

LARNE HIGH SCHOOL  
**DRUGS & SUBSTANCE ABUSE POLICY**

**1. Statement of Larne High School Policy**

1.1 Larne High School is committed to the Health and Safety of both its staff and pupils and will take action to safeguard their well-being.

1.2 Larne High School acknowledges the importance of its pastoral role in the welfare of young people, and through the School's Pastoral System will seek to promote the development of:

- skills to enable pupils to cope with adolescent concerns and make informed and responsible choices.
- pupil autonomy through the encouragement of self-discipline, self-awareness and the acquisition of appropriate personal and social skills.
- a school ethos that inspires confidence in the quality of teacher/pupil relationships and which values the full range of guidance and pastoral care provision relevant to pupil needs.

1.3 The school encourages parental involvement and seeks to educate parents of the school's policy with regard to drugs and substance abuse.

1.4 The Board of Governors supports a policy that forbids all pupils (no matter what the legal position states) from smoking, drinking alcohol or partaking of drugs within the school premises, whilst travelling to or from school, whilst in school uniform, whilst taking part in any school organised activity or travelling to or from such school activity, or participating on educational trips (as defined in the school's Educational Visits Policy). Possession of cigarettes, alcohol or drugs will be taken as an indication of a breach of these rules.

1.5 In any case of suspected drug misuse among pupils in school, the Chair of the Board of Governors and PSNI must be informed. Furthermore, the incident must be reported to the Designated Officer for Child Protection within Education Authority.

**2. Drugs – a definition**

As per the CCEA guidance, **“a drug is any substance which, when taken, has the effect of altering the way the body works or the way the 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, aspirin;
- Prescribed drugs, such as antibiotics, inhalers, Ritalin;
- Volatile substances, such as aerosols, correcting fluids, gas lighter fuel, glues and petrol;
- **Controlled drugs**, such as cannabis, LSD, ecstasy, amphetamine sulphate, magic mushrooms (processed), heroin, cocaine; and
- Other substances, such as amyl/butyl nitrites.

**3. Policy Aims**

The Drug and Substance Abuse policy aims to:

- Define the roles, responsibilities and legal duties of the Governors, Principal, the Designated Teacher for Drugs, staff and pupils;
- Promote a drugs education programme within the curriculum;
- Develop procedures for dealing with drug related issues;
- Establish procedures for managing specific incidents of suspected drug misuse;
- Establish guidelines for the administration of prescribed medication.

**4. Roles and Responsibilities**

4.1 The Board of Governors has overall responsibility for the policy and its implementation, but delegates the responsibility for the daily operation of it to the Principal and the Senior Leadership Team. Furthermore, the Board of Governors will ensure that a statement of the School's policy on Drugs and Substance Abuse is published in the school prospectus and that the policy is reviewed at regular intervals. The Designated Governor for Child Protection is also the Designated Governor for Drugs and Substance Abuse.

4.2 The Principal has the responsibility to determine the circumstance of any drugs related incident and should make every effort to contact the parents/guardians of those pupils involved. The Principal should ensure that in any incident involving a controlled drug there is close liaison with the PSNI. After informing the PSNI, the Principal should only be concerned with the welfare of the pupil(s)

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involved in the incident, the other pupils in the school and the safe handling, storage and disposal of any drugs / drugs related paraphernalia. The Principal and the Chair of the Board of Governors will agree the pastoral / disciplinary response and report the incident to the Designated Officer within the NEELB. All governors will be made aware of suspected drugs related incidents and the corresponding disciplinary response.

4.3 The Designated Teacher for Drugs and Substance Abuse (Designated Teacher for Child Protection) is responsible for ensuring that the curricular provision is in compliance with the statutory requirements. Furthermore, the Designated Teacher will act as the contact person for external agencies that may have to work with the school or with pupil(s) concerned. It is the responsibility of the Designated Teacher to take possession of any substance(s) and associated paraphernalia found in the event of a suspected incident and to complete / forward a factual report to the Principal.

4.4 **It is not the responsibility of individual staff members to determine the circumstances surrounding a suspected drugs related incident; however, they should deal with any emergency procedures if necessary.** Any information, substance or paraphernalia received should be forwarded to the Designated Teacher for Drugs and Substance Abuse immediately. A brief factual report of the suspected incident should be completed and forwarded to the Designated Teacher. Where a pupil discloses to a member of staff that they are taking drugs, the staff member should make it clear to the pupil that they can offer no guarantee of confidentiality.

**5. Provision of a Drugs Education programme**

5.1 The school believes in and supports the following educational aims of the drugs education programme:

- to promote the concept of preventative health education as part of a whole school process which provides for the well-being of all our pupils;
- to provide accurate information about substances;
- to increase understanding about the implications and possible consequences of use and misuse;
- to widen understanding about related health and social issues, e.g. alcoholism, crime, long term illness, sex and sexuality, HIV and AIDS;
- to enable young people to identify sources of appropriate personal support;
- to safeguard all our pupils from those wishing to involve them in drugs and substance abuse.

5.2 The co-ordinator of Learning for Life and Work will ensure that a programme for all Key Stages is implemented, regularly reviewed and updated.

5.3 Extra-curricular activities will provide many opportunities for staff to reinforce the learning of the more formal curriculum.

**6. Procedures for handling suspected incidents of drug misuse**

6.1 It will depend on the nature of the incident and the type of substance(s) involved; for example, cigarettes/alcohol, solvents, and controlled drugs will each dictate a different kind of response. Detailed guidance for dealing with drug and substance misuse are outlined in the DENI circular “Drugs: Guidance for schools” and the CCEA guidance “Guidance on Managing suspected drugs related incidents”.

6.2 In general, the following sequence will be followed by the staff involved:

6.2.1 Disclosures of drugs and substance abuse must be reported immediately to the Designated Teacher for Drugs and Substance Abuse.

6.2.2 Individual members of staff who suspect a drugs related incident must ensure the safety of all pupils and other members of staff affected and provide the immediate necessary medical care that is most appropriate.

6.2.3 The staff member should identify, remove and secure any drugs / substance and/or associated paraphernalia / evidence, and pass all information / evidence to the Designated Teacher for Drugs and Substance Abuse. Additionally, the staff member must write a brief factual report of the incident and forward it to the Designated Teacher for Drugs and Substance Abuse.

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- 6.2.4 The Designated Teacher for Drugs and Substance Abuse should respond to the member of staff / First Aider; in the event of an emergency, the parents/guardians of the pupil(s) concerned should be informed immediately.
- 6.2.5 The Designated Teacher for Drugs and Substance Abuse will take possession of any substance(s) and associated paraphernalia found and will inform the Principal. (S)he will take initial responsibility for the pupils(s) involved in the suspected incident and will complete / forward a factual report to the Principal.
- 6.2.6 The Principal will determine the circumstances surrounding the incident.
- 6.2.7 The Principal will inform the parents/guardians, Chair of the Board of Governors and the following external agencies as appropriate, viz. PSNI, Designated Officer in the NEELB and Gateway.
- 6.2.8 The Principal in consultation with the Chair of the Board of Governors will determine the appropriate pastoral / disciplinary responses including counselling services and support.
- 6.2.9 A copy of the incident report will be forwarded by the Principal to the chairperson of the Board of Governors and the Designated Officer with the NEELB (if appropriate).
- 6.2.10 The School will ensure that appropriate pastoral support will be provided for both the pupil(s) involved with the suspected drugs related incident and those pupils affected by the incident through, for example, the Independent Counselling Service for Schools (ICSS), Year Heads or other trained staff.
- 6.3 If the school receives an enquiry from the media, the caller should be referred only to the Principal (or a designated nominee).

**7. Sanctions**

With respect to the drug related incidents as outlined in Section 1.4 of this policy, the following sanctions will be applied to offenders.

- 7.1 In the case of the person bringing ('dealing' or 'supplying') a "controlled drug" to any of the situations, the Board of Governors will initiate expulsion procedures.
- 7.2 Any person possessing or using a "controlled drug" will be suspended pending investigations which may lead to expulsion.
- 7.3 Any person possessing or using a non-controlled drug or substance will be placed in a school detention or internal suspension dependent on previous record.
- 7.4 Repeated incidents of those detailed in Points 7.2 or 7.3 will lead to suspension and may ultimately result in expulsion procedures being implemented.
- 7.5 On return to the school, all persons involved in drug or substance related abuse will be strongly encouraged to receive counselling or support from other external agencies.

**8. Links with outside agencies**

- 8.1 The school actively co-operates with and utilizes the expertise of external agencies such as the NEELB Educational Welfare Department, Health & Social Services Department, the Independent Counselling Service for Schools, PSNI.
- 8.2 Use is also made of a number of voluntary organisations to deliver the school's educational programme, as well as to provide help to pupils and/or their parents should incidents of abuse be discovered.

**9. Administration of prescribed or proprietary medicines**

- 9.1 The school will operate procedures in respect of pupils taking prescribed or proprietary medicines in school as described in the school's Supporting Pupils with Medical Needs policy.
- 9.2 Any pupil found in possession of, or taking drugs or medicines, outside the terms of the arrangements as described in the Supporting Pupils with Medical Needs Policy, will be subject to the sanctions detailed in Section 7.

**10. Review and Evaluation**

This policy will be reviewed and evaluated at least every three years by the Board of Governors in consultation with the Designated Teacher for Drugs and Substance Abuse and the Senior Leadership Team.

January 2023

**Date of next review:** January 2026

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