

Belfast Model School for Girls

Achievement for All



Drugs and Substance Abuse Policy

Agreed by Board of Governors: Jan 2007

To be reviewed: Jan 2010

Rationale

Our school mission statement commits us to the creation and maintenance of a safe and caring environment in school. Part of this responsibility is an effective drugs (including substance abuse) education programme. Our drugs/substance abuse education programme aims to raise pupil awareness of the effects of drugs and other substances on emotional, physical and social well-being. "Drugs" in this context is used as a generic term to cover any substance taken into the body to change the way it functions. While recognizing that tobacco and alcohol are the drugs that our pupils are most likely to use or experiment with, there are situations where illegal substances are also available to them

Purposes
It is in the interest of all members of the school community that relationships between staff and pupils, staff and staff and pupil and pupil are conducted in an atmosphere of mutual respect. The aim is to create an ethos within the school which makes bullying unacceptable. An atmosphere of mutual respect should be developed and where bullying occur it will be addressed immediately and effectively.

Purposes

In this school we strive to raise pupil awareness of the health risks associated with the use of drugs and substance abuse and to develop pupils' ability to reject the drugs culture which increasingly prevails in contemporary society. Our school drugs and substance abuse policy aims:

- to ensure that the welfare of pupils is paramount at all times.
- to enable pupils to make healthy, informed choices by increasing knowledge, challenging attitudes and values and developing and practising personal and social skills.
- to provide pupils with accurate information about drugs and other substances.
- to increase pupils' understanding of the health and social issues related to drug use and substance abuse.
- to enable pupils to identify sources of appropriate support if the need arises.

Guidelines

- All curricular areas contribute to the raising of pupil awareness of health risks associated with drugs use and substance abuse.
- The Co-ordinator of Pastoral Care is responsible for the drugs and substance abuse awareness programme in school.
- All staff are made aware of the signs and symptoms of drug use and substance abuse and associated problems.
- Opportunities are created to update staff regularly on drug use and substance abuse.
- Parents are provided with relevant information as appropriate.
- The school works with outside agencies to seek advice and support.
- Pupils are prohibited from bringing illegal substances (including cigarettes and alcohol) to school and on any school visit/activity.
- The school operates a restricted smoking environment for staff and **a strict no smoking policy for all pupils.**

- If a pupil is found to be smoking either in school or in school uniform then she should be reported to her Year Head. The pupil involved will be subject to a school detention and a letter will be sent home informing parents/guardians of the matter.
- In the event of substance misuse, other than smoking, the pupil(s) involved should be immediately referred to the relevant V.P. who will take the following actions if appropriate:
 - assess the situation
 - seek medical advice if deemed necessary
 - inform parents
 - send pupil home if deemed necessary
- A pupil who has been involved in a drug use/substance abuse incident will be monitored by the relevant Year Head and may be referred to the school Counsellor.
- If a pupil is suspected of using or trafficking in illegal drugs the matter will be clarified by the Designated Teacher (or relevant Deputy Designated Teacher). If confirmed, the pupil(s) concerned will be suspended by the Principal and the matter referred to the Board of Governors. In more serious cases the pupil(s) concerned may be expelled. Procedures for suspensions and/or expulsions will follow the BELB guidelines.
- The school will fulfil its legal obligation to inform the Police Service of Northern Ireland of cases involving illegal drugs.
- Guidance will be offered to parents and pupils on the availability of specialist advice on the use of drugs and other substances.

These policy Guidelines are translated into action through other policies and procedures, for example:

Health Education Policy

Behaviour Management Policy

Pastoral Care Policy

BELB Guidelines on Suspensions/Expulsions