

**DRUGS POLICY**  
**FOR**  
**SAINT COLUMBAN'S P.S.**  
**BELCOO**



**Signed:**

*Gerry McAloon*

*12-04-2022*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chair of Board of Governors

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

*Liam Magee*

*12-04-2022*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Principal

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

### **Rationale**

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

St. Columban's 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 an ever younger population and the so-called 'recreational' use of drugs can lead to a dangerous acceptance of illegal and harmful drug misuse as part of everyday life. We believe that this school has a vital preventative role to play in combating the misuse of drugs by young people and we therefore include a drugs education programme as part of the statutory curriculum for Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU).

This 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 that schools alone 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 the programme.

### **Ethos**

The ethos of our school is founded on Catholic/Christian principles where tolerance and respect for others is paramount. It is our intention that everyone feels valued and our pupils are encouraged to develop their full potential in a caring and supportive environment.

This ethos underpins the policy and programmes in relation to drugs education.

## Mission Statement

*“ St Columban’s Primary School in partnership with parents and the community will strive through effective teaching to enable pupils to discover and develop to the full; their talents, attitudes and abilities in a caring and supportive environment”*

## Aims

- We aim to follow God's command to love, nurture, care and respect one another in everything we do.
- We aim to recognise the uniqueness of each person and to develop their self-worth and value by providing a fair, inspiring and enriching community.
- We aim to promote the full development of each person.
- We aim to inspire a caring inclusive environment where all are valued and respected within our school and wider community.
- We aim to celebrate individuality and the unique qualities of everyone.
- We aim to recognise the needs that are rooted in the Gospel values, to nurture and to help participate in building a better society.

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_Schools.pdf)

St. Columban’s 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 interests 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 (NRT) and electronic cigarettes;
- over-the-counter medicines such as paracetamol and cough medicines;
- prescribed drugs, such as antibiotics, painkillers, antidepressants, antipsychotics, 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;
- new psychoactive substances (NPS), formerly known as legal highs\*, which contain one or more chemical substances that produce similar effects to illegal drugs and are sold as incense, salts or plant food marked 'not for human consumption' to avoid prosecution; and
- other substances such as amyl or butyl nitrite (known as poppers) and unprocessed magic mushrooms

\*The term 'legal high' is no longer used as it is misleading. The public perceived that 'legal' meant safe, but as these substances are not regulated there is no way of knowing what chemicals they contain.

#### **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 programme which:
  - o Develops pupils' self-esteem and promotes positive attitudes in their relationships with others;
  - o 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, tobacco related products, alcoholic, e-cigarettes, volatile substances etc within the context of a healthy lifestyle; and
  - o 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 an 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 St. Columban's Primary School and will foster and support the development and on-going review of the Drugs Policy and education programme by collaborating with appropriate staff, pupils and parent / careers. 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 in school. They will ensure that the policy is referred to in the school prospectus and reviewed at regular intervals.

All governors should be fully aware of and one member will be trained to deal with suspected drug-related incidents and their appropriate disciplinary response.

### **The Principal**

It is the Principal's 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 parents / 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 his 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 paraphernalia, using protective gloves at all times;
- informing the Board of Governors;
- agreeing any appropriate pastoral or disciplinary response;
- reporting the incident to the EA if appropriate, for example if an incident:
  - o is serious enough to require PSNI involvement;
  - o requires that a child protection procedure is invoked; or leads to the suspension or exclusion of a pupil; and
- completing a written report and forwarding a copy to the Board of Governors and the designated officer in the EA.

### **The Designated Teacher for Drugs – Mr Magee**

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 co-ordination for the school's 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 contact point for outside agencies that may have to work with the school or with a pupil(s). In the absence of the designated teacher

Mrs Meehan will act as deputy. It is 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 to 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, 3 and 4). 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 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.
- Support the school in the development and implementation of this policy, including the school's procedures for handling incidents of suspected drug misuse and the drug education programme.
- Support your son/daughter if they have become involved with drugs.

### **Pupils**

- Be aware of and adhere to school rules in relation to drug use/misuse, including tobacco, alcohol, over-the-counter and prescribed medication, volatile substances and controlled drugs.

### **Drugs Education in the Curriculum**

The drugs education programme in St. Columban's 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, health education and PE. 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 positive attitudes 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.

### **Training**

- Appropriate training will be provided for the designated teacher, the drugs education coordinator, the principal and the designated governor. This training will be facilitated by the Education Authority.
- Information will be disseminated to staff by the coordinator.
- Certain agencies and organisations can provide information, talks and training.
  - PSNI Drug Squad
  - Health Promotion Agency
  - Education Authority Staff
- Non-teaching staff are up-dated regularly on all policies relating to Pastoral Care and Drugs Education.

### **Disciplinary Measures**

Each incident will be responded to individually, taking into account the age of the pupil, the number of pupils involved, evidence of peer pressure, level of involvement.

The needs of individual pupils will be considered and appropriate interventions and support mechanisms will be put in place.

We will endeavour to provide pupils with opportunities to learn from their mistakes and to develop as individuals.

The school will deal with drug related incidents according to procedures within the Disciplinary Policy. However, because of the seriousness of some aspects of this, certain further measures must be considered.

The school views possession of drugs or drug taking during the school day extremely seriously and will take appropriate disciplinary measures on any pupil guilty of the offence.

Disciplinary measures must be taken within the framework of the Education Authority guidelines.

When appropriate, internal exclusion may be considered.

In certain circumstances suspension may be an option. The child can be suspended for a maximum of 5 days while an investigation is carried out. This can be extended to 15 days in one term where necessary.

As a last resort, expulsion may be considered. The school cannot expel but can recommend a pupil for suspension to Education Authority.

### **Parents**

The school expects parental support and co-operation in any action taken in support of basic school aims outlined within this policy.

The drugs policy is available to everyone on the school website and a hard copy can be requested from the office.

Where sensitive issues are being addressed, the school will inform parents/guardians. The school expects parents to work together with the school in any measures deemed necessary.

### **Use of Outside Agencies**

Where appropriate, outside agencies may be invited to speak to the children. The Education Authority's advice on the use of outside agencies will be followed.

- The teacher will ensure that the activities will complement the programme.
- The class teacher will always be present.
- Ensure that the agency/individual has a child protection policy that is in accordance with recognised good practice.
- Clarify position of confidentiality.
- Ensure content and resources are appropriate.
- Provide the agency/individual with this policy.
- Inform parents of the use of the agency/individual.
- Give pupils the opportunity to discuss the session/class and to give feedback.
- Create opportunities for follow-up discussions with the class teacher and the agency or individual.
- Request evaluations carried out by the agency or individual.

### **Procedures**

All teachers will know and consider the Board's Guidelines and legal issue before reacting to a drug related incident.

- Searching - Teachers have the right to search school property but not the child or his personal property. The child may consent to emptying pockets, bags etc. However if a child refuses to cooperate, the PSNI should be contacted. Any search should be carried out only in the presence of a witness (perhaps another teacher).
- Detention - If a child is suspected of supplying or using an illegal substance then the teacher has the right to detain the child using reasonable force, since this a criminal offence. However, if a child wishes to leave the premises, he/she should be allowed to do so.  
There is no right to detain if the substances are legal.  
A witness should be present.
- Confidentiality - When dealing with a drugs related incident where a child is looking for help, staff should be aware that confidentiality cannot be

guaranteed as it is compulsory to inform the police about any criminal offence.

Children must be made aware that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

- Interviewing - The child should only be interviewed in the presence of a witness.

If possible during an interview with police, the parents should be present.

- Dealing with the Press - A written statement from the Principal should be given.

No questions should be answered.

Statement should end in a positive manner.

Other staff should be aware that they give no information and have no contact with the press.

### **Management of solvents**

By the term solvent we mean any volatile substance such as - adhesives, glues, petrol, gas lighter fuels, correcting fluids, thinners, aerosols.

Certain solvents are unsuitable for use in schools.

Teachers should be aware of the need to supervise closely any glues, paints etc. used in specialist areas such as craft, technology.

Any solvent that presents a danger will be kept in a secure store or locked cupboard.

Only members of staff will have access.

Cleaning agents and chemicals used by cleaners and caretaker will be stored according to procedures set out in Section 9 of Health and Safety in Education manual.

### **Management of prescribed medicines in school**

(See also Medicines Policy.)

On-going medication (e.g. for asthma, diabetics, epileptics.)

Teachers have a right to opt out.

In severe cases have an individual plan set up.

One off medication (e.g. antibiotic)

Teachers have a right to opt out.

Parents put in writing the name of drug, time to be administered, dosage. The school provides slips to be completed and signed by parents.

- Storage of medicines  
e.g. antibiotics, inhalers etc. - in a locked cupboard to prevent medicines falling into the wrong hands.  
Any medicines dispensed should be recorded and counter-signed.
- Emergency Permission  
If e.g. a child has an asthma attack and parent is unavailable call family doctor or ambulance.  
Parents need to be aware of procedures.
- A Teacher's Position  
Teachers must inform Principal of any medication to be administered.  
Teachers have a right to refuse to administer medication.  
Teachers have the right to insist on specialist training to administer certain drugs.
- School Trips  
Where a child requires medication during a school trip the parent must present all necessary information to the school in writing giving the name of the medicine, nature of the condition, dosage and times of dosage.  
Parents must give their prior consent, in writing, to any emergency treatment deemed necessary.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

There will be regular monitoring, review and evaluation of the drugs education programme within the school. This will involve a variety of methods and evaluation tools, depending on the issue and the year group.

Questionnaires for pupils, staff and parents/guardians will be used when appropriate to facilitate planning, monitoring and evaluating and will be used to inform future planning.

Education Authority pupil and teacher evaluations may also be used.

Parents will be informed about the school's policy and will be updated about relevant issues when necessary.

Feedback from pupils, staff, parents and governors can be useful in evaluating the programme. Any necessary change in the programme will be implemented.

The programme will be reviewed on a regular basis or in the light of relevant changes.

***Individual staff members should:***

- assess the situation and decide the action;
- make the situation safe for all pupils and other members of staff, secure first aid and send for additional staff support, if necessary;
- carefully gather up any drugs and / or associated paraphernalia or evidence and pass all information or evidence to the designated teacher for drugs; and
- write a brief factual report of the incident and forward it to the designated teacher for drugs.

***The designated teacher for drugs should:***

- respond to the first aider's advice or recommendations;
- inform parents or carers immediately, in the case of an emergency;
- take possession of any substance(s) and associated paraphernalia found;
- inform the principal;
- take initial responsibility for pupil(s) involved in the suspected incident; and
- complete a Drugs Incident Report Form, and forward it to the principal.

***The principal should:***

- determine the circumstances surrounding the incident;
- ensure that the following people are informed:
  - o parents or carers;
  - o designated officer in the local PSNI area;
  - o Board of Governors; and
  - o designated officer in EA.
- consult and agree pastoral and disciplinary responses, including support;
- forward a copy of the Incident Report Form to the Chairperson of the Board of Governors and the designated officer in the EA; and
- review procedures and amend, if necessary.

## Recognising Signs of Substance Abuse

## Appendix 3

The following guidance can be found in 'CEA Drugs Guidance for Schools in Northern Ireland (Revised Edition 2015)' page 42.

### What to look out for:

If someone is having a bad time on drugs, they may be:

- Anxious
- Tense
- Panicky
- Overheated and dehydrated
- Drowsy
- Having difficulty breathing.

### What to do:

The first things you should do are:

- Stay calm
- Calm them and be reassuring, don't scare them or chase after them
- Try to find out what they have taken and
- Stay with them.

If they are anxious, tense or panicky, you should:

- Sit them in a quiet and calm room
- Keep them away from crowds, bright lights and loud noises
- Tell them to take slow deep breaths and
- Stay with them.

If they are **really drowsy**, you should:

- Sit them in a quiet place and keep them awake
- If they become unconscious or don't respond, call an ambulance immediately and place them in the recovery position
- Don't scare them, shout at them or shock them
- Don't give them coffee to wake them up and
- Don't put them in a cold shower to 'wake them up'.

If they are **unconscious** or having difficulty breathing, you should:

- Immediately phone for an ambulance
- Place them in the recovery position  
Stay with them until the ambulance arrives and
- If you know what drug they've taken, tell the ambulance crew; this can help make sure they get the right treatment straight away.
- Unknown substance / paraphernalia found on the school premises

## Emergency Procedures

## Appendix 4

The following guidance can be found in 'CCEA Drugs Guidance for Schools in Northern Ireland (Revised Edition 2015)' page 44.

This is the current best advice on what to do if someone is in difficulty because of misusing drugs.

- it is important to find out what they have taken as this could affect emergency aid, for example, it will help the ambulance crew. Loosen clothing and call for an ambulance immediately.
- If the person has taken a depressant substance, for example solvents, alcohol, sleeping pills or painkillers, it is likely that they will be drowsy or unconscious. If the person is drowsy, it is important to try to keep them awake by talking to them or applying a cool damp cloth or towel to the back of their neck. You should not give them anything to eat or drink as this could lead to vomiting or choking.
- If they are or become unconscious, put them into the recovery position, clear their airway if blocked and keep checking on any changes to pulse and breathing rates.
- If they stop breathing, begin mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, starting with chest compressions. (If you have not been trained in CPR or are worried about giving mouth-to-mouth resuscitation to a stranger, you can do chest compressions only (or hands-only) CPR). Stay with the person until the ambulance crew arrive and then tell them all the facts, including what the person has taken. This is very important as it could save his or her life.
- If the person has taken a stimulant, such as amphetamines (speed) or ecstasy, they may show various signs of distress. If the person is panicking, try to reassure them. It is important that they calm down and relax. Get them to breathe in and out, deeply and slowly. Help them by counting aloud slowly. If they start to hyperventilate – that is they can't control their breathing – ask them to breathe in and out of a paper (not plastic) bag, if there is one available.

- If the person has taken a hallucinogen, such as LSD, magic mushrooms or cannabis in combination with ecstasy, they may become very anxious, distressed and fearful. They may act in an unusual way. It is very important to reassure the person – tell them that you will look after them, that they are in no danger, that it is the effects of the substance and that these will soon wear off. You may want to take them to a quiet place, keep other people away and continue to reassure them. Just stay with them and talk calmly to them until the ambulance arrives.

**St. Columban's Primary School**

1. Name of Pupil: \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Date of Incident: \_\_\_\_\_  
Time of Incident: \_\_\_\_\_  
Location of Incident: \_\_\_\_\_  
Reported by: \_\_\_\_\_

3. First Aid Given: YES / NO                      Administered by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Ambulance Called: YES / NO                      Time of call: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Parent / Carer Informed: YES / NO                      Time of call: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Where is substance retained: \_\_\_\_\_

6. PSNI Informed: YES / NO                      Date: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Education Authority Informed: YES / NO                      Date: \_\_\_\_\_

8. Description of Incident:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Form completed by: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_