

# OMAGH HIGH SCHOOL

## Policy on Drugs

1. This policy deals with substances taken into the body which will change the normal functioning pattern and includes:-
  - (a) Alcohol (see Appendix 4)
  - (b) Illegal drugs e.g. ecstasy and cannabis
  - (c) Prescription drugs (except for their appropriate medicinal use) and
  - (d) Solvents

Tobacco has been excluded from this document as a policy is already in place.

The school condones neither the use of any of the above nor their supply.

2. The school will promote and develop the vision of the school as a health promoting and caring environment, within which the school is committed to the well being and safety of all. To this end the school will take action if necessary to safeguard everyone's well-being.
3. The school aims to ensure the welfare of all through the pastoral system and the general ethos of the school.

## The school's response

The school believes it has a duty to inform and educate young people about the consequences of the use and abuse of drugs and therefore takes a pro-active stance believing that health education is a vital part of the education of every pupil.

The programmes of work in LLW, Science, P.E. and R.E. cover the physical and moral effects of substance abuse in our society and actively discourage experimentation. The programmes should help pupils to develop mature responses to the dangers of substance abuse especially when confronted with peer pressure to try alcohol etc in a social context.

When appropriate and practical **all** areas of the curriculum will contribute to developing an awareness of the dangers of substance abuse.

Parents/Guardians will be sent supporting material at intervals, to discuss with their children.

## School Policy for dealing with drug-related incidents:-

1. The pupil(s) should be taken to a private room and supervised constantly.
2. There should not be an opportunity to destroy or hide evidence.
3. A witness (senior member of staff) should be present at all times to corroborate.

4. Head teacher and witness should keep a written note of every course of action.
5. The police should be informed immediately for advice.
6. Inform the parents that the pupil is being detained in school until they can collect the child.
7. If the parents arrive before the police a witness must be present at all times.
8. The school will consider sanctions against pupils involved in a drug related incident. Such sanctions may include exclusion.
9. Without disclosing the name(s) of the pupil(s) the school will inform staff that:-
  - (a) a drug-related incident has happened in the school;
  - (b) it resulted in an exclusion pending further investigation;
  - (c) the problem of drugs is likely to be a wider one and be alert;
  - (d) no comment should be made to the press - allegedly 'off the record' telephone conversations may be taped!

### **Role of the Principal, B.O.G. and Designated Member of Staff**

1. The Principal is responsible for the implementation of the policy in conjunction with the B.O.G. This responsibility includes liaison with relevant outside agencies e.g. PSNI and Social Services, as well as with parents and EAWR.
2. The designated member of staff together with the relevant members of the pastoral team will deal with the routine administration of the policy.
3. The Principal will notify parents of all incidents involving possession, procuring of or partaking of illegal substances - the PSNI Drugs Squad will also be informed. The use or supply of drugs outside school is also notifiable.
4. The Principal will involve the B.O.G. in considering each incident individually so that an appropriate response can be made - permanent exclusion may be a possibility.
5. **All** personnel within the school are subject to disciplinary procedures in respect of drug possession or distribution. This includes being reported to PSNI Drugs Squad.
6. The Principal will liaise with the media - having sought advice from EAWR Legal Department. **The EAWR Adviser for Drugs Education and the School Support Officer will also be informed immediately.**

### **School Staff Guidelines for dealing with Emergencies**

#### **If a pupil overdoses and is found drowsy or unconscious:-**

- a stay calm;
- b do not leave the pupil because of the small risk of 'sudden sniffing death', discourage exertion and keep the pupil calm;
- c turn them on their side to prevent the inhalation of vomit;
- d make sure they have plenty of fresh air;
- e ring for a doctor or ambulance;
- f collect any powder, tablets or anything used in taking the drug so that they can be examined by the doctor.

#### **If a pupil is found in the act of 'Sniffing':**

- a stay calm;
- b do not attempt to discuss the drug or solvent use;
- c try to stop them sniffing but **DO NOT** use force;
- d stay with them until the effects have worn off;
- e **DO NOT** over excite solvent misusers because of the small risk of 'sudden sniffing death'.

#### **If the incident occurs during out-of-school activities or on a school trip**

The member of staff accompanying the pupils should:-

- a inform the Principal as soon as possible that the incident has taken place - the parents should be informed and the pupil may be brought home;
- b supervise the pupil closely - to prevent the destruction of evidence, or further harm to the pupil;
- c keep a detailed written account of the incident - with corroborating statements if there are witnesses;
- d turn over all details of the incident to the Principal as soon as the group returns to school.

### **How to recognise drug taking**

It is often difficult to tell if someone is taking drugs just by observing them. While the following symptoms **may** indicate use, they may also occur for a variety of other reasons.

Possible indications:

- a abnormal sleepiness or drowsiness;
- b sudden mood changes;
- c lack of concentration, black-outs;
- d lack of interest in school work/hobbies;
- e telling lies, stealing or furtive behaviour;
- f new and strange friends;
- g unusual smelling, stains or marks on body or clothes
- h 'drunken' behaviour
- i spots around nose and mouth (glue sniffer's rash only occurs with some glues - it is NOT common);
- j frequent and persistent headaches, sore throat or runny nose;

Remember - any of these might be happening for other reasons.

**DO NOT JUMP TO CONCLUSIONS BUT BE OBSERVANT.PASS ALL CONCERNS ON TO THE DESIGNATED TEACHER FOR CHILD PROTECTION.**

Alcohol presents certain difficulties for schools in that, like tobacco, it is not a banned substance even though, in common with the other substances in our Drugs Policy, it has addictive properties.

Almost all of our pupils are below the legal age to buy alcohol but it would be both naive and irresponsible of us to assume that they are not going to be offered alcohol - either in their own homes or elsewhere.

We do therefore have a responsibility to educate our young people about:

1. The social pressures they will encounter - from adults, from advertising and most importantly, their peers.
2. The need for responsible actions and how this can be impaired by alcohol i.e. the anti-social consequences of drunkenness which can include causing car accidents, getting into fights, promiscuity etc.
3. The actual physical effects of alcohol.
4. The need to respect the right of everyone to make their own personal decision to abstain, if they wish.

### **School's Response to Alcohol Abuse**

The consumption of alcohol by pupils in school or outside while in school uniform or when engaged in out-of-school activities is strictly forbidden, and in common with other breaches of discipline will have sanctions applied.