

Perth & Kinross

Local Agreements : Managing Drug Related Incidents in Schools [Oct. 2000]

**PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL
EDUCATION COMMITTEE -18 OCTOBER 2000
THE MANAGEMENT OF DRUG RELATED INCIDENTS IN SCHOOLS
APPENDIX TO A REPORT BY
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION and CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

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1 Background

1.1 Drugs present an undeniable problem to our society and from time to time Head Teachers may become aware of their presence in the school community.

1.2 This policy statement aims to provide guidance for Head Teachers and staff in schools who may have to deal with drug related incidents. The designation of Head Teacher will refer to the Head Teacher or his/her representative.

1.3 In supporting the Council's Policy statement and general aims it is important that every establishment should be able to respond appropriately to issues concerning drug and substance misuse. It is expected, therefore that all heads of establishment will -

- have strategies for drugs education. All schools have been issued with resource material on drugs education. In addition a framework for drugs education from nursery to secondary has been developed
- take steps to inform and educate parents about drugs education, drugs misuse and the establishment's policy on drugs. Approaches to educating parents on the topic of drugs may be undertaken in collaboration with the local police community involvement branch. The establishment policy and curriculum issues should be dealt with at a parents' meeting or with written communication with parents
- ensure that staff are well informed about drugs and committed to the establishment's policy on drugs. It is recommended that establishments involve the police in staff development sessions on drugs. In view of changing patterns of drug misuse staff information should be reviewed and updated as required
- consider carefully, in planning drugs education programmes, how personnel other than the police might be involved, such as Social Work, Psychological Services, Tayside Health Board and appropriate voluntary agencies
- ensure that their existing welfare and disciplinary policies take account of procedures for managing drug misuse
- have clearly defined arrangements for communicating with parents when dealing with individual drug related incidents
- ensure that pupils have an appropriate understanding of the school's policy on drug misuse and their rights and responsibilities within this

1.4 The prime concern is the welfare of young people, both those involved in drug incidents and others who may be affected.

1.5 For the purpose of this document the definition of an illegal substance is one which comes into the categories in the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 (ref Appendix 1).

1.6 Any reference to parents in this document should be understood to include guardians or any person exercising parental responsibilities and rights in relation to the child, in terms of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995,

2 Health Promoting School

2.1 Perth and Kinross Council is committed to the development of the concept of health promoting schools which places the interests of young people at the heart of health education, including drug education, within a comprehensive programme of personal and social development aimed at providing the necessary knowledge and skills relevant to their stage of development and individual needs to enable them to make responsible health choices.

2.2 Schools can never condone drug misuse. They can, however, maximise the conditions which lead to effective learning, including offering support or access to support when young people encounter problems or situations which limit their learning.

2.3 In addition the school community needs to know the protocol regarding drug misuse.

2.4 Staff, therefore, require to be secure about their legal and educative responsibilities.

2.5 Each teacher has a role to play in this process but there is a special role for the class teacher in primary school and for the guidance teacher in secondary school, who have a special knowledge of and relationships with those young people in their care.

2.6 Each school, therefore, will continue to evaluate the quality of its programme for drug education in the context of current guidelines and advice.

2.7 Within this programme the following principles are paramount:

- providing accurate and relevant information about drugs, the reasons people take them, the law and the effects and risks involved in drug use
- enabling children to explore personal and social attitudes to drug use
- exploring and challenging, as appropriate, attitudes and values regarding drug use in society
developing skills of assertiveness, decision making and raising awareness of pressures relevant to drug use and drug using situations
- ensuring personal safety and the safety of others
- promoting positive lifestyles and alternatives to drug use

2.8 The maintenance of a positive parent/staff relationship is vital in the partnership between home and school and outside agencies (eg Social Work Services may provide added information of Child Protection issues).

2.9 Perth and Kinross Education and Children's Services has a responsibility to:

- provide guidance on an appropriate drug education programme in accordance with the national framework from pre-school to S6
- provide relevant staff development opportunities which staff must take advantage of.

3 Being Prepared

3.1 Head Teachers may be presented with situations in which young people are:

- in possession of an illegal substance in an educational establishment
- suspected of being in possession of an illegal substance in an educational establishment
- suspected of being concerned in the supply of illegal substances to another, or other, pupils
- suspected of being under the influence of an illegal substance in an educational establishment
- suspected of being involved in a drug-related incident outside school premises which may affect good order and learning within the school.

3.2 Head Teachers, therefore, should -

- ensure that they have arrangements in place, in line with advice contained in this document, to deal with incidents. The arrangements may be free-standing or contained within more general guidelines dealing with discipline or aspects of behaviour.
- maintain contact with key personnel in the police and other agencies. It is important to seek assistance at the earliest possible moment when dealing with incidents.
- have an emergency procedure. Safety is of primary importance when a young person is discovered to be unconscious or semi-conscious or acting in a bizarre manner while under the influence of drugs or unknown substances.
- ensure that staff are aware of their responsibilities under the law. It is important that staff are aware of the legal implications of discovering a young person with a controlled substance and how they would be expected to deal with such an event.

3.3 It must be borne in mind that the guidance offered in this policy recognises the importance of the well being of young people and that the uniqueness of each situation must be considered.

4 Protocol - Managing Drug Related Incidents

4.1 All incidents of drug misuse should be treated seriously.

4.2 The first priority is the health and safety of the young person and others and in all circumstances the guiding principle must be the appropriate response to protect and safeguard the welfare of the child-

4,3 This may mean in certain circumstances seeking medical advice and/or attention where there is reasonable evidence that the child may be under the influence of an illegal substance.

4,4 The risk of a pupil damaging him/herself or others must be minimised.

4.5 Children under 8 should be dealt with within Child Protection procedures.

4.6 Each school should have a nominated person (normally the Head Teacher) who will be responsible for the management of ail drug related incidents.

4.7 The context of a single teacher or small school will require a co-ordinated response to ensure appropriate procedures are followed. This will be managed normally by the appropriate Head of Service (Appendix 3).

4.8 Each divisional office should have a designated officer to whom notification of drug related incidents will be given and who will manage the Authority's response if required. This will normally be the Head of Service who will support the school in ail aspects of the implementation of the policy.

4,9 When a drug related incident comes to the attention of school staff their observations must be reported to the Head Teacher. Pupil (and belongings) should be taken to a private room and supervised preferably by two members of staff. The safe removal of drug related litter should be arranged in accordance with set management procedures.

4.10 Parents should be informed of the incident and requested to come to the school immediately. The time of the call should be noted.

4.11 The Head Teacher should review preliminary information. Contact with Child Care Service manager could, if necessary, supply additional, relevant background information.

4.12 If necessary, the Head Teacher may interview the pupil.

4.13 Any interview should be managed in a non-oppressive, non judgmental, calm and supportive way. The child should not be searched or aggressively questioned. Not only could this constitute an abuse of the child and an abrogation of his legal rights. No physical restraint should be used to detain a young person. It is essential that any staff member is present with a colleague in an interview situation in order that statements are witnessed.

4.14 It should be pointed out to the young person concerned that there is no guarantee of confidentiality.

4.15 It is important that a written record is kept and that this is retained in a pupil's file (Appendix 4) for at least five years. These records will be open to scrutiny of a pupil over the age of 16 (pupils under the age of 16 require parental consent). In addition they must be approved by the pupil and any named other before disclosure to others within the school.

4.16 The Head Teacher has the right to interview a pupil in the absence of parents and based on the evidence available will decide on the seriousness of the incident.

4-17 As the policy aims to promote consistency the Head Teacher will require to decide upon the seriousness of each incident and the following 3 categories may assist in determining an appropriate response. They are as follows:

- i **of concern**
- ii **serious**
- iii **urgent**

| of concern | serious | urgent |
|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Person having used or tried drugs outside school in the past. • Person having minimal use outside school. • Person having bought drugs outside school. • Circumstances related to the above and other circumstances where there is moderate balance of probability but weak evidence. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary/vulnerable children involved in circumstances of concern. • Evidence of use, possession or supply of drugs outwith school. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being under the influence of drugs in school or at school events. • Buying or selling of drugs in any form at school. • Violence, bullying or intimidation associated with buying, selling or use. • Use or possession of drugs on school |

| | | |
|--|--|----------|
| | | premises |
|--|--|----------|

4.18 Incidents of concern should be addressed by the school in accordance with its normal procedures in discussion with pupils and where appropriate their families, other agencies including the Police.

4.19 With regard to incidents which are considered serious or urgent then the Head Teacher should contact the appropriate Head of Service who will liaise with Legal Services through the Education Helpline to ascertain the Police involvement. Parents should be informed and requested to attend and ESS should be contacted if parents cannot be reached. Parents should be advised that the Police have been contacted. If the child is looked after by the local authority away from home or is under the supervision of the local authority by virtue of a supervisor requirement, the school should contact the Child Care team to discuss how to contact and inform the child's parents.

4.20 It is not advised that extensive detailed investigation is undertaken if the Police are to be involved.

4.21 All young people (under 16) would normally be interviewed by the Police with their parents present except when parents are believed to be the source of drugs. In these situations the Head Teacher (or his/her representative) should be present.

4.22 The Police response should take account of the sex of the young person and the officer would have received appropriate training.

4.23 Staff members (e.g. class teacher, Guidance teachers or members of the Senior Management Team) should be briefed as appropriate. They may have additional information to contribute.

4.24 The Head Teacher must complete the 'Drug Related incident' proforma (Appendix 4 attached) and return it to the appropriate Head of Service within 2 days.

5 Consideration of Disciplinary Action

5.1 Due to the unique nature of each case the Head Teacher must assess the gravity of any situation taking into account the scale of the incident, any possible threat to order and discipline, together with the interests of the child.

5.2 It is not, therefore, appropriate to make fixed disciplinary measures in relation to incidents of drugs misuse.

6 Response to Press

6.1 If the school is approached by the press the Head Teacher should not comment but direct the press to the Public Relations Office (01738 4750471475048).

7 Parents

7.1 It is not advisable to write to ail parents in response to a specific incident. However, there may be instances where the Head Teacher may wish, in consultation with the Director of Education and Children's Services to consider whether a letter should be sent to parents to explain that:

- a. a drug related incident occurred in the school
- b. the problem of drugs is a universal problem
- c. school policy, with which parents are familiar, has been carried out

7.2 The young person or people must not be named in any correspondence.

7.3 Care should be taken in any formal correspondence between the home and individual parents, given the legalities and potential for court action. Consultation with Head of Service and/or Legal Services may be appropriate if there is any doubt.

8 Support For Young People And Their Families

8.1 In many cases drug related incidents are traumatic for young people, their families and any relevant members of the peer group. Following any situation it is vital to consider the longer term effects on the young person and his/her future welfare.

8.2 School staff should aim to direct the family to various support agencies. Information about support agencies is to be found in Appendix 5. Guidance and counselling should be arranged if appropriate.

9 Next Steps

9.1 Once the incident has been resolved the management of the incident should be reviewed.

9.2 The monitoring of young people involved in a drugs incident should be managed as long as it is necessary.

9.3 Without disclosing the name(s) of the young person(s) involved staff should be informed that

- o a drug related incident has occurred in the establishment
- o certain action, in keeping with protocol, has been taken
- o the incident may not be an isolated one and that staff should be alert

9.4 Lessons learned as a result of the incident should be integrated as appropriate into personal and social development programmes and professional development for staff.