MULLAVILLY PRIMARY SCHOOL

'Inspiring, Believing Achieving'

Drugs Policy

September 2024

Review Date Sep 2027

ETHOS

'Inspiring, Believing, Achieving'

RATIONALE

The Boards of Governors of all schools are required by the Department of Education to establish and maintain a Drugs Policy. The policy is based on guidelines from DENI (Circular 2015/23) and CCEA Drugs Guidance for Schools (2015). The policy endeavours to make a clear statement on our views of drugs and drug education.

We are committed to protecting and promoting the health and safety of all members of the school. Any instances of possession, use or supply will be regarded with the utmost seriousness. However, we recognise that there are those who are required to take prescribed drugs because of a health problem e.g. inhaler (See Administration of Medication Policy).

DRUG DEFINITIONS

A drug is any substance which, when taken, has the effect of altering 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 and cough medicines
- 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 legal highs as well as performance enhancing drugs.
- All other substances construed as 'legal highs' under current and future legislation.

This policy should be read alongside the following policies: Pastoral Care Policy; Child Protection Policy; Administration of Medicines Policy; Asthma Policy; Behaviour Policy

SECTION 1: AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

This school sees its role as that of a caring community committed to the physical, mental, social, emotional, moral and spiritual health, safety and wellbeing of pupils and staff. Our ultimate aim is to protect our pupils from the harm associated with the use and misuse of drugs so that they will know how to make healthy, informed choices through increased knowledge, developing a positive self-image, challenging their attitudes and developing and practising the skills needed to resist temptation.

TO SUPPORT THIS AIM, MULLAVILLY PRIMARY SCHOOL HAS THE FOLLOWING OBJECTIVES:

- The school has a consistent approach to drug-related issues in line with the school's pastoral care provision.
- The school implements and review a drugs education programme as part of its PDMU programme
- The school has procedures and protocols that address drug-related issues and manages specific incidents of suspected drug misuse.
- The school will monitor the effectiveness of this policy

SECTION 2: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

GOVERNORS

The Board of Governors and Principal will have overall responsibility for ensuring the effective implementation of the Drugs Policy in the Mullavilly Primary School. The governors will agree (in consultation with the principal) appropriate pastoral and disciplinary responses in relation to suspected drug related incidents.

PRINCIPAL

The Principal will:

- Ensure that members of the Board of Governors have been consulted on and ratified the policy.
- Draw attention of the policy to parents through the school newsletter and the website.
- In the case of incidents of suspected drug misuse ensure the welfare and wellbeing 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; Board of Governors; EA; 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 ensure a copy of the report is submitted to Board of Governors and EA as appropriate.
- Review procedures and amend as appropriate.

ALL STAFF

All teaching staff will be responsible for putting into practice the policy and ensuring that appropriate lessons are taught to ensure that children are developing positive attitudes towards a healthy way of life.

Staff will:

- 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.
- Be familiar with the school's procedures in the handling of drug-related incidents.
- It is not the responsibility of the staff member to investigate 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.
- Be aware that smoking (including electronic cigarettes) or the consumption or possession of alcohol on school premises during school hours is a serious breach of conduct.

THE CARETAKER

The caretaker will:

- Be vigilant around and conduct regular checks of the school grounds for drug-related paraphernalia and inform the Principal as appropriate.
- Ensure the safe storage, handling and disposal of potentially harmful substances such as solvents and cleaning fluids.

STAFF TRAINING

Periodically in house drug education programmes e.g. from PSNI may be organised to support staff training needs. All staff will be offered First Aid in the Work Place Training and will renew this on a three year cycle.

TAKING POSSESSION OF A SUSPECTED CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE AND/OR ASSOCIATED PARAPHERNALIA

The law permits staff to take temporary possession of a substance to protect a pupil from harm and to prevent the pupil committing an offence of possession.

LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES INVOLVING THE PSNI

Failure to notify the police is a criminal offence.
Staff must be aware of the legal implications of:

- Receiving information about a controlled drug;
- Discovering a young person in possession of a controlled drug; or
- Discovering a young person involved in supplying a controlled drug

SECTION 3: OVERVIEW OF DRUGS EDUCATION PROGRAMME

Drugs education will be an integral part of the school's Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU) programme, incorporating the personal and social development of pupils in their environment. Aspects covered will be relevant to age and will take account of present knowledge and experience of drugs. Adequate and suitable resources will be used in lessons of Living and Learning Together. On occasion outside agencies may be asked for specialist help.

The approach adopted will be mainly preventative and teaching methods will include pupil centred activities e.g. role play, drama and group work. Where appropriate links will be made with other relevant areas of learning e.g. Religious Education, Physical Education and PDMU.

AIMS OF THE DRUG EDUCATION PROGRAMME:

a) To promote positive attitudes towards personal health.

b) To inform pupils of the effects of drug use and abuse.

c) To help pupils build up the self-esteem of the pupils.

d) To help pupils acquire skills in managing the pressures of the youth culture in which they live.

e) To help pupils acquire decision-making skills.

f) To create a climate where a young person feels comfortable to discuss problems around substance misuse.

g) To encourage a participate approach in which each pupil is actively involved.

h) To encourage a healthy and critical respect for all substances taken into the body.

i) To equip pupils with skills that will empower them to take responsibility for their own health and safety.

COMMUNICATING THE POLICY TO PARENTS AND OTHER RELEVANT AGENCIES

The Drugs Education Policy will be made available to all parents on the school website. Attention will be drawn to the policy on the school website.

SECTION 4: PROCEDURES FOR MANAGING DRUG-RELATED INCIDENTS

The school will always take steps that would reasonably be expected of any parent/carer to safeguard the wellbeing and safety of the pupils and staff in its charge.
What constitutes a drug-related incident?

- A pupil displaying unusual or uncharacteristic behaviour;
- An allegation;
- Suspicion of possession, possession with intent to supply; and
- Finding substance-related paraphernalia

During instances where a pupil or pupils are suspected of, or found in possession of drug, names and identities will be passed on to the PSNI. The school will at all times give careful consideration as to how any information relating to an incident of suspected drug misuse is communicated to staff, pupils and parents/carers. Any suspicious substance found in school or in the possession of a pupil will also be given to the police for analysis. If a pupil is suspected of being under the influence of drugs, parents will be notified immediately and appropriate medical action taken.

It must be noted that confidentiality in drug related incidents cannot be guaranteed.

ON SUSPECTING PUPILS CONCEALING CONTROLLED DRUGS

Staff should encourage pupils to produce substances voluntarily. Staff cannot search the pupil's personal belongings without the consent of the pupil. Staff should carry this out, if granted, in the presence of the pupil and another staff member. If the pupil refuses, contact PSNI and parents. If staff recover a substance, they should take possession of it and make a full record using the school's Drug Incident Report Form (Appendix 5).

IN AN EMERGENCY:

1. Contact an ambulance and/or seek Mrs Patterson, Mrs Humphreys or Mr Wilson to administer emergency first aid.
2. Remove any bystanders from the immediate vicinity.
3. A member of staff who finds that a pupil has taken drugs should seek to find out what has been taken; this will benefit an ambulance crew and emergency first aid.
4. If the person has taken a depressant drug, such as alcohol, sleeping pills or painkillers, and is drowsy, it is important to keep them awake by getting them to walk, talking to them or applying a damp cloth to the back of the neck. They should NOT be given anything to eat or drink. 8

5. If they are or become unconscious, put in recovery position, clear airway if blocked. Call ambulance immediately. If breathing stops, begin mouth-to-mouth resuscitation.
6. If the person has taken a stimulant, such as amphetamines or ecstasy, they may show various signs of distress. If they are panicking, reassure them and seek to calm them down. Get them to breathe in and out slowly. If a person has taken LSD, they should be supervised in a quiet, darkened room. If a combination of drugs has been taken, a person can be anxious, distressed and fearful and will need to be reassured that you will take care of them. Tell them that it is the effect of the drugs and that it will wear off.

IN ALL CASES:

1. Inform the Principal as soon as is practicable.
2. Carefully gather up any drugs/paraphernalia/evidence lying around being careful to take any appropriate safety precautions e.g. making use of latex gloves and give to the Principal for suitable secure storage until it is handed over to the PSNI.
3. Where possible, the Principal will contact parents/carers of the pupil(s) involved informing them that the PSNI will be contacted and also recommending that medical advice be sought.

ENSURE ALL INCIDENTS ARE PROPERLY INVESTIGATED AND RECORDED:

1. The Principal will carry out appropriate investigations.
2. Where appropriate pupil(s) should be taken to separate rooms under constant supervision by two members of staff.
3. If there is a suspicion that a pupil has concealed illegal substances/legally held substances on his/her person or in his/her personal belongings every effort should initially be made for that pupil to voluntarily produce the substance(s) and if the pupil refuses request the presence of parents. If there is no resolution the PSNI will be called to deal with the situation. At all times there should be two members of staff present.
4. Physical body searches must not be made. A search of a pupil's belongings, including schoolbag, coat or other items of personal property should only be made with the pupil's consent, in his/her presence and with another member of the teaching staff present.
5. The Principal will investigate, taking statements from eyewitnesses and write a report on the incident.
6. In light of the report, the school will take further action in line its Behaviour Policy.
7. The Principal shall inform the Chairperson of the Board of Governors as soon as it is practicable.

MEDIA

In cases where an incident has occurred and the school is approached by the press, a prepared written statement will be made, only by the Principal (or vice-principal in her absence). This statement will include the fact that the school is dealing with the incident.

SANCTIONS

Pupils suspected of possessing, supplying or using drugs on the school premises will be dealt with in a serious manner. Parents, Governors and the PSNI will be informed. The school expects parents to co-operate with the school. Sanctions will be applied in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy. The school will take into account previous displays of good discipline and how the proposed sanction might affect the pupil's educational outcomes. The incident may result in a behaviour contract being drawn up. The pupil may have to be withdrawn from class and remain with the principal for a fixed period. The incident may lead to suspension or expulsion. In the latter cases, the school will act in accordance with DE and EA Guidelines.

Following investigation of the matter and application of sanctions, all possible support and assistance will be given to the pupil(s) concerned in the form of counselling or referral to outside support. At all times the needs of each individual child involved in such incidents will be considered and appropriate intervention and support mechanisms will be put in place.

ADMINISTRATION OF PRESCRIBED MEDICATION

The school will not administer any medicines to pupils except:

1. An epi-pen for any pupil liable to suffer allergic reactions in accordance with that pupil's Health Care Plan. The epi-pen dosage will only be administered by staff trained to do so;
2. To allow pupils to take under supervision of the principal, prescribed medication (including inhalers) which must be taken during school hours where the written permission of parents/guardians has been obtained and the medication is prescribed by the GP and is still in its original box with dosage amounts. All prescribed medicines remain the responsibility of the parent and, should a child require taking such, it is the responsibility of the parent to inform the school in writing accordingly. Please refer to the Administration of Medication Policy.

CONFISCATION AND STORAGE OF HARMFUL SUBSTANCES

If a harmful substance is found it will be stored in a secure place and presented to the PSNI.

SECTION 5: MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

The drugs education policy and programme will be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis as part of the School Development Plan to take account of the needs of staff and pupils. It will also be reviewed in light of particular incidents or local circumstances. Account will be taken of the views of the Board of Governors, staff, parents and pupils and any necessary changed will be made.

Adopted and signed on behalf of the Board of Governors	September 2024
Signature of Governor	
Signature of Subject Coordinator / Principal	
Review Date	September 2027