

POLICY FOR DEALING WITH DRUG INCIDENTS

Introduction

This policy was produced in June 1997 by a working group consisting of a Deputy Head Teacher, the Head of PSHE, a Year Leader and an Assistant Year Leader, all of whom had expressed a wish to be involved. The policy gives clear guidance to staff, governors, students and parents on the school's view of drugs, how drug-related incidents are managed and the rules relating to drugs. It should be viewed in conjunction with the school's stated aims on Drugs Education as outlined in the PSHE Curriculum Statement, and is reviewed annually.

- The draft policy was discussed with a wide range of people in the school community, including staff, students from the Sixth Form, some of who had previously been trained as Peer Group Counsellors, parents and governors and their comments were incorporated where appropriate.
- An outline of the policy has been sent to all parents and they may ask for a full copy if they wish to.
- A copy of the policy has been sent to the Liaison Officer within the local police.

The Need for a Policy

This school understands that drugs play a part in the lives of every one of us and that experimentation with drugs has always been a feature of many young people's lives. It is the responsibility of schools to play a role in the prevention of drug misuse and in helping those who misuse drugs. Schools need a policy, which gives a clear view about drugs in school and the importance of drug education. This policy emphasises the school's pastoral role and its proactive approach to drug education. It provides a clear statement on how the school will respond to drug use in school.

In developing this policy the school has considered its legal responsibility and the needs of all students, teachers and governors. Information is available to parents and the community on request.

A Definition of Drugs

Drugs are substances that alter the mind or the body. This policy is concerned with legal drugs such as alcohol, tobacco and solvents, over the counter and prescribed drugs such as tranquillisers and painkillers and illegal drugs such as ecstasy, cannabis, cocaine, crack and heroin, and other drugs young people may use such as "poppers".

Drug Education and Drug Prevention

This school provides a planned drug education curriculum for all students, as part of the Health Education Programme within Personal Health and Social Education. We aim to provide all students with knowledge, attitudes and skills to be able to make informed decisions about drugs.

This school acknowledges that a positive school ethos helps students to feel valued and part of the school community and in so doing, helps to foster positive self images which may help students to cope better in situations involving drug use.

Statement on the Use of Drugs in School

This school believes that the possession and use of drugs in school or during the school day, unless medically prescribed, is inappropriate. All the drugs covered by this policy are not permitted to be brought to, sold, passed on or obtained on school premises or during the school day. Any breaking of these rules may result in punishment including permanent exclusion.

Confidentiality

Students at this school may need to talk to a member of staff about a drug-related problem and should feel comfortable about doing so. The welfare of young people will always be central to our policy and practice. Teachers will not, however, be able to promise confidentiality, as they need to seek help and advice from colleagues. Information about a student in relation to drugs will follow the same procedure as for other sensitive information. Staff must always inform the Year Leader (or Faculty/Department) and then the Assistant or Deputy Head and Head Teacher will be informed and help sought. Tutors will normally be kept informed about any concerns there might be about students in their group. Confidentiality will be maintained beyond certain key people.

Parental Involvement

A outline of this policy will be included in the first edition of the 'Hanson News line' published after the policy has been agreed. Thereafter, this outline will be included in the 'Handbook for Parents', which all families receive when children enter the school. Parents will be contacted if there is a concern about their child's use of or involvement with drugs or if their child breaks the rules on drugs. Information will be made available to parents so that they can obtain support and guidance concerning drugs.

Police Involvement

In most cases any punishment is likely to be a school not a police matter. This school maintains links with the local community police. It is the policy of this school to contact the local community police/schools involvement officer where an incident has involved illegal substances, and to hand the substance to the police.

Managing and Responding to Drug-Related Incidents

Incidents involving drugs may take the form of emergencies, intoxication, discovery/observation, and/or disclosure. All forms are considered in this policy.

Emergency Situations: i.e. where a person is unconscious perhaps as a result of drug use. A member of the Senior Staff and a First Aider will be called. The unconscious person will not be left alone. The person will be placed in the recovery position and an ambulance called. The parents will be informed. An assessment of the incident will be started including finding out whether a substance has been taken and evidence will be gathered. A report of the incident will be written down and given to the Head Teacher, Year Leader or Assistant or Deputy Headteacher. These key staff involved will decide appropriate disciplinary and/or counselling action.

Intoxication from Drug Use. If possible, the person will be removed to a quiet room. A senior member of staff and a first Aider will be called. The person will be observed will be encouraged to talk in order that the cause of the intoxication can be discovered. An ambulance will usually be called. The parents will be informed. A report of the incident will be written down and key staff involved will decide appropriate disciplinary and/or counselling action.

Discovery/Observation, i.e. when a person is discovered using, supplying or holding a substance that is not permitted on school premises and which is described in this policy. A senior member of staff will be called. The person will be approached and the substance confiscated, if possible. The person(s) involved will be questioned. If the substance is illegal or there is doubt about its identity, the local community police/schools involvement officer will be contacted. An illegal substance will be handed to the police. Parents will be informed and called to the school. A report of the incident will be written down and key staff will decide which disciplinary action will be taken and whether a counselling approach is appropriate.

Disclosure: i.e. when a student discloses to a member of staff that s/he has been using drugs or is concerned about someone else's drug use. Please refer to section on confidentiality.

Responding to Drug-Related Incidents

In all situations involving drugs the following principles apply:

- All situations will be carefully considered before deciding to respond.

The needs of the individual child will always be carefully considered and appropriate action taken.

- The needs of the whole school community will receive the same careful attention.
- The Pastoral system will be used to make the first response if at all possible.
- Parents/carers will be involved at an early stage and throughout any investigation.
- Support agencies including the police will be involved if appropriate.
- Support for students will be maintained and counselling arranged if appropriate.
- Responses may include both a disciplinary and counselling response.

Disciplinary response

Situations, which include breaking of the school rules on drugs, will result in punishment. The type of punishment cannot be categorically stated, as it will depend on the exact nature and degree of the offence. The school employs a variety of sanctions related to the offence, e.g. fixed exclusions, or community service. All sanctions will be considered in relation to an incident and, in some cases, *permanent* exclusion will be used. Parents/carers and students will be informed throughout the investigations.

Counselling Response

The students' welfare is paramount and in all incidents involving drugs, referral for counselling by outside agency support will be actively considered. The school has links with local drug agencies that can offer some counselling and work with students as part of their drug education programme. We believe that those students who are misusing illegal drugs and volatile substances should be strongly encouraged to seek help at the earliest possible stage so that they can be helped.

Reporting Procedure

The reporting procedure ensures that only a limited number of people will be involved in any incident. All incidents are reported to the appropriate Year Leader, Headteacher and Assistant / Deputy Head teacher. If a decision is taken to exclude a student then the procedure for this is put into action by the Head Teacher involving the governors. All incidents are written down and kept in the office as confidential items.

Prescribed Drugs and Medicines

In most cases, parents and students will administer prescribed medicines themselves out of school hours. Where this is not possible, parents of children in need of medication must make appropriate arrangements with their child to self administer the prescribed dose which is to be taken during the school day and inform staff of the requirement by writing a note in the child's journal. Where a student has a long-term medical condition requiring drug treatment, special arrangements may be made for the secure storage of the drugs. In the case of asthma reliever inhalers, these are normally kept by the students for easy and immediate access. It should be noted that school staff may not administer any medicines or tablets including aspirin or paracetamol.

EXCEPT IN THE ABOVE CIRCUMSTANCES, NEITHER PRESCRIBED OR PROPRIETARY MEDICINES NOR ANY OTHER DRUGS SHOULD BE BROUGHT INTO SCHOOL

NB: All adults employed at Hanson School are covered by the usual Conditions of Service and Health and Safety Regulations.