

# The Axe Valley Community College

## Drug Education and Drugs Related Incidents Policy

The aim of this policy is to acknowledge and clarify the role of The Axe Valley Community College in drug prevention and education and ensure it is appropriate to students' needs. The policy provides information and guidance about drug education, as well as procedures to respond to any drug-related incident, for students, teachers, support-staff and outside agencies or individuals.

The policy aims to ensure that the approach taken on the issue of drugs is a whole-college one and is part of our commitment to and concern for the health and well-being of the whole College community.

This policy aims to make clear procedures for responding to and managing drug-related incidents. Sanctions for incidents will be consistent with the College Behaviour Policy. This policy should also be read in conjunction with our Safeguarding, Behaviour and other related policies. This policy applies at all times to the College premises, College transport (or public transport used by students) as well as College visits/trips/fieldwork/residentials etc.

### STATUTORY DUTY OF THE COLLEGE:

The Headteacher takes overall responsibility for the policy and its implementation, for liaison with the governing body, parents, LA and appropriate outside agencies and for ensuring the implementation of the Drugs Education Policy. The Headteacher will ensure that all staff dealing with substance issues are adequately supported and trained. A school cannot knowingly allow its premises to be used for the production or supply of any controlled drug (It is an offence under Section 8 of the *Misuse of Drugs Act 1971* for the management of establishments to knowingly permit the supply and production of any illegal drugs on their premises. It is also an offence to allow premises to be used for the smoking of cannabis or opium). Where it is suspected that substances are being sold on the premises details regarding those involved and as much information as possible, will be passed to the police.

### IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICY:

The rationale for implementing the response to a drug related incident is:

- To establish and maintain an environment in which the school is free from the misuse of any drugs
- To clarify the appropriate procedures in the management of drug-related incidents
- Reduce situations of risk for the majority
- Deter future occurrences
- To respond to any individual in the school community in need of support.

### THE DEFINITION OF A 'DRUG'

The following gives a list of categories to define the word 'drug' as used in this policy:

- Drugs which are controlled/illegal substances (for example cannabis, amphetamines, ecstasy, LSD) under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971
- Over-the-counter and prescription medicines, including those used improperly which can include sleeping tablets and slimming tablets
- All legal drugs including alcohol, tobacco, solvents, and poppers
- Drugs which are misused to enhance performance (for example analgesics or steroids)

Our view is that the possession and or use of such drugs in College, during the College day or while travelling to or from College is inappropriate. The drugs/substances covered by this policy are not to be bought, sold or

otherwise exchanged or brought onto College premises during the day, or while students are on College visits. Individual exceptions may be made for students who require prescription medicines, as follows:

## MANAGING MEDICINES NEEDED AT COLLEGE BY STUDENTS

The following procedures plan for the good management of appropriate and prescribed medicines.

- staffing – managing medicines is not part of a teacher's role. Support staff may volunteer to take on such a role but must receive appropriate training. The College will make sure that its insurance arrangements provide full cover for staff acting within the scope of their employment
- administration – medicines must only be administered in accordance with instructions, as displayed on the container/packaging
- self-management – The College will decide in consultation with the student's parents/carers whether the student can carry and administer their own medicines. The College will attempt to ensure that students have ready access to essential medicines, such as asthma inhalers, and that medicines are only accessible to those for whom they have been prescribed
- storage – some medicines need to be readily available to students (e.g. their asthma inhalers) whilst some may require suitable storage (in a fridge, or a secure container). The College will make this judgment in consultation with the parents/carers.
- Record-keeping – an accurate record of when medicines have been given or if a child has refused their medication will be kept in the Student Office. This information is subject to the Data Protection Act.

Medicines that have been prescribed for an individual must only be used by them. They must not be given or passed to a third party. A response to the misuse of medicines is included within this policy.

For non-prescribed medicines such as analgesics the College will have either written permission in advance from the parents/carers setting out the circumstances in which students may be provided with such over-the-counter medicines, or the school will contact parents/carers and receive verbal permission as necessary.

## DRUG EDUCATION:

The College provides a planned drug education curriculum through the following:

- (i) The National Curriculum science order outlines the content of the *statutory* drugs education-
  - Key Stage 3, 11-14 year olds should be taught that abuse of alcohol, solvents, tobacco and other drugs affects health; that the body's natural defences may be enhanced by immunisation and medicines; and how smoking affects lung structure and gas exchange
  - Key Stage 4, 14-16 year olds should be taught the effects of solvents, tobacco, alcohol and other drugs on body functions
- (ii) PSHE reflects other discretionary topics such as decision making, healthy lifestyles, peer pressure etc that reflect knowledge, understanding, attitudes and social skills; this will:
  - Enable students to make healthy, informed choices
  - Promote positive attitudes to healthy lifestyles
  - Provide accurate information about substances
  - Increase understanding about the implications and possible consequences of use and misuse
  - Widen understanding about related health and social issues
  - Enable young people to identify sources of appropriate advice and personal support

Full details of the College PSHE programme can be obtained if required and more general details can be found on the College web site.

- On the whole, it will be teachers who will teach drug education but, where appropriate, outside visitors may make a contribution. Such visitors should be used in a planned way and their contributions evaluated. Teachers within the PSHE team must be confident and skilled to teach drug education and students need to receive up to date, relevant and accurate information as well as support. Teachers will have access to on-going advice, support and training as part of their own professional development. The school actively cooperates with agencies such as the LA, Police, CSW, health and drug agencies such as YSMART.

In incidents involving substance misuse or possession/supply on the premises during the College day, and following discussion with the student and staff, action will proceed as follows.

## **DEFINING A DRUG INCIDENT**

A drug incident is likely to involve suspicions, observations, disclosures or discoveries of situations involving unauthorised drug. It may fit into the following categories:

- drugs or associated paraphernalia are found on school premises
- a student is found in possession of drugs or associated paraphernalia
- a student is found to be a recognised source of supply of drugs on school premises
- a student is thought to be under the influence of drugs
- a student is displaying signs of illness or inappropriate behaviour as a result of substance misuse
- a student discloses that they are misusing drugs or a family member/friend is misusing drugs
- a parent/carer or staff member is thought to be under the influence of drugs on school premises (Conduct and Safeguarding Policies will be implemented as necessary).
- a staff member has information that the illegitimate sale or supply of drugs is taking place in the local area

## **ESTABLISHING THE NATURE OF AN INCIDENT**

After immediate medical needs have been addressed, the nature and circumstances of any incident should be established, and an assessment made of the needs of the students involved.

The Headteacher or designated senior member of staff will conduct a careful investigation to judge the nature and seriousness of each incident. They will inform, consult and involve others as necessary. Careful attention should be given to respecting the confidentiality of those involved. A range of factors may be relevant and need exploration to determine the seriousness and needs of those involved and an appropriate response. For example:

- does the student admit or deny allegations?
- is this a first or one-off incident or a longer term situation?
- is the drug legal or illegal?
- what quantity of the drug was involved?
- what was the student's motivation?
- is the student knowledgeable and careful or reckless as to their own or others' safety?
- What are the student's home circumstances?
- does the student know and understand the College policy and College rules?
- where does the incident appear on a scale from 'possession of a small quantity' to 'persistent supply'?
- if illegal supply is suspected, how much was supplied and was the student coerced into the supply role or the one 'whose turn it was' to buy for others, or is there evidence of organised or habitual supply?"

(DFE 'Drugs Guidance for Schools')

Drugs should not be the only focus when managing drug-related incidents. Once safety issues have been addressed, factors such as students' recklessness, ignorance, bravado, rebellion, or susceptibility to a stronger influence may need consideration and could provide opportunities for significant student learning. Staff will try to ensure that everyone involved, whether directly or indirectly, learns from each incident.

Any child or young person who uses drugs to cope with personal anxiety or problems may be in need of help from outside agencies. Information about local drug and support services will be made available to students and parents. It is our policy to refer ALL students involved in incidents relating to drugs to YSMART for support and advice.

## **PRINCIPLES TO CONSIDER**

Each incident will be assessed according to the circumstances and student(s) involved, and we recognise that no two incidents can be viewed as the same. However, the College has a series of agreed principles that will be adhered to, regardless of the incident:

- ❖ in every situation there will always be a thorough investigation
- ❖ in every case we will ensure that the safety and welfare of all students is paramount
- ❖ any action taken will be commensurate with the seriousness of the incident and the needs of the student(s)
- ❖ we recognise the importance of, and will make every endeavour to inform parents/carers as soon as practicable and whenever appropriate
- ❖ in every drug-related incident careful records will always be made at all stages

## **SEARCHING**

### **Searches of College property**

Staff will search College property (e.g. student lockers), if they believe drugs to be stored there.

### **Searches of personal property**

Staff will ask for consent if they wish to search personal property, e.g. a bag or a coat or blazer. Students will be asked to remove coats and blazers for this purpose, and to turn out pockets on other items of clothing. They will also be asked to remove their shoes. Where consent is refused we will notify parents/carers and ask them to attend whilst we search such property. If consent is still refused we will immediately contact the Police.

When a person is suspected of concealing illegal or other unauthorised drugs, every effort will be made to persuade the person to voluntarily hand over any drugs, in the presence of a second adult witness. Schools may not detain a person without their consent unless a citizen's arrest is made.

Where students have been involved in a drug-related incident but are allowed to remain on our roll we may inform parents/carers that random searches will be carried out in the future. Random searches and results will be recorded.

## **THE POLICE**

The following criteria indicate our response to involving the police in any drug related incident:

- Incidents involving prescribed drugs or first offences of being found in possession of small quantities of category C drugs will probably be managed internally by the College but we will always inform our Youth Intervention Officer or the local police. The police will be informed or consulted – this will always happen if

the College has evidence that a student has been supplying drugs or is in possession of category A or B drugs.

- The police will be actively involved if we have reason to believe that drugs are on site and a student does not give up the drugs or give permission for their possessions to be searched. The police will also be actively involved with drug related incidents which indicate the buying or selling of illegal drugs.

The College may contact our local police officer police to discuss a case and ask for advice without divulging a student's name. The police will not normally need to be involved in incidents involving legal drugs, but we may inform the police about the inappropriate sale or supply of alcohol or volatile substances to students in the local area.

## **RESPONSE TO A DRUGS INCIDENT**

- If we suspect substance misuse which requires emergency medical intervention parents/carers will be contacted and arrangements made to take the student to the local minor injuries unit. A member of staff may take the student if this is deemed necessary,
- A full written account of the incident will be taken
- If a young person admits to using or supplying substances off the premises, we will inform parents/carers. The Police will be informed if a student admits to supplying drugs, in order to Safeguard other young people.
- The College will consider each incident individually and will employ a range of responses (see below).
- The governing body will be involved in drug-related incidents as they are concerning other matters relating to the school.
- The Headteacher will take responsibility for liaison with the media, where required.

All staff, parents/carers and young people will be reminded regularly of this policy, and its procedures.

## **SANCTIONS**

The College employs a range of sanctions in response to breaches of our Behaviour Policy, including incidents involving drugs. Details are contained within that policy which is published on our website.

The needs of students in relation to drugs may come to light other than via an incident, e.g. through our support systems. The response may also serve to enforce and reinforce the College rules.

College staff will be in a good position to judge whether the student or students involved are likely to learn from the experience and not engage in such activities in the future as a result of our considered response. If the police become involved and decide to press charges, then the law will take its course. If not, the College will endeavour to avoid a response that would be harsher than that imposed by the law.

## **Behaviour Contract**

In the case of serious breaches of discipline such as possession of drugs on the College site a Behaviour Contract is a possible sanction. This must be agreed and signed by the student, the parents/carers and the College. We will set out clearly the terms on which a young person can remain here and monitor progress towards greater stability. This may require the student to be 'internally excluded' from normal contact with peers during the school day for a fixed period in the first instance. Such an approach may incorporate intensive drug education input to boost the student's understanding. This may be supported by outside agencies such as health workers, youth workers or drug specialists. A Behaviour Contract is likely to include the requirement for random searches during College hours.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

The essential nature of confidentiality is not altered by the fact that a case involves drugs. Teachers cannot promise total confidentiality. The boundaries of confidentiality should be made clear to students. If a student discloses information which is sensitive, not generally known, and which the student asks not to be passed on, the request should be honoured unless this is unavoidable in order for teachers to fulfil their professional and moral duties in relation to:

- child protection
- co-operating with a police investigation

## **CONFISCATION and DISPOSAL**

The law permits College staff to take temporary possession of a substance suspected of being an illegal drug for the purposes of protecting a student from harm and to prevent an offence being committed in relation to that drug. We will always confiscate drugs we suspect to be illegal, store them securely and arrange for their disposal without delay. An adult witness will if possible be present when a confiscation occurs and a record will be kept of the details.

The College is allowed to dispose of illegal drugs. A witness must be present and the action recorded.

Larger quantities of suspected drugs will automatically be sealed in an envelope and the envelope signed and dated across the seal. This envelope will be stored in the College safe until collected by the police. Although the law does not require a school to divulge to the police the name of the student from whom the drugs were confiscated we will always give that information to the police. Guidelines have been created across all Devon schools in relation to the police response in schools where there is a drug-related incident and the collection/disposal of drugs.

It will not always be possible to identify a drug (or to be sure it is a drug) without formally testing it. In such cases the suspected drugs will be handed to the police. College staff will not attempt to analyse or taste unknown or confiscated substances.

## **CONFISCATION OF OTHER UNAUTHORISED DRUGS**

Although it is not illegal to possess alcohol, medicines, solvents (or cigarettes) these items will always be confiscated from the student and will be disposed of unless there is an exceptional reason not to do so. This includes lighters and other smoking paraphernalia AND items in the possession of students who were WITH other students who were smoking but not actually smoking themselves.

## **CONTACTING PARENTS/CARERS**

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher (or the nominated senior member of staff) to contact the parents/carers of a student involved in a drug-related incident. It is at the discretion of the Headteacher whether parents/carers are contacted and if so, at what stage. Factors such as the safety and welfare of the child, whether they are on the Child Protection register, and confidentiality issues will be recognised, although in most cases it is expected that a parent/carer would be contacted. Exceptions to this expectation would be in line with Child Protection protocol or if a Police enquiry may be compromised by such contact.

## **KEEPING A RECORD OF INCIDENTS**

All drug related incidents are recorded electronically on a Student's profile

Great care will be taken to record any statements provided by those involved or by witnesses as police may require these if the incident becomes a criminal investigation. The College will separate any students involved in the incident and obtain full written accounts. The records may be used as evidence in any subsequent prosecution.

On rare occasions, when a serious criminal offence has been revealed the Police may ask us to stop internal investigations. A school's response to parallel criminal investigations and Exclusion procedures are contained within County Exclusions Protocol.

Policy written: March 2014

Policy reviewed: March 2016    Next Review March 2018

