



Benhurst Primary School Policy Statement



'Only my best is good enough for me'

Policy

Drugs and Substance Misuse Policy

Introduction

At Benhurst, we aim to equip our children and staff with the knowledge, understanding and skills that enable them to make the sort of choices that lead to a healthy lifestyle. We teach children about the dangers to health posed by drug taking and to equip them with the social skills to make informed moral and social decisions in relation to drugs in society. We are committed to the health, safety and general well-being of all the members of our school community. This policy takes account of DFES Drugs: Guidance for Schools Ref: DFES/0092/2004 and the National Drugs Strategy. This policy applies to the whole school community, working on the premises during the school day, after school and the evenings; it also applies to school day trips and residential visits.

Drugs Education in Context

The core aim at Benhurst, is to promote the development of the 'whole child' which encompasses physical, mental, emotional, social and environmental health; by equipping pupils with the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values to handle their lives effectively in the present and prepare them for adulthood. Drugs education should therefore form an integral part of the school curriculum.

We are committed to the health and safety of our school community and will act to safeguard their wellbeing. Therefore, a life skills approach to drug prevention is essential and within the programme, pupils are taught about raising self-esteem, self-confidence and assertiveness to prepare them for making informed decisions about drug use, the main focus being on knowledge, social skills, attitudes and values. This will encourage them to appreciate the benefits of a healthy lifestyle and relate this to their own actions, both now and in their future lives.

The Range of Substances

'A drug is any substance which, when taken, has the effect of altering the way a person behaves, feels sees or thinks.' As well as everyday substances such as tea and coffee, drugs include:

- Alcohol and tobacco
- Over the counter medicines' such as paracetamol for headaches
- Prescribed drugs, such as antibiotics and tranquilisers
- Volatile substances such as glues and aerosols
- Illegal drugs such as cannabis, LSD and ecstasy

The school recognises that this policy focuses mainly on illicit drugs. Procedures for handling prescribed medicines is outlined in the school Medicines policy.

If the Headteacher has reasonable grounds to suspect that drugs are being used or supplied on the school premises appropriate steps will be taken to inform the relevant bodies in order to avoid any liability as a 'manager or occupier' of premises. If staff have taken possession of a substance for the purposes of protecting a pupil from harm and from committing an offence; they should under no circumstance, try to analyse or identify it. Staff should wear gloves when handling it, to avoid possible ingestion through the skin. The drug should be immediately stored in a safe place, and the police contacted.

Procedures for Handling and Reporting Incidents

A suspected drug related incident is described as:

- Suspect drugs found on the school premises

- A pupil suspected of being in possession of drugs
- A pupil found to be in possession of drugs
- A pupil suspected of being under the influence of drugs
- An adult visitor or staff suspected of being under the influence of drugs

If an incident occurs the member of staff involved should:

- Make the situation safe
- Send for support
- Administer first aid if necessary
- If an illegal drug is found it should be secured in a safe place until dealt with by the police
- Report the incident

Any incident will be reported to the Headteacher who will contact the police. The parents will also be contacted and made aware of the situation. The incident will be recorded and held on file in the Headteacher's confidential records.

Drugs Education Within the Curriculum

We regard drugs education as a whole-school issue and we believe that opportunities to teach about the importance of a healthy lifestyle occur naturally throughout the curriculum, but especially in science, PSE, RE and PE. There are also opportunities in circle time.

Teaching about drugs will begin in Key Stage 1, when pupils are taught about seeing the doctor, visiting the chemist and the importance of medicines and their safe handling. In Key Stage 2, pupils will learn that alcohol is the most widely used drug and that its dangers can be overlooked. We will ensure that our pupils are aware of the risks associated with drinking. We teach pupils about the dangers of smoking and habit forming, and encourage them to consider its effects and risks. We also teach pupils about the dangers of volatile-substance abuse, because of the high risk of accidental death, especially for first-time and occasional abusers.

At Benhurst, we acknowledge that by the time pupils are in Year 6, some of them may have had some experiences with drugs already, so we must help to equip pupils to handle risky situations, before they actually meet them. We recognise that learning is most effective when it addresses the development of knowledge, attitudes and skills together and when teaching and learning are participative and active.

We endeavour to:

- Use a variety of teaching styles that are characterised by active learning
- Find out what the children know already
- Use drama, role-play or ICT to demonstrate various strategies and scenarios
- Encourage pupils to listen to the views of others, and we ask them to explore why drugs are such a problem for society.

Drugs education takes place during normal lesson time. Sometimes, a class teacher will seek support from the school nurse or another health professional. In teaching this course, we follow the DfE and LA guidelines. The resources and materials that we use are recommended either by the Health Authority or by the LA. Lessons that focus on drugs education form part of a sequence of lessons that are designed to promote a healthy lifestyle.

Confidentiality

If a pupil discloses to an adult that he or she is taking drugs, the adult should make it clear that he or she can offer no guarantee of confidentiality. However, the adult can advise the pupil of other sources of confidential information or advice. Pupils should also be encouraged to talk to their parents. A record will be made of the disclosure (via MyConcern) and the Headteacher is to be informed immediately. In their absence, this should be given to the Deputy Headteacher. The matter will be treated as a potential safeguarding matter, and the parents contacted in the first instance.

Drugs at School

Where children have medical needs, parents and carers must give us details of the child's condition and medication. Parents and carers will bring the medication to school in a secure, labelled container. Records will be kept of all medication received and given. Emergency medication is stored securely in the School Office.

Solvents and other hazardous chemicals must be stored securely, to prevent inappropriate access, or use by pupils. Aerosols, glues (other than PVA) and board-cleaning fluids are used sparingly in school, and must be handled and stored carefully by all members of staff.

Legal drugs are legitimately in school only when authorised by the Headteacher. Members of staff who smoke must keep their tobacco and matches or lighters secure. Smoking (or the use of E-Cigarettes) is not permitted anywhere in the school premises or grounds. Alcohol to be consumed at community or parents' events will be stored securely beforehand. To sell alcohol, we must be licensed under the current licensing act. Occasionally, members of staff may consume limited amounts of alcoholic drinks, but only by prior consent of the Headteacher (such as an organised staff social event).

Drugs Incidents

An incident involving unauthorised drugs in school is most likely to involve alcohol, tobacco or volatile substances, rather than illegal drugs. The first priority is safety and first aid, i.e. calling the emergency services and placing unconscious people in the recovery position. An intoxicated pupil does not represent a medical emergency, unless unconscious.

Any drug suspected of being illegal will be confiscated and stored securely, the police will be notified to determine an appropriate method of disposal. These precautions must be witnessed and recorded by either the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher. Staff must not taste unknown or confiscated substances.

Legal but unauthorised drugs or medicines will also be confiscated, and will be returned to parents or carers; the school may arrange for the safe disposal of volatile substances. Where a pupil is suspected of concealing an unauthorised drug, staff are not permitted to carry out a personal search, but may search pupils' bags, trays, etc.

The Headteacher will notify the police and take advice as to how to proceed further. A full record will be made of any incident and the Headteacher will conduct an investigation into the nature and seriousness of any incident, in order to determine an appropriate follow-up response.

The Chair of Governors will be informed of any drug incident that should occur. The Local Authority are also notified of any drug incidents in school each term.

The Site Manager ensures that the grounds are kept clear of any dangerous substances/objects. A daily check of the grounds are undertaken and recorded on the Daily Site Inspection stored centrally. Any substances will cause concern to the school will be given to the police, or disposed of on their advice in the presence of witnesses.

All staff however are encouraged to be vigilant around the school grounds, particularly close to the main entrances. Pupils should not pick up any such materials.

The Role of Parents and Carers

The school is well aware that the primary role in children's drugs education lies with parents and carers. We wish to build a positive and supporting relationship with the parents/carers of our pupils, through mutual understanding, trust and cooperation. To promote this objective, we will:

- Inform parents or carers about the school drugs policy;
- Answer questions that parents and carers may have about the drugs education that their child receives in school;
- Take seriously any issue which parents and carers raise with teachers or governors about this policy, or about arrangements for drugs education in the school;
- Inform parents and carers about the best practice known with regard to drugs education, so that the parents/carers can support the key messages being given to children at school.

When an incident concerning unauthorised drugs has occurred in school, and a pupil is involved, parents or carers will be informed with an explanation of how the school intends to respond to the incident.

Staff will be cautious about discharging a pupil to the care of a parent/carer who appears to be under the influence of drugs/alcohol, particularly when they intend to drive the pupil home. Staff will suggest an alternative arrangement, as the focus will be the pupil's welfare and safety. Where such behaviour places a child at risk, or the parent/carer becomes abusive or violent, staff will report the matter to the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher, who will consider whether the circumstances of the case are serious enough to invoke child protection procedures, and the involvement of Social Services or the police.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Schools and education are continually changing. Consequently, it is necessary to regularly review the school practices and with it, this Drugs & Substance Misuse Policy so that we can take account of new research, advice or other related developments.