

POLICY FOR DEALING WITH SUSPECTED OR ACTUAL SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Matters relating to substance abuse are to be seen within the context of the school's Drugs Education Policy and broad Pastoral Care Policy, with the emphasis on a preventive rather than a reactive, model of care.

The policy on Substance Abuse aims to:

1. Ensure the well being and safety of the pupils and to promote and develop the ideals, values and beliefs of the school as set out in the school Mission Statement.
2. Provide a framework of dealing with actual substance abuse and substance related problems.

Procedures for management of drugs and solvent related incidents on school premises.

Procedures relating to drugs and solvent 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.

The senior member of staff who is the designated Drugs Education Co-ordinator in school is responsible for co-ordinating the arrangements to deal with suspected or actual substance abuse. The Drugs Education Co-ordinator will act on behalf of and in liaison with the Principal and keep him informed at all stages in matters relating to misuse.

Should an incident occur in school where drugs or solvents have been abused the following procedures will apply.

(i) Legally Held Substances (See Appendix II for details)

School accepts that it may be necessary for some pupils to take prescribed drugs for serious chronic conditions during school hours and will discuss with parents how best to do this, with reference to the pupil's condition and the method of administration. Details of procedures relating to short-term illnesses are laid out in the Staff Guide Section C Routines Points 7 and 8. However, Hunterhouse College acknowledges the particular status of Ritilin within the context of the administration of medicines and accepts, should it become necessary, that it should try to make provision for:

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

The procedures agreed for the safe keeping of any medication will apply both inside school and on any school outing or residential stay.

Where there has been misuse of legally held substances, the member of staff who discovers the incident should call the designated Drugs Education Co-ordinator and a member of the school's qualified First Aid team (names are published in the Staff Guide and on the staffroom notice board). The designated Drugs Education Co-ordinator and First Aider will

- Assess the situation
- Take steps to ensure the safety of the pupil and others
- Give emergency aid and seek medical attendance if necessary. Arrange for the pupil to be taken to hospital or a medical centre if necessary.

- Inform parents*
- Inform the Principal

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

(ii) Illegally Held Substances (see Appendix III for details)

For illegally held substances, the above steps will be taken. In addition the following will apply:

- Teachers discovering substances which are suspected to be harmful, illegal or deserving of investigation should remove the substance from the location or from the person where it is found wherever possible in the presence of witness. In the absence of a witness, however, the suspicious substance should still be removed.
- The teacher should record in writing the place, date, time and circumstances when the substance came into his or her possession.
- The substance should be taken immediately to the designated Drugs Education Co-ordinator who, in the presence of the teacher, will place the substance in an envelope or a container which can be sealed. Both the teacher and the designated Drugs Education Co-ordinator should sign across the seal and date the package. An official report will be attached using the teacher's recorded notes of the date, time, location and circumstances of the finding.
- The designated Drugs Education Co-ordinator will report to the Principal and one of them will contact the Drugs Squad to collect and remove the substance. Until collection the Principal is responsible for the safe-keeping of the substance.
- If a pupil is directly involved when a substance is found, it is the Principal's responsibility to have the parents notified and to instigate any further appropriate action.
- This procedure will also be followed in the event of the discovery of any equipment associated with substance abuse. All equipment so found must be handled only by adults and with the utmost care.
- The PSNI Drugs Squad or the Community Police Liaison Officer will give advice to the school in determining an appropriate response to the incident and, where appropriate, will recommend which external agency is best suited to the care of the pupil. The school will be guided by this advice and recommendation.
- Since substance abuse may lead to sudden collapse or the onset of sickness, the school's policy on accident and illness should be followed meticulously.
- Procedures for suspension remain the same in the case of substance abuse as for all other incidents.
- Should an incident of substance abuse be sufficiently serious to attract media attention no-one other than the Principal should make any media comment. He should do so along the guidelines issued by the Belfast Education and Library Board (1992).

- The Principal will follow his normal practice of informing the Board of Governors about the incident.

All members of staff are expected to be vigilant about these issues and respond appropriately. They should have a working knowledge of the signs of Drug or Solvent misuse. See Appendix IV for warning signs in individuals, that may indicate Drug Abuse whether in the behaviour of individuals or groups, or in the presence of certain objects or materials.

(iii) Alcohol

Consumption of alcohol by pupils is forbidden in any connection with the school. It is not to be brought into school by them or consumed in school or on any school activity. Pupils are taught and encouraged to be strong enough to say 'no' if anyone tries to persuade them to consume alcohol. They are encouraged to lead a healthy lifestyle and develop positive attitudes to health. Addiction to alcohol is a habit which is hard to break.

Possession of alcohol in conditions which may give rise to abuse or consumption of alcohol is forbidden and any pupil contravening this regulation will be subject to the school's Disciplinary Procedure.

(iv) Smoking

The entire school premises and campus are a non-smoking area. Smoking is forbidden in any connection with the school. Cigarettes/tobacco/cigars etc matches and lighters are not to be brought into school or taken on any school activities. Along with the risk to health, the possession of matches, lighters etc and lighted cigarettes etc constitute a fire hazard.

Smoking is an addictive habit that causes death. Passive smoking is now acknowledged to be harmful to health. Pupils are taught about the hazards of smoking and given opportunities to learn how to resist the pressures to smoke. They are thus encouraged to lead a healthy life.

Possession of items for use in smoking is forbidden and any pupil contravening this regulation will be subject to the school's Disciplinary Procedure.

Linked Disciplinary Procedures

- (i) If it becomes known or is rumoured that a pupil is involved in some way with substances or drugs as defined in Clause 1 of the Drugs Education Policy then the designated Drugs Education Co-ordinator will lead a discrete investigation.
- (ii) If a pupil is found to be in possession of, or is using substances or drugs while in school or in school uniform, then there will be a thorough investigation by the designated Drugs Education Co-ordinator and other appropriate members of staff. If an offence is confirmed, disciplinary action will ensue, depending on the seriousness of the offence, ranging up to and including fixed term or permanent exclusion as in accordance with the school's Disciplinary Procedure. In the interim, guidance will be given to pupils and parents on the availability of specialist advice from support agencies.
- (iii) If a pupil is found to be offering, selling or supplying substances or drugs in school or in school uniform then the Principal will inform parents. The appropriate Head of School and form teacher will also be informed. If the law has been seen to have been broken, the Principal will inform the police. Internal disciplinary action will ensue normally consisting of fixed term suspension which may lead to permanent exclusion. Counselling will be suggested or arranged in appropriate cases.
- (iv) If it becomes known that a pupil is using substances or drugs outside school hours or out of uniform then the situation will be monitored and disciplinary action as stated in (ii) above may ensue.

The Governors will expect parents to inform the Principal or the designated Drugs Education Co-ordinator if they suspect that their children are taking illegal drugs.

Should an incident involving substance or drug abuse occur in school, its implications will be considered by the designated Drugs Education Co-ordinator and appropriate other staff, who will decide if any further action needs to be taken.

*Parents - Throughout the policy the term 'parents' is taken to mean those with parental responsibility.

Legally held substances

Volatile substances

- 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

Illegally held substances

1. Amphetamines (speed - whiz)
2. Cannabis (grass/marijuana or cannabis resin (dope, pot, hash, dough))
3. Cocaine a white powder (coke, snow) or crack cocaine (crystal form)
4. Ecstasy (Es, disco biscuits)
5. Hallucinogens eg LSD and magic mushrooms
6. Opiates (heroin, diamorphine, smack)

Warning Signs that may indicate Substance Abuse

(Reproduced from DfE/Welsh Office Booklet 'Drug Misuse and the Young - A Guide for the Education Service' 1992)

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 solvent 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.

The Role of Designated Drugs Education Co-ordinator at Hunterhouse College

The designated Drugs Education Co-ordinator has overarching responsibility for drugs issues in school. He/she will:

1. Ensure along with other senior members of staff the implementation of the school Drugs Education Policy and the school policy for Dealing with Suspected or Actual Substance Abuse. He/she will also co-ordinate arrangements for evaluation and review of both these policies at regular intervals.
2. Have oversight of Drugs Education in the school delivered through the Personal and Social Education Curriculum and other subject areas as outlined in Appendix I of the Drugs Education Policy. In this the co-ordinator will work closely with the teacher in charge of Personal and Social Education who holds the specific responsibility for ensuring that the Personal and Social Education programme is implemented as effectively as possible at all times throughout the school.
3. Establish contact with agencies who may offer support and guidance to those concerned about substance abuse. This includes providing appropriate information about external agencies to those who wish to seek advice; and working closely with the BELB's officer in charge of substance abuse, the Community Police Liaison Officer and, within the school, the Health Education Co-ordinator and teacher in charge of Personal and Social Education.
4. Ensure that appropriate information about Drugs Education in school and the school's Policy for Dealing with Suspected or Actual Abuse is available to those who have parental responsibility for the pupils.
5. Be available to all those who may wish to discuss any aspect of substance abuse, including those who have parental responsibility for the pupils and seek support or guidance, staff who wish to discuss substance related issues that they may be facing with the pupils in their care, and pupils who seek advice concerning themselves or others.
6. Promote staff training and development about drugs related issues using external and/or internal sources. The co-ordinator will seek to motivate teachers to undertake their responsibilities conscientiously, in accordance with the relevant school policies.

Hunterhouse College

To be issued to all girls

The School's Disciplinary Procedure with reference to illegal Drugs, Alcohol and Cigarettes.

1. **If it becomes known, or is rumoured, that you are involved in some way with illegal drugs, alcohol or cigarettes at school:**
 - a) you will be informed of the allegations
 - b) your form teacher and Head of School will be informed
 - c) the allegations will be quietly investigated

2. **If you are found to be in possession of, or are using illegal drugs, alcohol or cigarettes at school:**
 - a) the Principal, your Head of School and your form teacher will immediately be informed
 - b) your parents* will be informed as soon as possible
 - c) disciplinary action will be taken, depending on the seriousness of the offence, ranging up to and including fixed term or permanent exclusion
 - d) the police will be informed in cases where this is required ie when the law is seen to have been broken
 - e) counselling will be suggested or arranged in appropriate cases

3. **If you are found to be in possession of, or are using illegal drugs, alcohol or cigarettes outside of school hours whilst in school uniform:**
 - a) the Principal, your Head of School and your form teacher will immediately be informed
 - b) your parents* will be informed as soon as possible
 - c) disciplinary action will be taken, depending on the seriousness of the offence, ranging up to and including fixed term or permanent exclusion
 - d) the police will be informed in cases where this is required ie when the law is seen to have been broken
 - e) counselling will be suggested or arranged in appropriate cases

4. **If you are found to be offering, selling or supplying illegal drugs, alcohol or cigarettes at school:**
 - a) the Principal, your Head of School and your form teacher will immediately be informed

- b) your parents* will be informed as soon as possible
- c) disciplinary action will be taken. Where illegal drugs are involved the sanction will normally be permanent exclusion; where alcohol or cigarettes are involved suspension will normally result.
- d) the Principal and the police will be informed in cases where this is required ie when the law is seen to have been broken
- e) counselling will be suggested or arranged where appropriate

5. **If it becomes known that you are using illegal drugs or are involved in underage drinking and smoking outside school hours:**

- a) the information will be discreetly checked
- b) all information of a confidential nature will be respected as such
- c) your parents may be informed
- d) you may be offered counselling in school or steered towards counselling by an outside agency

NB If you need help or know somebody else who needs help and do not wish to go through school, the following organisations offer completely confidential advice and help relating to Drugs and Solvents:

New Life Counsellor in Hunterhouse College (one day a week)	See current leaflet and 24/7 LifeLine number below
New Life Counselling	www.youthcounsellingbelfast.com
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

*Parents Throughout this statement the term 'parents' is taken to mean those with parental responsibility.