

*Sonning Common
Primary School*

**GUIDELINES
FOR STAFF ON
DRUG ABUSE**

*Policy 51 Version 1
Summer 1996*

DRUG ABUSE - FOR STAFF INFORMATION

Drug Education

As part of the National Curriculum revised Order, which came into force from 1st August 1995, pupils should be taught about the role of drugs as medicines at Key Stage 1 (5-7 year-olds) and that tobacco, alcohol and other drugs have harmful effects at Key Stage 2 (7-11 year-olds).

This is the statutory minimum requirement for drug education in schools.

A suggested outline drug education programme approved by Oxfordshire LEA is shown in Appendix A.

Teaching about drugs is best provided as part of an integrated programme of health education. Teaching about illegal drugs is unlikely to have a lasting effect if a lesson is given in isolation or as a one-off response to a local drug-related incident.

There is no statutory obligation for a drugs education policy but, by the start of the Spring term 1996 all schools should have considered their drugs prevention programme and the actions to be taken in cases of drugs-related incidents.

Policy Statement

A policy statement on drug abuse has been prepared, approved and ratified by the Governing Body. These guidelines should be read in conjunction with, and as an appendix to, this policy document.

The Law

Drug misuse is defined as the non-medical use of drugs which may or may not have an accepted medical purpose. These drugs are 'controlled substances' under the *Misuse of Drugs Act 1971*.

Under this Act it is an offence to supply, to offer to supply, to possess or to possess with intent to supply, any controlled substance.

It is also an offence to be the occupier or manager of premises knowingly to permit the preparation or smoking of cannabis, also the supply or production (or attempted supply or production) of any controlled substance.

The main drugs covered by this Act are:

- **analgesics** e.g. heroin, morphine and methadone
- **stimulants** e.g. cocaine, amphetamines and Ecstasy
- **tranquillisers** e.g. temazepam and barbiturates
- **hallucinogens** e.g. LSD, Ecstasy and Psilocybin (Magic Mushrooms)
- **cannabinoids** e.g. cannabis Note that Ecstasy is a hallucinogenic stimulant.

Although the drugs listed above are split by the Act into Class A and Class B, the maximum legal penalties, for offences concerning these materials, are not significantly different. Class A drugs are cocaine, heroin, Ecstasy and LSD. Class B drugs are cannabis, amphetamines and barbiturates.

Physical problems

Major physical problems associated with use of controlled substances;

Cannabis	– none
LSD	– none
Ecstasy	– causes severe dehydration in conjunction with alcohol
Amphetamines	– easy to overdose with muscle spasms, breathing difficulties and high pulse rate
Barbiturates	– can overdose, can cause long-term damage to kidneys etc.

All the above are psychoactive and may cause significant mental problems.

Other substances

A large number of other substances are open to misuse, although the degree of importance of this misuse is open to interpretation. The legal constraints on these substances are variable.

These other substances include;

- **volatile materials** e.g. adhesives, aerosols, paint stripper, Tippex

It is only an offence to **sell** these products to children under 18 if there is cause to believe they will be used for the purpose of intoxication.

- **anabolic steroids**

It is, at present, **not** an offence to supply or intend to supply these substances. Since these substances can have serious physical effects on young people, the law could be changed at some future date.

- **alcohol**

It is an offence to **sell** intoxicating liquor to anyone under the age of 18. It is an offence to **give** intoxicating liquor to a child under the age of 5.

- **smoking**

It is illegal to **sell** tobacco products to children under the age of 16.

Other substances are also used as materials for substance abuse. A set of guidelines like this document can only highlight the major substances of abuse.

Dealing with Illegal Drugs

There is no statutory or legal requirement at present to inform the police if illegal drugs are found on a pupil or on school premises although it has been stated in the media that the Department for Education will press for prosecution of headteachers who not comply, although such a case has never been brought.

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 offence of possession. This material can be destroyed without having to inform the police. **It** is open to a member of staff to search a pupil's desk or locker where they have reasonable cause to believe it contains unlawful items including illegal drugs.

Staff should never carry out personal physical searches of any pupil.

Where a teacher is told or is aware of criminal activity outside the school, including the sale of alcohol or tobacco products to pupils, there is no statutory obligation to inform the police although it is expected in the interests of safeguarding the health and safety of young people in the area. They are also expected to inform the police if shopkeepers sell solvents "to young persons in contravention of the law".

Smoking;

The whole site has been designated a "no smoking" area. This area includes, not only the buildings, playgrounds and fields of Sonning Common County Primary School, but also the Bishopswood site, the Sonning Common Pre-School Playgroup site and the site car park.

It is the responsibility of all members of staff to enforce this ruling, tactfully, especially with outside contractors and other visitors. If this proves to be unsuccessful staff should inform the headteachers on this shared site.

Warning Signs of Drug or Solvent Abuse

The signs listed below may indicate that individuals or groups of children are misusing drugs. Their presence alone is not conclusive proof of drug or solvent misuse; many of them are a normal part of adolescence and preadolescent behaviour.

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 sunglasses at inappropriate times (to hide dilated or constricted pupils)

Groups

Regular absence on certain days.

Keeping at a distance from other pupils, away from supervision points e.g. groups who frequently gather near gates 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 e.g. perhaps to shoplift 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.

Objects that may indicate Drug or Solvent Abuse

The objects listed below may, in certain circumstances, give grounds for concern: -

Foil containers or cup shapes made from silver foil, perhaps discoloured by heat. Metal tins.

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 and needles.

Cigarette papers, lighters and spent matches.

Plastic bags or butane gas containers. (solvent abuse) Cardboard or other tubes.

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)

APPENDIX A EXAMPLE OF A DRUG EDUCATION PROGRAMME

KEY STAGE ONE

KEY STAGE TWO

Knowledge and Understanding

- School rules relating to medicines.
 - Basic information about how the body works and ways of looking after the body.
 - The role of medicines (both prescribed and over-the-counter) in promoting health and the reasons people use them.
 - Understanding that all drugs can be harmful if not used properly.
 - Simple safety rules about medicines and other substances at home, including solvents.
 - Consideration of alcohol and tobacco, their general effects on the body and on behaviour.
 - People who are involved with medicines (such as health professionals, pharmacists, shopkeepers).
 - People who can help children when they have questions or concerns.
- School rules relating to medicines, alcohol, tobacco, solvents and illegal drugs.
 - More detailed information about the body, how it works and how to take care of it.
 - Different types of medicines (both prescribed and over-the-counter), legal and illegal drugs including their form, their effects and their associated risks.
 - Introduction to the law relating to the use of legal and illegal drugs.
 - People who help children when they have questions or concerns.
 - Dangers from handling discarded syringes and needles.

Skills

- Communicating feelings such as concerns about illness and taking medicines.
 - Following simple safety instructions.
 - When and how to get help from adults.
- Identifying risks
 - Coping with peer influences.
 - Communicating with adults.
 - Decision-making and assertiveness in situations relating to drug use.
 - Giving and getting help.
 - Safety procedures when using medicines.

Attitudes

- Valuing one's body and recognising its uniqueness
 - Attitudes towards medicines, health professionals and hospitals.
 - Attitudes towards the use of alcohol and cigarettes.
 - Responses to media and advertising presentations of medicines, alcohol and smoking.
- Valuing oneself and other people.
 - Attitudes and beliefs about different drugs and people who may use or misuse them. • Responses to media and advertising presentations of alcohol, tobacco and other legal drugs.
 - Taking responsibility for one's own safety and behaviour.

