



Policy for Managing Drugs-Related Incidents

Date approved:

Review Schedule: two year cycle

Reviewed: 7th May 2015

Next review: Summer 2017

Context

Clyst Vale is a comprehensive Community College with around a thousand students aged 11-18. This age can be a time of experimentation, or of challenging authority, and drugs can form a part of this. As an educational establishment, Clyst Vale seeks to inform young people of the risks associated with drugs through Personal & Social Development and Health Education (Course 42); this is considered fully in the College's Drugs Education Policy.

The Governors and Principal have responsibilities with regard to the health, safety and welfare of students and staff. Incidents involving the use and misuse of drugs at Clyst Vale have been mercifully few and far between, but this policy reflects the need for appropriate procedures in the event of such incidents.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Governors' Discipline Statement, the Behaviour Management policy and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. The safety of students, staff and other users of the College is paramount, and the Discipline Statement clearly indicates that bringing illegal or dangerous items on to the College site will result in exclusion, either fixed-term or, in cases of supplying drugs on school premises, permanent exclusion. It should be noted that this policy also extends to College visits and residentials, and all members of the College community.

The Governor with oversight of Drugs Education is **Mrs Gina Stroud**. The senior member of staff with oversight of this policy is **Mr P Sutton**.

Aims of this Policy

- To establish and maintain an environment which is free from the misuse of any drugs
- To set out clear procedures in the management of drug-related incidents
- To minimise risk for the majority
- To deter future occurrences of drugs-related incidents
- To respond to any individual in the College community in need of support

Definitions

This Policy is concerned with five categories of drugs:

- Controlled/ illegal substances (for example cannabis, amphetamines, ecstasy, LSD, heroin)
- Drugs which interfere with learning (for example alcohol or solvents)
- Drugs which have a harmful effect on health (in particular, tobacco)
- Drugs which are used to enhance performance (for example analgesics or steroids)
- Prescribed drugs which are improperly used
- Drugs known as 'legal highs' will be treated in the same way as any other drug for the purposes of this policy

Responding to a Drugs-Related Incident

"Drugs-related incidents"; will be both unique in each case and unexpected; therefore, there will be no set way of responding, although there are key principles which apply.

Responding to illness, or inappropriate behaviour as a result of substance abuse.

- A member of the Senior Leadership Team must be informed at the earliest opportunity;
- anyone involved should be moved to a private room or office;
- the medical needs of anyone involved are paramount;
- the welfare and safety of others must also be considered;
- parents/ carers must be informed as soon as practicable;
- accurate information is essential, and should be recorded as soon as possible using designated pro-formas, (kept in DTs office) following the immediate resolution of the incident
- decisions regarding support and/or sanctions must be made carefully, on the basis of the evidence and advice of external agencies where involved.

Responding to / acting upon:

- an allegation of, or possession of, suspected illegal substances (or drugs without medical authority), for the person's own use.

-sharing, supplying or dealing in suspected illegal substances.

-drugs found on or near College premises.

-information received regarding a student's involvement in one of these situations.

- A member of the SLT must be informed at the earliest opportunity, to consider the quality and likely veracity of the information and the risk to students or staff.
- The Police will usually be consulted at this stage, and on every occasion that a Class A drug is suspected.
- The member of SLT may need to coordinate a further initial investigation, details of which must be recorded.
- Students may be searched in accordance with **DFE-00034-2014 Searching, Screening and Confiscation advice for schools (Feb2014)**, two members of staff should be present, and students can be expected to empty their pockets and bag. Staff must not conduct a body search. If a student refuses to be searched, the Police and/or parents/carers may be informed.
- Parents/ carers will be informed after an initial assessment of the incident, or earlier if the student needs medical attention.
- Any substances found or confiscated should be sealed in an envelope and placed in the College safe until collected by the Police.
- Decisions regarding support and/or sanctions must be made carefully, on the basis of the evidence and advice of external agencies where involved; however, bringing illegal items on to the College site will result in exclusion, and dealing in drugs may lead to permanent exclusion.

Medical Emergencies

In some drugs-related incidents, young people may be at risk of medical harm. Health and safety are a greater immediate priority than investigating an incident or sanctions. If there is any doubt, medical advice should be sought without delay; the usual College procedures should be followed through referral to a First Aider and making parental contact.

Any medical information which can be obtained from the person concerned or others (if the person is unconscious) will be passed on to the relevant medical authorities.

An accident form will be completed where necessary, and the incident recorded in the Drug Incident Log.

Support

The College recognises its role in supporting students following drug-related incidents. Equally, the College recognises that its role is essentially educational, and that students may need to access external support agencies with drugs expertise, depending on their individual needs.

Drugs should not be the only focus when managing drugs-related incidents. Students may have acted dangerously, out of ignorance, bravado or rebellion, or with the influence of peers. Staff should try to ensure that students involved learn from each incident. Students may have acted out of anxiety, depression or another psychological need; if suspected, the College would inform parents and encourage them to seek external help.

Members of staff should not give individual advice to students about their personal drug use. They should direct students to the School Nurse, Counsellors or Youth Worker for contacts and general advice. Helpline numbers are also made available through the Health Education programme.

Breaches of Discipline Code and Sanctions

The College's Discipline Code states that bringing illegal or dangerous items on to the College premises is a serious breach of the rules, and may lead to exclusion.

However, the severity of a sanction applied to a drugs-related incident will take account of many factors: the motive, medical requirements, reliability of information, nature of the drug, the student's response to the incident, and the student's disciplinary record and character.

Further, the sanction should be appropriate and proportional to the incident; should balance the needs of the student concerned, other students and the College's community; should be consistent with existing College rules and expectations, and consistent with similar incidents in the past.

(Being found on college premises in possession of tobacco, or in the act of smoking, will not automatically result in a fixed-term exclusion. However, persistent defiance of college rules will mean that punishment can be escalated to a formal exclusion.)

It is acknowledged that permanent exclusion may make a young person more vulnerable to exposure to drugs; however, permanent exclusion may be used,

even for a particularly serious first offence, especially when “allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupil or others in the school” (DfES Circular 10/99).

Recording Drugs-Related Incidents

All drug-related incidents will be recorded in the Drug Incident Log, held in the Designated Teachers office

Additionally, all drug-related incidents requiring medical intervention will be recorded on an accident form.

Papers and information relating to drug-related incidents which constitute a breach of the College Discipline Code will be filed confidentially.

For students known to Children and Young People's Services, or who become known as a result of a drug-related incident, a further record of the incident will be held by the College's designated Child Protection Officer.
(Paul Sutton)

Review

This Policy will be reviewed regularly at two-year intervals by the Governors' Teaching and Learning Committee.

Date adopted: 1st July 2002.