



Ashfield Girls' High School

Drugs Policy





Rationale

For the purpose of this document the term 'drugs' includes tobacco, alcohol, over-the-counter and prescribed medication, volatile substances and controlled drugs. Ashfield Girls' High School does not condone the misuse of drugs but recognises that there has been a considerable increase in the misuse 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 Ashfield Girls' High School has a vital preventative role to play in combating the misuse of drugs by young people and we therefore include a Drug Education programme in our curriculum.

Ashfield Girls' High School sees its role as that of a caring community committed to the physical, mental, social, emotional, moral and spiritual health, safety and well being 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 drugs problem; the school is only one of a number of groups and agencies which must play a part the education of young people in and we make use of their expertise where possible in the delivery of the programme.

"There is a public perception that drug misuse is mainly an issue in disadvantaged inner city areas Drug misuse is just as much an issue in rural areas and affluent communities: it extends across socioeconomic, geographical and cultural boundaries. Educationally successful young people are just as likely to put themselves at risk as low attainers." (DENI 1996/16)

All staff (teaching and non-teaching), should familiarise themselves with the information included in this policy and further copies may be obtained from the Designated Teacher for Drugs (*Mrs E. Watson*).

Copies of the guidance on which this policy is based, Drugs: Guidance for Schools in N. Ireland 2004, are available from the Department of Education website www.deni.gov.uk

Definitions

For the purpose of this document and in line with the guidance issued to all schools by the Department of Education (**NEW CIRCULAR**) (2004/9) **drugs will include any substance which, when taken, has the effect of altering the way the body works or the way a person behaves, feels, sees or thinks.**

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

- alcohol and tobacco;
- “over-the-counter” medicines, such as paracetamol;
- prescribed drugs, such as antibiotics, tranquillisers, inhalers and Ritalin;
- volatile substances, such as correcting fluids/thinners, gas lighter fuel, aerosols, glues and petrol;
- controlled drugs, such as cannabis, LSD, Ecstasy, amphetamine sulphate (speed), magic mushrooms (processed), heroin and cocaine; and
- other substances such as amyl/butyl nitrite (‘poppers’) and unprocessed magic mushrooms.

Ethos

Ashfield Girls’ High School aspires to help all members of the school community to improve the quality of their lives through learning, living, caring and the need to leave our mark on the world in which we live.

“Each Different, Each Talented, All Valued”

Aims and Objectives

- To have a clear and agreed understanding among everyone in the school community about the implications and possible consequences of drug use/misuse.
- To provide all staff (teaching and non-teaching) with adequate training and support to enable them to deal effectively and confidently with incidents of suspected drug misuse, and to ensure that the procedures are sensitively and consistently applied in all situations.
- To empower teaching staff through appropriate training and support to develop and deliver an effective drug education programme.
- To provide a drug education programme 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, alcohol and volatile substances, within the context of a healthy lifestyle; and
 - 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 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

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.

All staff (teaching and non-teaching)

- Be alert to the possibility of drug use/misuse.
- Be familiar with the school's procedures in the handling of suspected drug-related incidents.
- It is not the responsibility of the individual staff member to investigate the circumstances surrounding an incident, however he/she should deal with any emergency procedures if necessary.
- Any information, substance or paraphernalia received should be forwarded to the designated teacher for drugs who may have to take immediate action.

Teachers delivering the Drug Education programme

In addition to the above:

- Deliver the school's drug education programme.
- Try to create an atmosphere in the classroom in which pupils can freely contribute to discussion, safe in the knowledge that the comments, ideas and feelings of the group are valued.
- Support pupils in their class if necessary.
- Liaise with the designated teacher for drugs regarding any aspect of the programme/policy, as necessary.

The Designated Teacher for Drugs (*Mrs E. Watson*)

- Ensure that all staff and parents are aware of and have access to a copy of the policy.
- Have oversight and co-ordination of the planning of curricular provision in compliance with the statutory requirements including periodic update and review of the policy.
- Liaise with other staff responsible for pastoral care in co-ordinating the delivery of the drug education programme.
- Co-ordinate training and induction of all staff in the procedures for dealing with incidents of suspected drug misuse.
- Be responsible for co-ordinating the school's procedures for dealing with incidents of suspected drug misuse.
- Determine the circumstances surrounding the incident.
- Complete a suspected incident report form and forward to principal.
- Ensuring the engagement and active participation of parents in all aspects of drug education.
- Act as the point of contact for outside agencies working with the school.

The Principal

- Ensure that members of the Board of Governors have been consulted on and ratified the policy.

In the case of incidents of suspected drug misuse:

- Ensure the welfare and well being of the pupil(s) involved in the incident and the rest of the school community.
- Ensure that the following people are informed (where relevant):
 - * Parents/Guardians
 - * PSNI - preferably the Community and Schools Involvement Officer (CSIO)
 - * Board of Governors
 - * Designated Officer in BELB
 - * Members of staff
 - * Other pupils and parents informed within the confines of confidentiality
- Agree, in consultation with the Board of Governors, appropriate pastoral and disciplinary responses in relation to the incident, including counselling services/support.
- Retain written records of the incident and ensuring a copy of the reports are submitted to Board of Governors, BELB as appropriate.
- Review procedures and amend.

The Board of Governors

- Examine and approve the completed policy prior to its implementation in the school.
- Ensure the policy is published in the school prospectus and that it is reviewed at regular intervals.
- Be fully aware of and adequately trained to deal with suspected incidents of drug misuse, including tobacco and alcohol, and their appropriate disciplinary response.
- Agree in consultation with the principal appropriate pastoral and disciplinary responses in relation to suspected drug related incidents.

Parents/Guardians

- Support your daughter if they have become involved with drugs.
- 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.

The Caretaking Staff

- Be vigilant around and conduct regular checks of school grounds for drug-related paraphernalia. Inform the designated teacher for drugs should any be found.
- Ensure the safe storage, handling and disposal of potentially harmful substances such as solvents and cleaning fluids.

Training and Information

Training is provided by the CASS service or other external agencies as available. The school will request training if required in the light of experience.

The Drugs Education Programme

The drug education programme in Ashfield Girls' High School is just one part of the whole school response to drug use/misuse. The programme is grounded in the following aims and objectives:

AIMS

- To promote positive attitudes towards personal health.
- To develop self-discipline and self-respect.
- To build pupils' self-esteem.
- To develop decision making skills which may delay or prevent the onset of experimentation.
- To inform pupils of the effects of drug abuse and the risks involved.
- To help pupils to understand how they can influence their peers.
- To develop knowledge and understanding of themselves and others as individuals.

OBJECTIVES

Pupils should be able to:

- Understand their own personality, needs, abilities and interests.
- Understand the process or reasoning required to make informed choices.
- Explore their own attitudes towards drugs and drug issues.
- Develop coping strategies to deal with peer pressure.
- Develop a competence in challenging attitudes and patterns of behaviour associated with drug misuse.
- Develop self-discipline.
- Understand what is meant by a 'drug' and the definition of 'addiction'.
- Understand how some drugs affect the human body.

Drug education has a place in the Personal, Social & Health Education programme and is supported by the pastoral care programme throughout the school. There are relevant subject programmes of study such as science, HE, PE, RE, LLW and other subject areas which also support Drugs education. Varied methods of delivery will be used including pupil-centred/active learning. The thrust will be on preventative education and there will be opportunities for special events eg. Drug awareness days. Assemblies will also be used to promote healthy lifestyles.

Procedures for dealing with suspected drug related incidents

Fundamental to dealing with incidents of suspected drug misuse is the principle of *'in loco parentis'*, and Ashfield Girls' High School will always take the steps that would reasonably be expected of any parent to safeguard the well being and safety of all the pupils in their charge.

A suspected drug related incident is described as:

- Illness/inappropriate behaviour
- An allegation of a suspected controlled drug related incident
- Possession, possession with intent to supply and supply of controlled drug.
- Finding drugs related paraphernalia
- Any of the above whilst on a school trip, on a school minibus or any authorised school activity.

Procedures Relating to Discipline and Counselling

Procedures should be carried out in line with the School's Behaviour Policy. The Pastoral Care team will be involved in setting up appropriate support strategies.

Actions by members of staff in the event of a suspected drugs-related incident:

1. Assess the situation and decide on action. Ensure the safety of the individual pupil involved, of other pupils, yourself and other staff.
2. Secure first aid and send for additional staff if necessary. Put person under the influence of the drugs in the recovery position if necessary. Ensure airways are cleared. Send for an ambulance if necessary.
3. Gather details and data from all the eye-witnesses at the scene.
4. Remove any other bystanders from the immediate vicinity.
5. Make the situation safe for all students and other staff.
6. Carefully gather up any drugs / paraphernalia / evidence lying around and keep safely. School staff are not permitted to search pupils' clothing or possessions. However, it is acceptable to ask the pupil to empty pockets and school bags. Staff may search **school property** such as lockers or desks.
7. Ascertain which substances / drugs have been taken and how much.
8. Secure all drugs and paraphernalia and give to the Designated teacher immediately, and lock them away.
9. Write a factual account and forward this to the Designated teacher.

Actions taken by Designated teacher:

1. Respond to first aiders advice and recommendations.
2. Inform parents/guardians immediately.
3. Take possession of any evidence.
4. Inform Principal.
5. Inform the relevant BELB officer and CSIO
6. Take initial responsibility for students involved in the suspected incident
7. Complete an incident report form and forward this to the Principal.
8. All statements and phone calls should be recorded, signed and dated.

Actions taken by the Principal:

1. Determine the circumstances from the reports.
2. Verify that the following people have been contacted: parents/guardians, Community and Schools Involvement Officer, BELB Officer. Ensure the BELB incident form is filled in and returned to the Advisor for Pastoral Care.
3. Inform the Board of Governors.
4. Agree pastoral and disciplinary responses including counselling services support.
5. Forward a copy of the incident report to the Chairman of the Board of Governors and the designated BELB Officer.
6. Review policy and procedures if necessary in the light of experience.

A pastoral / disciplinary response will be made by the school, balancing the need for compassion and the pupil's welfare with the need to send a clear message about illegal actions and behaviour and the impact on the school community.

Confidentiality

The school will at all times give careful consideration as to how any information relating to an incident of suspected/confirmed drug use/misuse is communicated to staff, pupils and parents/guardians.

The parents/guardians of the pupil(s) directly involved in an incident of suspected drug use/misuse will be informed of the incident recognising that the future of a child or adult can be adversely affected. Confidentiality is of paramount importance in drug related incidents and subsequent outcomes.

Dealing with the Media

If the school receives an enquiry from the media the caller will only be referred to the principal or, in the absence of the principal, the designated teacher.

When responding to the media the privacy of the pupil(s), her family and/or any staff members will be respected at all times.

The Management of Prescribed Medicines (Please refer to Medical Needs Policy)

At the start of the school year, parents must inform the school of any medical illness their child has by completing form AM1. If a pupil needs to take a prescribed medicine in school then form AM2 needs completed. The pupil must immediately give the medicine to the School Nurse who must store the medicine in a locked cupboard and ensure that only the pupil for whom the medicine is prescribed, takes the medicine. If the pupil only needs to carry the medicine eg inhaler, then form AM3 must be completed.

If during the school year a pupil is given a prescribed medicine for a short term then a letter from the parent/guardian explaining the nature of the illness and the dosage required must be sent to the school with the pupil concerned.

The Management of Solvents

All members of staff are responsible for the safe storage and use of solvents in their classroom. Where possible they should be locked away when not in use. The cleaners and caretakers should also ensure that their stores are locked when not in use and that solvents are held in a secure place.



A Specialist School for **ICT**



SSAT | inquire
Inspire
Innovate
Impact



Principal: Mrs A Mungavin BA DipEd PQH (NI)
Holywood Road • Belfast • BT4 2LY • Tel: 028 90471744 • Fax: 028 90672416
E-Mail: info@ashgirls.belfast.ni.sch.uk • Internet: www.ashfieldgirls.org