

**Reviewed: April 2018**

## **Drugs Incidents Policy**

### **SAFEGUARDING**

We are committed to create and maintain a safe learning environment for all pupils and staff and where there are child welfare concerns, taking action to address them, in partnership with other organisations and agencies, where this is appropriate.

This policy is one of a series in Northumberland PRU's integrated safeguarding portfolio.

Our core standards for promoting the welfare of pupils are listed in our Safeguarding Policy.

### **RATIONALE**

Drugs use and misuse are becoming increasingly common in our society. Schools need to deal with the broad range of drugs-related situations and incidents. Excluded learners are more vulnerable, and, therefore, dealing with drugs incidents needs to be seen as part of a wider strategy to reduce drugs misuse. A policy on dealing with drug-related incidents is a prerequisite for good and effective practice. Informed identification of the causes of drugs misuse helps in the planning of interventions that are consistent and constructive. All staff have a role in responding to drugs-related incidents and, therefore, relevant training is essential. They need to work with all constituent parts of the Northumberland PRU community including those other professionals associated with tackling social problems in relation to drugs-related incidents. At the individual level, the receiving of a pupil from another school can provide us all with the opportunity for a fresh start. Sensitive handling is, needless to say, the key to success.

### **PURPOSES**

To present a clear procedure for all staff and learners when dealing with a drugs-related incident.

To identify training needs for staff.

To coordinate between other organisations to promote consistency of approach.

### **GUIDELINES**

#### **Principles / Issues to consider:**

- it is Northumberland PRU's responsibility to ensure that the health, care and well-being of young people in their charge is paramount. Drugs education and drugs incident management should operate in tandem within a supportive school ethos
- the whole school community plays a key role in the process: staff, learners, parent/carers, school support staff, and ground staff. The policy, therefore, should be understood by all relevant parties
- Northumberland PRU needs a clear definition of what constitutes a drugs-related incident
- Northumberland PRU should carefully assess the needs of any young person involved in a drugs-related incident
- Northumberland PRU should develop appropriate responses to drugs-related incidents. Over-reacting can lead to further disaffection and exacerbate / promote inappropriate behaviours
- clear boundaries should be known to parents and learners and they should be acted on consistently
- the aim of all interventions is to promote learners' understanding and minimise harm

- a consistent, informed approach to drugs-related incidents needs sanctions that are in line with the school's other disciplinary codes
- counselling-based options need the active consent of learners if they are to be effective; they should not be used as a sanction
- external support and advice organisations can contribute effectively to policy development, education programmes and management of incidents but such support needs to be integrated with Northumberland PRU's own efforts. Learners need to know the drugs policy and have a role in its formulation. A successful policy will empower young people to make informed choices
- the policy should be systematically monitored, evaluated and reviewed in line with Northumberland PRU's practice
- medical help must be sought if there is any doubt about how to proceed

### **Guidance on managing drugs-related incidents**

General guidance on dealing with emergencies and any situation involving drugs without medical authority is attached. (see *Appendix 1, Flowchart*)

The management of drugs-related incidents will be coordinated through the Headteacher. The Headteacher will initiate or coordinate action, including consultation with outside agencies where appropriate. The Drugs Coordinator, Emma Blackburn, will be fully aware of current guidance and local circumstances to ensure that a consistent, informed approach underpins responses to unplanned situations.

Drugs should not be the only focus when managing drugs-related incidents. Once safety issues have been addressed other factors could provide opportunities for significant pupil learning. Everyone involved should learn from the incident. The drugs education content may need to be reviewed and strengthened, but individual attention may be more effective in reinforcing learners' understanding of safety issues, rules, the law and expected standards of behaviour. A more serious response may involve sanctions.

Any sanction involving a drugs-related incident should be chosen from the range of those available for other breaches of school rules. They should be justifiable in terms of:

- appropriateness of response
- proportion with the offence
- the needs of all concerned: the young person, other learners, school, community
- consistency with other school rules, codes and expectations
- consistency with other disciplinary actions and similar incidents in the past

A good knowledge of the learners involved will help to determine the response. The school should avoid a response that would be harsher than the law. (see *Appendix 2*)

### **Informing Parents**

Informing parents: under the Children Act, parents/carers should normally be involved in the advice and help given to learners. In exceptional circumstances (and, in this case, with the agreement of the Headteacher) advice and help can be given without parents' knowledge. We need to establish that:

- the young person has "sufficient maturity, understanding and intelligence to be capable of making her/his own mind on the matter in question
- if the pupil does not receive the help and advice being offered they begin or continue to suffer physical or mental harm
- the pupil is unlikely to begin or continue treatment if the parents are informed
- it is in the best interests of the learners themselves

In all situations learners should be encouraged to inform their parents themselves and be offered support to do this.

We should be aware of external agencies which can support the work of Northumberland PRU.

Staff discovering substances, which are suspected to be harmful, illegal or requiring further investigation should observe the following guidelines:

- report all incidents to the Headteacher. Where possible remove the substance from the location in the presence of a witness. If there is no witness, remove the substance and inform the Headteacher
- do not keep the substance on your person; use Northumbria Police *Bag and Tag* system. Bagged substances should be kept in the school safe located in the 'Vault' within the kiln room and a *Bag and Tag* form should be completed. Northumbria Police should be informed of the substance so that they are able to remove it as soon as possible from the premises
- if there is a report of an incident and it is necessary to conduct a search, this should be conducted with a senior member of staff. Searches of learners or personal property must not be carried out without the consent of the pupil
- the Headteacher will determine whether an incident is sufficiently serious to call the police. When this is necessary the pupil should remain under constant supervision; parents should be informed and asked to attend Northumberland PRU. Police guidance will be followed where parents are unable to attend
- where substances are being consumed or sold illegally outside the school premises, the appropriate authorities will be informed
- all incidents will be recorded; using the appropriate form
- the Headteacher will determine the range of welfare/support agencies to be notified/consulted

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### **Medical emergencies**

A medical emergency arises when a person:

- Is unconscious
- Is having trouble breathing
- Is seriously confused or disorientated
- Has taken a harmful, toxic substance
- Is otherwise at immediate risk of harm

There will be a need to act promptly to ensure the safety of individuals as well as the school community.

The chart provides outline guidance for responding to medical emergencies. However, it is important that first aid procedures are also in place and followed where necessary. It is important to share any information as this could save a life.

The most urgent question is always whether medical help is needed. If it is, or if there is any doubt, do not hesitate to get such help. The school's first aid procedures should be clearly displayed and all staff should be aware of them.

Always act calmly and do not panic. The primary concern is the pupil at immediate risk as well as all other learners and staff.

1. Assess the situation
  - if you can, remove any immediate risk of harm
  - if medical help is needed, summon a doctor or ambulance
2. Before assistance arrives
  - ask the pupil what happened and identify any substance used
  - collect any substance and any vomit for medical analysis
  - do not induce vomiting
  - keep the person under observation, warm and quiet
3. If the person is unconscious
  - ensure person can breathe and is in recovery position
  - do not move the person if they have fallen, as the fall may have led to a serious injury that may not be obvious
  - do not give anything by mouth
  - do not attempt to make the person sit or stand
  - do not leave the person unattended or in the charge of another pupil

### **Assessment of needs**

After the immediate medical needs have been addressed, the nature and circumstances of any incident should be established. (*See Appendix 1*)

## Appendix 1

### Factors to consider when assessing needs

Schools will want to determine the seriousness of a breach of school rules. Where an illegal drug is involved there are several factors that might need to be reviewed. Only when all factors have been explored can the spectrum of responses can be considered and discussed.

### Some factors affecting assessment

rumour / suspicion	definite evidence	un-intoxicated
intoxication	pleasure seeking	in personal turmoil
in no immediate danger	medical emergency	careful low-risk use
reckless as to safety	ignorant of rules	understood rules
un-controlled drug	class A illegal drug	possession of small quantity
persistent supply	admission	denial
first offence	persistent offender	

### Drugs testing

Not always a reliable experience. To drugs test, a school must have permission from learners and, if they are under 16, the consent of their parents.

### Northumberland Police Policy for the collection of substances on school premises.

The aim of these procedures is to:

- ensure drugs are collected and disposed of safely
- provide a consistent approach
- maintain in the integrity of school staff and offer support, liaison and further advice

On finding a suspicious substance or someone in possession of such substance, the following procedures must be followed:

- inform Headteacher
- if appropriate take possession of the substance and place it in a clear plastic bag, supplied by Northumberland Police, the bag should be sealed and numbered then placed in the office safe or Head's office to await collection
- record details of incidents on substance collection form and inform the police officer as soon as practicable, i.e. on collection of substance. A suitable witness should countersign the form
- do not attempt to identify the substance, a brief description should be included on the form, which also includes a brief description of the circumstances, including where, how and from whom the substance was taken
- to provide continuity, the member of staff who found or took possession of the substance should carry out, the whole procedure where possible
- drugs paraphernalia should be dealt with according to *Appendix 1*, needles should be disposed of safely through LA disposal contractor

## **Appendix 2**

### **Developing a range of responses**

Northumberland PRU is clear that the possession or use of illegal substances on the premises is unacceptable and will be dealt with firmly, promptly and fairly. Legal drugs or medicines will always be managed appropriately; unauthorized possession cannot be permitted. All learners need to learn from a drugs-related situation that has been dealt with by the school. Each situation needs to be carefully assessed to ensure appropriate action. Care needs to be taken to avoid perpetuating the unwanted behaviour.

Children behave inappropriately for a variety of reasons; drug taking could be just one of a number of important aspects of behaviour.

The following possible responses to drugs-related incidents are based on published strategies:

#### **Early warning**

- eg. misuse of any substance at an early age, low expectation, low achievement, truancy, anti-social behaviour, family problems, lack of parental support, family alcoholism or use of drugs, peer influences, isolation from peers, friends who use drugs, peer pressure
- some schools have elaborate processes intended to identify early signs of drugs misuse
- the best examples balance the need for monitoring and communication between staff with respect for confidentiality and respect for learners' rights

#### **In-school counselling services**

- some schools provide counselling services. These services often involve outside agencies and can take the form of a drop-in. learners can use them if they feel they have a problem or for advice on general or specific matters. Services often consider more holistic needs and a generic service can provide protection against being labeled a drugs-user
- peer counseling or mentoring schemes also provide a valuable service to learners. Counselling should only be carried out by a skilled and competent person. Confidentiality issues need to be considered

#### **Specialist consultation groups**

- some schools have specialist consultation groups to assess individual situations and circumstances surrounding substance-related incidents. (eg. SMT member, PHSE Coordinator, LEA health education coordinator, the EWO, outside agencies, EP, youth and community worker, police school liaison officer, social services, NAS and other appropriate professionals.)

#### **Pupil assistance programmes**

- this involves the collaboration of a number of local schools and are often run by outside agencies. Assessment can be made and appropriate support given
- the schemes can: distance the pupil from the disciplinary process at an early stage; provide support for the pupil at an early stage; support any reintegration process

#### **Counselling referrals**

- many schools can refer learners to outside agencies for counselling or treatment. This can run parallel to disciplinary procedures, with local agencies detailed in the drugs policy. Issues of confidentiality should be addressed and any referral needs the pupil's agreement
- assessment for and discussion to consider counselling should, where possible involve the pupil in order to gauge both need and willingness to take part in the process

### **Case conferences**

- some schools organise internal case conferences to deal with serious drugs related incidents. The purpose should be to discuss options before devising action plans to allow the pupil to remain in school and receive appropriate help. Action plans can involve a range of options, eg. educational and recreational activities, community activity opportunities, counselling, individual support, monitoring and reporting to staff during breaks and lunchtime

### **Intensive in-house programmes**

- learners should have a PSP involving a planned intervention and clearly set targets aimed at helping learners to manage their behaviour better. Rather than excluding a pupil, it is more constructive to work towards involving them in school
- under a PSP learners enter an agreement to undertake an intensive educational programme over a period of time. The PSP can involve a range of professionals. Parents may also be offered support. A case conference will decide the pupil's future in school

### **Inter-agency education programmes**

- schools may work together with the police and local youth and community services to provide an alternative community-based education programme. Referral can be made by professionals or parents or the young person themselves. The aim is to work together to prevent exclusion from school, prosecution or further criminality. Referrals are coordinated by a named person for each school and police area. A pre-course visit is designed to explain the programme and ask for parental cooperation

### **Fixed-term exclusion**

- fixed term exclusion should only happen after a range of alternative strategies have been tried and proven to have failed to resolve the pupil's disciplinary problems. This can have the effect of making a powerful point quickly and also gives the school time to assess calmly a pupil's needs. Care is needed to ensure that a period of exclusion does not itself place the pupil at risk. The headteacher needs to ensure that work is provided for excluded learners and that that work is marked until he/she returns to school. There should be clear procedures for the reintegration of learners at the end of the period of exclusion.

### **Permanent exclusion**

- this is the very last resort but it can leave a pupil more vulnerable to involvement with drugs. Evidence shows that only a minority of these learners successfully transfer to a new school, especially at Key Stage Four

\_\_\_\_\_ **Chair**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Date**