



Everyone matters, every day counts

DRUG INCIDENT POLICY

Policy created:

Policy first adopted:

Signed chair of *Governors*:

Re-adopted & signed:



Drug Incident Policy

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher and Governors to ensure that all staff, including non-teaching staff, recognise 'a drugs incident' and are aware of the processes established by the College for dealing with such incidents.

Where training needs amongst staff and governors are identified then the relevant courses will be attended.

It is imperative that all staff are aware of and are able to recognise the warning signs that students, young people and adults may express as a result of substance use and misuse, including alcohol. All staff will be given necessary training to recognise these signs.

The College will consider each incident individually and recognises that a variety of responses will be necessary to deal with these. The College will consider very carefully the implications of any action it may take. It seeks to balance the interests of the student or person involved, their age, the involvement and safety of other College members and the local community.

The Headteacher will take responsibility for responding to the media after full consultation with the relevant staff and Governors and the local authority. It is essential that procedures are followed by staff as set out in the policy, so that the headteacher is adequately informed. As the issue of substance misuse is an emotive one, and is likely to generate interest from the local and national media, the school will take appropriate advice and guidance from the local authority Press Office and Legal Department to ensure that any reporting of incidents remains in the best interests of the young people, their families, the staff and the college. Should an incident occur in which the local or national press become involved, the following press release will be made:

"Oak Grove College has a policy for dealing with incidents of this type. The incident is being investigated. No further information is available at present. The headteacher is not available for comment. Please contact the County Press Office who will be able to assist you further."

Guidelines for Staff

Recognising early signs of alcohol or drugs misuse is one of the most important factors in helping young people. First experiments with drugs almost always involve a friend, who is usually the provider as well. The presence of a drug is not proof of drug or solvent misuse. Several signs will give more foundation for suspicion and grounds for concern.

Confidentiality

We regard all information relating to possible individual safeguarding and child protection issues as confidential.

Children and staff understand that, for their own safety, in some instances confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. We only pass information on to appropriate persons.

Warning signs in individuals

- changes in attendance
- unwilling to take part in activities
- decline in performance in school work
- outbreaks of temper, mood swings, restlessness or irritability
- excessive tiredness
- physical appearance deteriorates
- sores, rashes (especially around the mouth)
- parental concern about change in friendships
- excessive spending or borrowing
- stealing
- heavy use of perfumes or scents
- inappropriate wearing of sunglasses

Warning signs in groups

- regular absences on certain days
- gathering of groups away from supervision
- being the subject of rumours about drug taking
- talking to strangers near the premises
- group thefts
- increased use of slang which is drugs related: 'spliffy, skank, E, wiz, bang, speed, smoke, toke, billy, snow, rope, apples, strawberries, diamonds', etc.
- exchanging money or objects in unusual circumstances
- association with much older age group than usual peers

Objects to be aware of in the environment

- cans, foil twisted, cup shape, spoons that have been discoloured by heat
- cigarette papers, torn card, shredded cigarettes, spent matches and lighters
- plastic bags or butane gas containers
- pill boxes, small plastic phials or bottles
- plastic, cellophane or metal foil wrappers, paper folded as envelopes (approx 2" square)
- stamps, stickers, transfers or similar items
- straws, sugar lumps, syringes and/or needles, cardboard tubes

All the above are known as 'works' (materials used for taking drugs).

Procedure to follow

- observe behaviour of the student/adult
- share concerns with the Headteacher or Deputy
- record any concerns on a Record of Concern, which should include

- conversation with student/adult
- changes in behaviour
- physical and/or emotional changes
- friendship groups/patterns
- comments from others

Headteacher or Deputy to follow up necessary action according to the Safeguarding Policy.

Suspicion of Substance Misuse

On the Premises:

- The law permits staff to take TEMPORARY possession of a substance suspected of being a controlled drug for the purpose of protecting the student from harm and from committing the offence of possession. A member of staff can openly search a student's possessions if they have reasonable cause to believe it contains unlawful items. It is vital that, wherever possible, staff should have a witness, preferably another member of staff.

On the Person:

Concealing drugs or illegal substances on the person is a different matter.

- Every effort must be made to secure voluntary production of any harmful substance. If the student refuses, the Headteacher or nominated deputy will be called and, if this fails then the Police. Parental permission should be sought.
- ***At no time should intimate physical searches be made by any member of staff.***

The following procedures should always be followed:

If a member of staff has any concerns regarding student behaviour, immediately report this to the Headteacher or Deputy.

If at any time a member of staff is not sure, or is unhappy about an incident, they should try to contain the student and call for the Headteacher, Deputy or Duty Manager. Any serious incident must be reported to the Headteacher as soon as possible.

If it is necessary for a member staff to deal with an incident themselves:

1. If possible remove the substance and record the time, place and circumstances and how the substance came into their possession. Whenever possible, have a witness.
2. Do not investigate the nature of the substance, but do record its approximate size and appearance. Take the substance immediately to the Headteacher or Deputy. Do not keep it in your possession or in a safe place. Doing so may put you at risk and in breach of the law. The substance should be placed in a safe container and in the presence of another responsible adult and the package must be signed and dated. The witness should also sign and date the package.
3. A full written report of the incident should be made including time, date, circumstances and witnesses and given to the Headteacher or Deputy. It is then the Headteacher's role to inform the Police, who will then decide the appropriate means of disposal for the substance and the action to be taken.
4. The student will be interviewed and the parents will be informed.

PLEASE NOTE:

"Sudden Sniffing Syndrome" (glue/solvents). This can bring on heart failure, often as a result of over exertion - such as running away whilst intoxicated. On finding a sufferer, DO NOT PURSUE as a chase could lead to a heart attack and could be fatal.

Medicines in school

Please see relevant policy.

Individual advice.

The DfES publication 0092/2004 was consulted during the review of this policy. Useful individual advice is also stated in the DfES Circular 4/95 - Drugs prevention in schools:

"Where a pupil discloses to a teacher that he/she is taking drugs, the teacher should make it clear to the pupil that he/she can offer no guarantee of confidentiality given the seriousness of the drug misuse. (A teacher can point to the sources of confidential information and advice and to treatment and rehabilitation services to help those who are misusing illegal drugs to stop")

If a student discloses substance misuse on/off the premises, the staff member is obliged to inform the Headteacher or Deputy, who will then deal with the incident.

Interviewing by Police on the school premises:

This can only take place with the Headteacher's agreement and provided efforts have been made to inform the student's parents. The Police will follow the Code of Practice as stated in the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984.