

Policy on Response to Drug Incidents in The Edron

The vast majority of the information contained in this policy is taken from the DES booklet: *Drugs: Guidance for schools*

(Throughout this document, the term **drugs** refers to all drugs including medicines, volatile substances, alcohol, tobacco and illegal drugs)

The Edron intends to send a clear message to the whole community that the possession, use or supply of illegal and other unauthorized drugs within the *school boundaries is unacceptable.

The school acknowledges that it can reduce the risk factors and strengthen protective factors by promoting:

- Supportive and safe relationships
- Regular school attendance
- The ability to cope with the academic and social demands of the school
- Strong and supportive social networks within the community
- Good social skills
- Realistic self-awareness and self-esteem
- Good knowledge of the effects and risks of drugs
- Good knowledge of how to access help and information
- Work with parents, especially around good communication and boundary setting
- Participation in extra-curricular activities in school and out
- Counseling and other support mechanisms

(please refer to the policy on drug education)

The following substances are not permitted within the school boundaries, (with the exception of cigarettes and alcohol for adults on specified social occasions. Also certain prescribed medications such as Ritalin – with prior written permission from parents. This list must be kept updated as necessary; the nurse will have responsibility for doing this)

- Tobacco
- Alcohol
- Cannabis
- Volatile substances such as ‘Kola Loca’, lighter fuel, compressed air
- Class A drugs – cocaine, ecstasy, crack, heroin, magic mushrooms
- Unauthorised prescription drugs

Medicines which are allowed in school. Procedure for their use:

- These should be left with the nurse, locked in the fridge or a cupboard
- They must only be administered in accordance with the doctor’s instruction
- A record should be kept of when the medicine has been given or if the child refused to take the medicine.

*For the purposes of this policy, *school boundaries* refers to all areas within the school gates, including the barranca, a distance of 50 metres either side of the school gates, school transport, the Police Academy (where applicable) and all school theatre, sports and cultural trips or camps.

Management responsibilities

In The Edron, the Head of Secondary has overall responsibility for the management of drug incidents. He/she will be supported by relevant colleagues as and when necessary. All staff should be made aware of the procedures for managing incidents, including who they should inform and who has authorization for such things as bag searches.

Confidentiality

In managing drug incidents and issues, we need to have regard for issues of confidentiality. **Teachers cannot and should not promise total confidentiality.** The boundaries of confidentiality should be made clear to students. However, if a pupil discloses information which is sensitive, not generally known, and which the pupil asks not to be passed on, the request should be honoured unless this is unavoidable in order for teachers to fulfil their professional responsibilities in relation to:

- The child's safety and protection
- A police investigation
- Referral to external services

If in doubt, teachers should share information with the Head of Secondary rather than keep it to themselves.

Every effort should be made to secure pupils' agreement to the way in which the school intends to use any secure information. It should only be in exceptional circumstances that information is passed on against the student's wishes, and then the school should explain why this is happening. This should be defined by a moral or professional duty to act.

Children should also be made aware of the fact that parents will be called in earlier rather than later on all cases and/or suspicions involving drugs.

Definition of a drug incident:

- Drugs, the smell of smoke, and/or associated paraphernalia are found on the school premises
- A pupil demonstrates an inappropriate level of knowledge of drugs for their age
- A pupil is found in possession of drugs or associated paraphernalia
- A pupil is found to be supplying or selling drugs on the school premises
- A pupil, parent or member of staff is found to be under the influence of drugs in school time
- A staff member has information that the illegitimate selling or supply of drugs is happening in the school local
- A pupil or parent discloses that another pupil is misusing drugs
- We are informed of drug use at a weekend party (In cases such as these, parents will be called in if we believe that the health or safety of individuals is in danger. The meeting will take the form of an informal chat and parents will be left to deal with the

information as they see fit. Only if the problem interferes with school performance will we formally take the matter further.)

Specific responses to drugs in our school:

Tobacco

- If found, tobacco will be confiscated inside the school grounds. Parents will be informed via telephone.
- Outside school (inside boundaries) – tobacco will be confiscated. Parents will be informed via telephone.
- For repeat offenses, parents will be called in to discuss the problem.
- Smoking in school will result in a 1 day suspension. Parents will be called in to discuss the problem.

The school is also considering starting a support group for students and staff who wish to stop smoking.

Alcohol

- If found, alcohol will be confiscated inside the school grounds. Parents will be informed via telephone.
- Students bringing alcohol in to school as gifts (for example at Christmas) should use their discretion and keep the alcohol in their bag.
- Students under the influence of alcohol in school will be immediately isolated. The nurse will be called to check the condition of the student. Parents will be asked to collect the student. A 2 day suspension will be given. Counseling will be discussed with parents as appropriate. A contract may be given. Reinscription may be withheld.
- Students are not allowed to consume alcohol on school camps

Cannabis

- Possession of cannabis will result in a 2 day suspension.. Head of Secondary will be informed immediately. Parents will be asked to collect the student. Counselling will be discussed with parents as appropriate. A contract may be given. Reinscription may be withheld.
- Students under the influence of cannabis will be immediately isolated. The nurse will be called to check the condition of the student. Parents will be asked to collect the student. A 3 day suspension will be given. Counselling will be insisted upon as appropriate. A contract may be given. Reinscription will be withheld upon satisfactory completion of rehabilitation. Second offences will result in expulsion.
- Supplying the drug will result in a 1 week suspension. Community service will be asked for. Counselling will be insisted upon as appropriate. A contract will be given. Students will not be allowed to return to the school in the following academic year. Second offences will result in immediate expulsion.
- Dealing of the drug will result in immediate expulsion. External counseling may be offered to families if needed.

Class A drugs

- Possession of these drugs in school will result in the student being asked to undertake an external rehabilitation programme on a case by case basis. Reinscription for the following year will not be given.
- All other cases will result in immediate expulsion.

Procedure for dealing with incidents

All suspected drug incidents should be referred to the senior teacher in charge. This senior teacher will then inform other members of staff to support. A range of responses may then be immediately set in motion:

- Early intervention and targeted prevention
- Closing off areas of the school
- Bag and locker searches
- Questioning of certain groups of students
- Interviews with individual students (see appendix 2)
- Referral
- Individual counselling
- Family counselling
- Fixed period exclusion
- Permanent exclusion
- Calling the police

(in accordance with the guidelines outlined above)

We must keep a full record of every incident that occurs. Appropriate paperwork will be kept with the Head of Secondary and copies will go into students' files. Tutors will be informed.

Searches

If needed, bag and locker searches can be carried out by senior members of staff – heads and deputies. We should explain why we are doing the search and ask for cooperation. Any student who wishes to have the search conducted in private should be allowed to. If a student refuses to have their bag searched, they should be accompanied to the Head Teacher, then isolated, parents will be called in and the search conducted with parental permission. Finally, a student does not have the right to refuse a bag or locker search if the school insists.

Pupils may also be asked to turn out their pockets, but a member of staff does not have the right to physically touch a student in order to do this. If a student refuses to have their pockets searched, they should be accompanied to the Head Teacher, then isolated, parents will be called in and the search conducted with parental permission.

The school nurse may be called upon to examine a student who we believe to be under the influence of drugs. If the student wishes, a friend, parent or teacher may accompany them in this – although obviously too much time must not elapse.

In extreme cases, the police may be called to deal with the incident.

Pupil needs and support mechanisms

The school must ensure that there is a balance between support and punishment/consequences. It is vital that, in the first instance, we do support students and families who are experiencing problems with drug use.

- The school PSE programme is the first line of support and education that we have.
- In most cases, counselling will be identified as potentially valuable to students and their families. Counselling may be provided by the school psychologist or by informed teachers. In other cases, outside agencies will be used. This should be dealt with on a case by case scenario.
- Behaviour support plans and contracts may also be put in place.
- Temporary exclusion can be used to give the school breathing space to fully investigate the incident.
- Permanent exclusion can also be implemented after thorough investigation.

Appendix 2 – questioning students suspected of involvement in drug incidents. A range of factors may be relevant and need exploring when dealing with a drug incident:

- What does the pupil have to say?
- What is their general attitude and/or body language?
- Is this a one-off incident or a longer term problem?
- Is the drug illegal?
- What quantity of the drug was involved?
- What was the pupil's motivation?
- Is the pupil reckless with regards to his or other's safety in how the drug was being used?
- Does the pupil know and understand the rules regarding drugs in the school?
- On what scale is the incident with regards to 'possession of a small quantity' through to 'supply for profit'?
- If supply is suspected, how much was supplied, was the pupil coerced, was it 'his turn' is there evidence of organised supply?

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Appendix 3: Anti-doping and random drug testing

At the moment the school does not have a policy of random drug testing and this will not change for the near future at least.

As a small school we feel that we can handle drug incidences on a case by case basis.

Students not involved in drug taking or abuse have the right to feel that their privacy as individuals will not be violated by random drug testing.

This policy can and will be reviewed as necessary.