College's Positive Behaviour Policy.

Incidents Involving Smoking/Vaping:

The entire College site is a non-smoking area. Smoking is forbidden in any connection with the College. Cigarettes/e-cigarettes and any related products are not to be brought into the College, consumed on the College site or on any College activities. Along with the risk to health, the possession of matches, lighters etc and lighted cigarettes etc constitute a fire hazard. Any instance where a student(s) is found to be smoking/vaping on the College site will be managed through the College's Positive Behaviour Policy.

Linked Documents:

Drugs Education Policy
 First Aid & Medication Policy
 Positive Behaviour Policy
 Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
 Student Progress Policy
 Suspension & Expulsion Policy

Appendix 1

The Management of Prescribed Medicines:

The College accepts that it is necessary for some students to take prescribed drugs for medical conditions during College hours and will discuss with parents/carers how best to do this, with reference to the student's condition and the method of administration. This will include:

- A nominated person to have responsibility for supervising the administration
- A secure place for storage of the drug while on school premises

At the start of the school year, parents/carers must inform the College of any medical illnesses their child has by completing the second page of the data capture form. If a student needs to take a prescribed medicine in College this should also be stated on the data capture form. The student must immediately give the medication, along with a written note of instructions from the parent/carer, to Pupil Reception who will pass it to a member of the first aid team located in Colinmore. The member of staff must store the medicine in a locked cupboard and ensure that only the student for whom the medicine is prescribed takes the medicine. If the student needs to carry the medicine, for example an inhaler or EpiPen, this must also be stated on the data capture form and a spare must be provided to be kept in a locked cupboard. If, during the year, a student is given a prescribed medicine for a short term, then a letter from the parent/carer explaining the nature of the illness and the dosage required must be sent to the College with the student concerned. This medicine will then be stored in a locked cupboard and the student must present to the medical room at the appropriate time for the medication to be taken.

Please see the First Aid and Medication Policy for further information.

Appendix 2

Drugs Incident Report Form

1.	Name of Student	
	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	
	Date substance destroyed or passed to PSNI	
	Time	
6.	PSNI Informed	YES/NO
	Date	
	Time	
7.	Education Authority Officer Informed	YES/NO
	Date	
	Time	
8.	Form completed by	
	Date	
	Position	
Description of the Incident		
Actions Taken		

Incident form Completed by	Date

Appendix 3

Warning Signs that may indicate Substance Abuse

The signs listed in Tables 1 and 2 may indicate that individuals or groups of young people are misusing drugs. Their presence alone is not conclusive proof of drug or substance misuse: many of them are a normal part of adolescence, but the presence of several signs which, if found in certain circumstances, might also give grounds for concern.

Table 1: Warning Signs in Individuals

- Changes in attendance, and being unwilling to take part in school activities
- Decline in performance in school work
- Unusual outbreaks of temper, marked swings of mood, restlessness or irritability
- Reports from parents that more time is being spent away from home, possibly with new friends or with friends in older age groups.
- Excessive spending or borrowing of money
- Stealing money or goods
- Excessive tiredness without obvious cause
- No interest in physical appearance
- Sores or rashes especially on the mouth or nose
- Lack of appetite
- Heavy use of scents, colognes etc to disguise the smell of drugs
- Wearing sun glasses at inappropriate times (to hide dilated or constricted pupils)

Table 2: Warning Signs in Groups

- Regular absence on certain days (eg the day young people receive state benefit)
- Keeping at a distance from other pupils, away from supervision points (eg groups who frequently gather near the gate of a school playground or sports field).
- Being the subject of rumours about drug taking
- Talking to strangers on or near the premises
- Stealing which appears to be the work of several individuals rather than one person (eg perhaps to shop lift solvents)
- Use of drug takers slang
- Exchanging money or other objects in unusual circumstances
- Associating briefly with one person who is much older and not normally part of the peer group.

Table 3: Objects that may indicate Drug Misuse

- Foil containers or cup shapes made from silver foil perhaps discoloured by heat
- Metal containers/boxes
- Spoons discoloured by heat
- Pill boxes
- Plastic, cellophane or metal foil wrappers
- Small plastic or glass phials or bottles
- Twists of paper
- Straws
- Sugar lumps
- Syringes or needles (rare)
- Cigarette papers and lighters
- Spent matches
- Plastic bags or butane gas containers (solvent abuse)

- Cardboard or other tubes (heroin - rare)
- Stamps, stickers, transfers or similar items
- Shredded cigarettes, home rolled cigarettes and pipes (cannabis)
- Paper (about 2 inches square) folded to form an envelope (heroin - rare)

(Table 1, 2 and 3 are adapted from Liverpool Education Authority and TACADE materials)

Detecting drug use through other aspects of behaviour

There is the possibility that if there is suspicion of drug use then this can be further indicated or confirmed by looking at certain behavioural characteristics.

The likelihood of drug taking can be assessed by looking for history or signs in the young person of

- peer group drug use
- serious school misbehaviour
- other forms of delinquent behaviour
- truancy
- conflict with parents

Weekly alcohol use and daily cigarette smoking are important additional factors or makers.

APPENDIX 4

The Role of Designated Teacher for Drugs Education

- Ensure that all staff and parents/carers are aware of and have access to a copy of the policy.
- Have oversight and co-ordination of the planning of curricular provision in compliance with the statutory requirements including periodic update and review of the policy.
- Liaise with other staff responsible for pastoral care in co-ordinating the delivery of the Drugs Education programme.
- Co-ordinate training and induction of all staff in the procedures for dealing with incidents of suspected drug misuse.
- Be responsible for co-ordinating the College's procedures for dealing with incidents of suspected drug misuse.
- Determine the circumstances surrounding the incident
- Complete a suspected incident report form (Appendix 1) and forward to the Principal.
- Ensuring the engagement and active participation of parent/carers in all aspects of Drugs Education.
- Act as the point of contact for outside agencies working with the College.

APPENDIX 5

The College's Procedure with reference to illegally-held Drugs/Substances, Alcohol or Cigarettes

The term 'drugs/substances' includes tobacco, alcohol, over-the-counter and prescribed medication, volatile substances, controlled drugs and new psychoactive substances (NPS) or any other substance which, when taken, has the effect of altering the way the body works or the way a person behaves, feels, sees or thinks.

1. **If it becomes known, or is rumoured, that you are involved in some way with illegal drugs/substances, alcohol or cigarettes in the College**

AND/OR

2. **If you are found to be in possession of, or are using illegal drugs/substances, alcohol or cigarettes in the College**

AND/OR

3. **If you are found to be offering, selling or supplying illegal drugs, alcohol or cigarettes in the College**

AND/OR

4. **If you are found to be in possession of, or are using illegal drugs/substances, alcohol or cigarettes outside of College hours whilst in school uniform**

- the Principal, Vice Principal, the Designated Teacher for Drugs Education and other Student Progress staff will immediately be informed
- your parents/carers will be informed as soon as possible
- the Designated Teacher for Drugs Education and the Designated Teacher for Child Protection will liaise and agree the next steps as appropriate. This may include referral to the PSNI, Social Services or other external agencies
- formal sanctions will be applied as decided by the Principal. These may include suspension or expulsion

If it becomes known that you are using illegal drugs or are involved in underage drinking and smoking outside College hours, the College will apply its Safeguarding & Child Protection policy as appropriate. This will include informing parents/carers as well as referral to any appropriate external agencies such as Social Services or the Drug and Alcohol Intervention Service for Young People (DAISY).

If you need support around drugs/substances or know somebody else who needs support and do not wish to go through the College, the following organisations offer completely confidential advice and help relating to Drugs/Substances:

School Counsellor – in College 1 day a week (one day a week)	familyworksni.co.uk
LifeLine 24/7	0808 8088000
NICAS (N Ireland Community Addiction Service) Best time to telephone: 8.45am - 5.00pm, Monday - Thursday; 8.45am - 1.00pm, Friday	028 9066 4434 www.nicas.info
PSNI	0845 600 8000 www.psni.police.uk

