

## **DRUG & ALCOHOL EDUCATION POLICY**

At Meadows School we are committed to positively and constructively supporting the 'Every Child Matters' agenda. We appreciate that drug and alcohol abuse is not confined to one particular setting; we are not immune from the effects of tobacco, alcohol or other drugs.

We believe that providing effective education and by having a process by which we respond to substance-related incidents we are demonstrating responsibility for the young people in our care.

We believe that drug and alcohol education is most effective as part of a wider personal, social and health education programme that should begin at primary school and continue into secondary school. Effective teaching of drug education should increase pupils' knowledge about alcohol, tobacco and other drugs and also enable young people at the school to:

- improve their self esteem;
- make informed choices and decisions;
- develop personal initiatives and be able to take responsibility and keep themselves safe;
- recognise personal skills and qualities in themselves and others;
- maintain and develop relationships;
- develop self confidence;
- to teach the benefits of a drug free lifestyle;
- to distinguish between different drug substances and consider their use, misuse, benefit and harm;
- develop assertiveness in appropriate situations;
- develop the motivation to succeed.

At Meadows School we intend to deliver the 'drug and alcohol education programme' targeted specifically at pupil need. We will canvass pupil attitude, level of knowledge and behaviour as part of the programme to ensure the relevance of the drug education programme.

The primary vehicle for Meadows' drug education programme will be through PHSE. The advantages of delivery through PHSE are;

- the length of time that can be devoted to the issue and the opportunity for pupil discussion and involvement;
- delivery of the subject by experienced staff;
- the transferable nature of core PHSE skills which will be relevant to other areas;
- the opportunity to 'dovetail' material with other related PSHE topic and thus avoid duplication;
- to enable the pupil's to develop the necessary knowledge, attitude and skills that allow them to resist drug and alcohol misuse, through addressing the social, legal and moral impact, as well as the health considerations.

## Dealing with drug and alcohol related incidents

All staff have a responsibility for the safety and well being of the pupils at Meadows School. These practice guidelines are to assist staff to deal with issues arising from suspected drug and alcohol misuse by any pupil at the school.

- All drug and alcohol misuse incidents are to be viewed as serious and should be recorded on an incident sheet.
- All drug and alcohol related incidents involving a controlled substance need to be reported to a senior member of staff.
- The school policy is to always inform the parents of pupils involved in drug and alcohol related incidents due to the management of personal health.
- Police will usually be informed of drug related incidents involving controlled substances.
- The school intends to work closely with the local police in dealing with drug related incidents and close consultation will take place.
- The Law permits staff to take temporary possession of a confiscated suspicious substance.
- Confiscated substances will be handed into the police or destroyed if asked to do so by the police.
- Any suspicious substance that the police ask to be destroyed will be in the presence of witnesses and records kept.
- While awaiting collection or delivery of substance by/to the police; it should be stored in the Principals secure cupboard.
- Staff are permitted to search pupil's lockers / rooms on suspicion of possession of illegal substances.
- To search a pupil, consent is required from the pupil; if consent is refused and the pupil refuses to volunteer the contents of their clothes then the police can be called to deal with the situation.
- Pupils may wish to disclose information in confidence. Staff should explain to pupils that they cannot guarantee confidentiality.
- It is the policy of the school to work in partnership with parents. Where-ever possible parents should be immediately informed of any drug related concerns involving their child.
- Any pupil believed to have been inhaling propellants will be taken to hospital or have an ambulance called to them (the school has been advised that the cocktail of substances used in such products makes such inhalation potentially fatal).

Any sanctions imposed for drug and alcohol related issues should be justified in terms of;

- appropriateness of response;
- proportionality to the offence;
- addressing the needs of all concerned;
- consistency with existing rules and past disciplinary action.

Exclusion may be the appropriate course of action with the Governors deciding whether to exclude permanently or temporarily.

## Staff Considerations

Staff involved in caring for young people have a particular responsibility in relation to the use of drugs and alcohol.

Controlled substance use will be viewed as a criminal offence; staff considered to be under the influence may be asked to leave the premises pending investigation.

Staff should not consume alcohol whilst on duty or arrive at work suffering from the effects of alcohol consumption because;

- Alcohol even in small quantities reduces concentration and impairs responses and may lead to unprofessional conduct.
- The irresponsible use of alcohol sets a bad example for young people.

The consumption of alcohol on Meadows School property when the pupils are on site is not to be condoned – any exception must be authorised by the Principal (in writing).