

**Balnamore Primary School**

**Drugs Policy**

Date reviewed: Sep. 2022

Date due to review: Sep. 2024

**Rationale**

Children and young people are exposed to messages about drug use from an early age. Their exposure to the use and misuse of rugs may come through parents/guardians, older siblings, friends or media.

Balnamore Primary School does not condone the misuse of drugs but recognises that there has been a considerable increase in the abuse of drugs in recent years in Northern Ireland. Drug misuse appears to be affecting and ever younger population and the ‘recreational’ use of drugs can lead to a dangerous acceptance of illegal and harmful drug misuse as part of everyday life.

We believe that our school has a preventative role to play in combating the misuse of drugs by young people throughout our PDMU lessons.

Balnamore Primary School sees its role as that of a caring community committed to the physical, mental, social, emotional, moral and spiritual health, safety and wellbeing of our pupils and staff. WE want our pupils to make informed and responsible decisions about drugs, by increasing their knowledge and by developing in them appropriate values, attitudes and skills. However, we recognise that drug misuse is a whole community issue and hat schools along cannot solve the problem, the school is only one of a number of groups and agencies which must play a part in the education of young people, and we make use of their expertise where possible in the delivery of awareness.

**Ethos**

In Balnamore Primary School the welfare and safety of our pupils is paramount. We feel that raising awareness will help to promote that sense of wellbeing, as well as the safety and security of the pupils within our school.

This policy is based on the guidance provided by the Department of Education for Northern Ireland in the following documents:

* DE Circular 2015/23 Drugs Guidance
* CCEA Drugs Guidance for Schools in Northern Ireland (Revised Edition 2015): [http://ccea.org.uk/sites/default/files/docs/curriculum/area\_of\_learning/pdmu/drugs/Drugs\_Guidance\_for \_Schools.pdf](http://ccea.org.uk/sites/default/files/docs/curriculum/area_of_learning/pdmu/drugs/Drugs_Guidance_for%20_Schools.pdf)

Balnamore Primary School promotes the rights of the child based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child. This policy therefore, takes into account Article 3 which states: ‘The best interest of the child must be a top priority in everything we do.’

**Definitions**

For the purpose of this policy, the term drug and substance include any product that when taken, has the effect of altering the way the body works or how a person behaves, feels, sees or thinks.

As well as everyday products such as tea and coffee, substances include:

* Alcohol, tobacco and tobacco-related products including nicotine replacement therapy and e-cigarettes
* Over the counter medicines such as paracetamol and cough medicines
* Prescribed drugs, such as antibiotics, painkillers, anti-depressants, anti-psychotics, inhalers and stimulants such as Ritalin
* Volatile substances such as correcting fluids or thinners, gas lighter fuel, aerosols, glues and petrol
* Controlled drugs such as cannabis, LSD, ecstasy, amphetamine sulphate (speed), magic mushrooms, heroin and cocaine
* Other substances such as amyl or butyl nitrite (known as poppers) and unprocessed magic mushrooms.

**Aims and objectives**

* To provide a clear statement of the school’s view on drug education
* To ensure a consistent approach from staff to drug education and in the handling of drug related incidents
* To safeguard good practice in the future
* To inform pupils of the effects of drug use and abuse
* To provide a drug education via PDMU which:

Develops pupils’ self-esteem and promotes positive attitudes in their relationships with others

Gives pupils opportunities to develop the values, skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to make informed and responsible decisions about the use/misuse of drugs, including tobacco related products, alcohol, e-cigarettes within the context of a healthy lifestyle

Helps pupils develop the skills necessary to assert themselves confidently and resist negative pressures and influences

* To provide appropriate support and assistance for those pupils affected by drug-related issues
* To inform parents/guardians of the content of this policy and the procedures to be implemented in the management of incidents of suspected drug misuse.
* To establish and environment in which the school is free from the misuse of all drugs

**Roles and responsibilities**

**The role of the Board of Governors**

The school governors have responsibility for Balnamore Primary School and will foster and support the development and ongoing review of the Drugs policy by collaborating with appropriate staff, pupils and parent / carers. They will facilitate the consultative process where the school community can respond and contribute to the effectiveness and quality of the policy and programme, which the governors will examine and approve prior to their implementation within the school. All governors will be fully aware of the policy in process.

**The Principal**

It is the Principals responsibility to determine the circumstances of all incidents, but it is the responsibility of the PSNI to investigate any criminal or suspected criminal offence. In any suspected drug related incident, the Principal should contact the parent/carers of those pupils involved. The Principal must ensure that in any incident involving a controlled substance there is close liaison with the PSNI. Failure to inform the PSNI of a suspected incident involving controlled drugs is a criminal offence.

***After contacting the PSNI, the Principal should confine her responsibilities to:***

* The welfare of the pupil (s) involved in the incident and the other pupils in the school
* Health and safety during the handling, storage and safe disposal of any drug or drug-related incident
* Using protective gloves at all times
* Inform the Board of Governors
* Agreeing any appropriate pastoral or disciplinary response
* Reporting the incident to the EA if appropriate, for example if an incident:

Is serious enough to require PSNI involvement

Requires that a child protection procedure is invoked; or leads to the suspension or expulsion of a pupil

Complete a written report and forward a copy to the Board of Governors and the designated officer in the Education Authority.

**The Designated Teacher for Drugs**

The duties of the designated teacher will include the oversight and co-ordination of the planning of curricular provision, in compliance with the statutory requirements and liaison with other staff responsible for pastoral care

The designated teacher is responsible for the coordination for the school procedures for handling suspected drugs-related incidents and the training and induction of these procedures with new and existing staff.

The designated teacher will act as a point of contact for outside agencies that may have to work with the school or pupil(s). in the absence of the designated teacher, a deputy will be available. It’s the responsibility of the designated teacher for drugs to take possession of any substance (s) and associated paraphernalia found and complete a factual report.

**All Staff (teaching and non – teaching)**

Individual staff members are likely to be the first encounter a suspected drugs related incident. It is not their responsibility to determine the circumstances surrounding the incident. However, they should deal with any emergency procedures, if necessary (see appendix 1,2,3). Any information, substance or paraphernalia received should be forwarded to the designated teacher for drugs. A brief factual report of the suspected incident should be forwarded to the designated teacher for drugs.

**The Role of the Parents/Carers**

All Parent/Carers should be made aware that the school has a ‘Drugs Policy’ and how it applies to them and their children. Parents/Carers form a part of the consultative process.

**Drug Education in the Curriculum**

The Drugs Education programme in Balnamore Primary School will be included in teachers’ planning and will form part of the curricular area of Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU). It will also be supported by the pastoral care programme and policy throughout the school and will link with other subject areas such as Religious Educations and Physical Education. When available, the school will use the PSNI to deliver specialised drugs education lessons.

The programme is a preventative one and is pupil centred, delivered through active learning. ***The aims of the programme are:***

* To promote a positive attitude towards personal health
* To inform pupils of the effects of drug use and abuse
* To help pupils acquire skills to resist peer pressure
* To build up the self-esteem of pupils
* To help pupils acquire decision making and problem-solving skills that will empower them to take responsibility for their own health and safety

**Responses in the event of a suspected drugs related incident**

Dealing with a suspected incident requires extreme sensitivity on the part of all those involved.

***All staff should be aware of the procedure for:***

* Dealing with substances found on the school premises
* Finding/suspecting a pupil/adult of possessing/distributing an illegal substance
* Pupil suspected of having taken drugs in school

These procedures are outline in the ‘CCEA Drugs Guidance for Schools in Northern Ireland (Revised Edition 2015) Section 3: Responding to Drug-Related Incidents’

**Illness, Unusual or Uncharacteristic Behaviour**

Young people’s behaviour may be unpredictable and bizarre for many reasons during their times at school. Changes in behaviour may indicate a range of difficulties and problems and may be related to a medical condition, rather than substance misuse. It is, however, important to note that intoxication physical collapse or unconsciousness can also result from initial experiment with drugs.

Staff should be any indication of illness, unusual or uncharacteristic behaviour because of suspected substance misuse to the attention of the designated teacher for drugs. They should not make any judgement until they have determined the circumstances surrounding the incident. Where staff believe a pupil may have taken a substance, they suspect is a drug, they should seek medical assistance immediately after following the recommended emergency procedures. The school must inform Parents and the PSNI.

**Taking possession of a suspected controlled drug and / or associated paraphernalia**

The law permits school staff to take temporary possession of a substance suspected of being a controlled drug to protect a pupil from harm and prevent the pupils committing the offence of possession. The teacher should use appropriate safety precautions, take the suspected substance and any associated equipment and or paraphernalia to the designated teacher for drugs as soon as possible. They should arrange for its safe storage until the school can hand it over to the local PSNI officer to identify whether it is a controlled substance. School staff should not attempt to analyse or taste an unidentified substance. An adult witness should be present when staff confiscate the substance and the school should keep a record of the details using the schools Drug Incident Report Form.

**An Allegation of a Suspected Controlled Drug Related Incident**

**Carrying out a search**

If the designated teacher for drugs receives an allegation of possession, he/she may need to search a pupil’s desk or belongings, if he has cause to believe it contains unlawful items, including controlled drugs. However, teachers cannot search personal belongings without consent. Staff should only search the pupils’ personal belongings, including school bag, coat and other items with the pupil’s consent. Staff should carry out this search in the presence of the pupil and another adult witness.

If the school suspects pupils of concealing controlled drugs on tehri person or in their personal belongings, staff should make every effort to encourage them to produce these substances voluntarily. Staff should ask pupils to turn out their pockets or schools’ bags. If pupils refuse, staff should contact their parents or carers and the PSNI to deal with the situation. A member of staff should never carry out a physical search of a pupil, unless there is compelling evidence that the pupil has committed an offence. If staff recover a substance or object that they suspect has a connection with drugs, they should take possession of it and make a full record.

**Possession, Possession with intent to supply and supply of controlled drugs**

Schools must be aware that pupil involvement in suspected controlled drug-related incidents may take several forms.

These could include:

* Possession
* Possession with intent to supply
* The supply of a controlled drug

It is illegal for pupils to be in possession of a controlled drug. If a member of staff comes across a pupil(s) in possession of what they believe or suspect to be a controlled drug, they should immediately attempt to take possessions of the substance and escort the pupil(s) to the designated teacher for drugs who will deal with the incident as outlined in the school policy.

**Staff policy on smoking and alcohol**

Balnamore Primary School is a smoke and alcohol-free zone. For further information refer to the Health and Safety Executives website ([www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk))

**Confidentiality**

Should a pupil reveal any personal drugs information, which puts them or any other pupil at risk, this must be passed on to the designated teacher/Principal. Confidentiality can never be guaranteed, as we are responsible for all of the pupils in our school.

**Disciplinary/Pastoral Care Responses**

The Principal will retain responsibility for deciding how to respond to a particular incident and will take into account factors such as:

* The age of the pupil
* Does the pupil admit or deny the allegations?
* Is this the first or subsequent offence
* Is the drug legal or illegal?
* Quantity of the drug involved
* What was the pupil’s motivation?
* Does the pupil understand the school policy and school rules?
* Where does the incident appear on a scale from possession of a small quantity to persistent supply?
* If illegal supply is suspected, how much was supplied and was the pupils coerced to buy for others, or is there evidence of organised or habitual supply

At all times the needs to individual pupils will be considered and appropriate intervention and support mechanisms will be put into place.

Any sanction imposed will be justifiable in terms of:

* The seriousness of the incident
* The identified needs of the pupils, other pupils and the community
* Consistency with published school rules
* Consistency with disciplinary actions for breaches of the school rules

**Procedures for using outside agencies**

Any visitor providing an input to the drugs education programmes will be given a copy of the ‘Drugs Policy’. They will have a clear set of aims and objectives as well as a lesson plan. The teacher will view these to ensure they are appropriate and will remain in class with the visitor.

**Guidance for confiscation and storage of harmful substances**

Any confiscated drugs or drug-related items should be given to the Principal for storage in a locked cabinet and then given to the PSNI.

**Guidance on the administration of medication in school**

Please refer to the school policy on the Administration of Medications. Medication will only be given on school trips/residentials if the parent/carer has signed a consent form. If the child requires other medication, he / she will be taken to the nearest hospital.