



RYECROFT C. E. (C) MIDDLE SCHOOL

POLICY STATEMENT

DRUGS

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 All drugs have the potential to harm; but some drugs are more harmful than others. For a small number of people, drugs lead to serious and far reaching consequences not only for themselves, but their families, their communities and society in general. For children and young people in particular, drugs can impact on their education, their relationships with family and friends and prevent them from reaching their full potential.

1.2 All children need to be able to make safe, healthy and responsible decisions about drugs, both legal and illegal. Ryecroft will play a central role in helping children make such decisions by providing education about the risk and effects of drugs; by developing their confidence and skills to manage situations involving drugs; by creating a safe and supportive learning environment; and ensuring that those for whom drugs are a concern receive appropriate support.

1.3 The definition of a drug given by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime is:

A substance people take to change the way they feel, think or behave

The term 'drugs' and 'drug education', unless otherwise stated, is used throughout this document to refer to all drugs:

- all illegal drugs (those controlled by the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971)
- all legal drugs, including alcohol, tobacco, volatile substances (those giving off a gas or vapour which can be inhaled), ketamine, khat and alkyl nitrites (known as poppers)
- all over-the-counter and prescription medicines

1.4 The majority of young people of school-age have never used an illegal drug. Most will at some stage be occasional users of drugs for medicinal purposes and many will try tobacco or alcohol. Some will continue to use these on a regular basis. All pupils, including those in Key Stage 2, are likely to be exposed to the effects and influences of drugs in the wider community and be increasingly exposed to opportunities to try both legal and illegal drugs.

1.5 It is an offence under Section 8 of the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 for the management of establishments (this includes schools) to knowingly permit the supply or 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, and the preparation of opium.

2. THE CONTEXT OF DRUG EDUCATION

2.1 Drug education at Ryecroft enables pupils to develop their knowledge, skills, attitudes and understanding about drugs and appreciate the benefits of a healthy lifestyle, relating this to their own and others' actions.

2.2 Drug education is delivered through personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) and fulfils the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum Science document. The topic is covered in both Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 and is linked to ensure continuity and progression.

2.3 Drug education covers all drugs and, when appropriate, focuses on drugs of particular significance such as alcohol, tobacco, cannabis, volatile substances and Class A drugs.

Contributions from other curriculum subjects might include, for example:

- English - group discussion and interaction, information texts, literature and the media,
- maths - handling data, including interpreting and discussing results,

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- information and communication technology (ICT) - finding things out, exchanging and sharing information,
- drama - exploring and developing skills through role play
- music and art - exploring popular culture
- geography - economic activity
- physical education - fitness and health
- religious education - exploring morals, values and cultural diversity.

2.4 External contributors have a valuable role to play in supporting and working alongside teachers at Ryecroft.

2.5 Prescribed drugs are wholly different and covered under our policy on 'Medicines in School.'

2.6 Some pupils may require medicines that have been prescribed for their medical condition during the school day. Where staff at Ryecroft manage and administer medicines clear procedures and arrangements are in place through the 'Medicines in Schools' policy.

3. THE MANAGEMENT OF DRUGS WITHIN SCHOOL

3.1 The possession, use or supply of illegal and other unauthorised drugs within school boundaries is unacceptable. In this instance, 'school boundaries include:

- The school site,
- The school day,
- Pupils on the journey to school and the journey home from school at the end of the school day,
- Any events held on the school site beyond the normal school day,
- Day visits which involve travel beyond the school site but organised by school staff and attended by our pupils from Ryecroft,
- Residential visits which involve travel beyond the school site but organized by school staff and attended by pupils from Ryecroft,

3.2 Where drugs/suspicious substances/drug paraphernalia have come into the possession of school staff they will initially be kept in safe keeping by the most senior member of staff available. As soon as possible these will be transferred to a member of the SMT. In taking temporary possession and disposing of suspected illegal drugs the following procedure should be adhered to:

- a second adult witness is present throughout,
- the sample to be sealed in a plastic bag/envelope and include details of the date and time of the seizure/find and witness present,
- the container should be stored in a secure location, such as the school safe or other lockable container/cupboard with restricted access,
- **the law does not require a school to divulge to the police the name of the pupil** from whom the drugs were taken. Where a pupil is identified the police will be required to follow set internal procedures,
- if the items are clearly identified as tobacco and alcoholic products available on the high street, these will be returned to the child's parents at an appropriate time. Small amounts of volatile substances may be placed in a bin to which pupils do not have access Other products suspected as being a classified drug will be handed over to the police, without delay, and as soon as practicably possible.
- if on a foreign residential visit, the seizure should be handed over to the local police, their procedures may be different from those in the UK,
- needles or syringes found on school premises should be placed in a sturdy, secure container (for example, a tin with lid), using gloves The LA or Local Authority Environmental Health Department will advise on the best way to dispose of the contents of a sharps container,
- The headteacher is to be informed of events as soon as possible. There is **no legal**

obligation to report an incident involving drugs to the police. However, not informing the police may prove to be counter-productive for the school and wider community. **The police should, however, be involved in the disposal of suspected illegal drugs,**

3.3 Personal property cannot be searched without prior consent. Consent should also be sought for searches of school property such as lockers, but such a search may be conducted even where consent to it is withheld. Every effort should be made to persuade the person to hand over voluntarily any drugs, in the presence of a second adult witness. Where the individual refuses and the drug is believed to be illegal, and the school wishes to proceed along formal lines, then the police must be called. **The police can conduct a personal search if they believe a crime has taken place, or to prevent harm to themselves or others following an arrest.** The Headteacher is within his rights to invite the police to bring sniffer dogs onto the school premises.

3.4 The law permits school staff to take temporary possession of a substance suspected of being an illegal drug for the purposes of preventing an offence from being committed or continued in relation to that drug providing that all reasonable steps are taken to destroy the drug or deliver it to a person lawfully entitled to take custody of it.

3.5 In any incident involving illegal and other unauthorised drugs the pupil's parents/carers, will be notified as soon as possible (unless this would jeopardise the pupil's safety).

3.6 A full record of every incident will be compiled. This confidential information about pupils or staff should be secure and will be stored in accord with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998. Records, including notes of any discussions with pupils, may be used in any subsequent court proceedings. Notes should include the time, date, place and people present, as well as what was said.

3.7 From time-to-time alcohol may be authorised at school, for example at a PTA or community events, in these case the arrangements for storage or use is agreed in advance and adhered to. On these occasions a license is sought. Schools would need to obtain an occasional license to sell alcohol under the Licensing laws. However, no license is needed by the school to offer alcohol at school events (where no sale takes place) or to store alcohol on school premises.

3.8 Ryecroft is a tobacco-free school (see policy on 'Smoking')

3.9 Drugs incidents are likely to involve suspicions, observations, disclosures or discoveries of situations involving legal, illegal and other unauthorised drugs. They could fit into the following categories:

- drugs or associated paraphernalia are found on school premises
- a pupil is found in possession of drugs or associated paraphernalia
- a pupil is found to be supplying drugs on school premises¹
- a pupil, parent/carer or staff member is thought to be under the influence of drugs
- a pupil discloses that they or a family member/friend are misusing

3.10 The response should balance the needs of the individual with those of the wider school community, and aim to provide pupils with the opportunity to learn from their mistakes and develop as individuals. The needs of pupils in relation to drugs may come to light other than via an incident, for example, through the pastoral system. Possible responses include:

- early intervention and targeted prevention
- referral
- counseling
- behaviour support plans
- inter-agency programmes (inc links via school nurse)
- fixed-period exclusion
- pastoral support programmes

- a managed move
- permanent exclusion.

4. PUPILS

4.1 Some pupils are more vulnerable to drug misuse and other social problems than others. Ensuring that these pupils are identified and receive appropriate support through the curriculum, the pastoral system or referral to other services will become a priority at appropriate times.

4.2 Ryecroft has a role in identifying pupils who have drug related needs. The process of identifying needs aims to distinguish those who require additional information and education, those who could benefit from targeted prevention, and those who require a more detailed assessment of their needs. Pupils might require additional support if, for example:

- their knowledge about drugs is low
- they rely upon frequent use of drugs
- their drug use is affecting performance at school
- their drug use is causing problems such as conflict at home
- they feel under pressure to use drugs
- they fall into an identified vulnerable group or are experiencing one or a number of risk factors
- their (or someone else's) drug use is impacting on their behaviour and/or emotional health

5. PARENTS

In any incident involving illegal and other unauthorised drugs, the child's parents/carers will be informed to explain how the school intends to respond to the incident and to the pupil's needs. Where it is thought that to do this might put the child's safety at risk or if there is any other cause for concern for the child's safety at home, then caution will be exercised when considering involving parents/carers. In any situation where a pupil may need protection from the possibility of abuse, the school's child protection co-ordinator should be consulted and child protection procedures followed.

6. STAFF

6.1 School staff should have a general drug awareness and a good understanding of the school's drugs and other related policies. This understanding should include first steps in managing drug incidents and identifying and responding to pupils' needs (see below).

6.2 In managing drugs, school staff need to have regard to issues of confidentiality. School staff cannot and should not promise total confidentiality. The boundaries of confidentiality should be made clear to pupils. If a pupil discloses information which is sensitive, not generally known, and which the pupil asks not to be passed on, the request should be honoured unless this is unavoidable in order for staff to fulfill their professional responsibilities in relation to:

- managing drugs in school (see section 3 of this policy)
- child protection
- co-operating with a police investigation
- referral to external services.

6.3 The misuse of illegal drugs, prescription medicines or problem drinking by staff should be regarded as a health matter rather than an immediate cause for discipline. Problems with illegal drugs, prescription medicines, or alcohol often result from pre-existing circumstances.

6.4 Employers have a responsibility to maintain a safe and healthy working environment (DfEE Circular 4/99).

6.5 Teachers' misuse of illegal drugs, prescription medicines or alcohol can be a disciplinary matter. It can lead to barring or restricting a person's employment, for instance if it leads to criminal activity or to behaviour that involves an abuse of the teacher's position of trust or a breach of the standards of propriety expected of the profession (DfEE Circular 11/95). Employers have a statutory duty to inform the Department for Education and Skills and provide specific information when they cease to use a person's services (or might have ceased to use the person's services had they not withdrawn them) on the grounds of their misconduct, unsuitability to work with children or where a relevant health issue is raised (Education (Prohibition from Teaching or Working with Children) Regulations 2003).

6.6 A teacher may be deemed unfit to teach if he or she poses a risk or potential risk to the health and safety of pupils or colleagues. The governing body or headteacher must take emergency action when they consider a teacher may have become medically incapable of performing teaching duties and is putting pupils or colleagues at risk (DfEE Circular 4/99 and DfEE 2000).

7. GOVERNORS

7.1 As part of their general responsibilities for the strategic direction of the school, governors have a key role to play in the development of their school's policy on drugs.

7.2 Exclusion should only be considered for serious breaches of the school's behaviour policy, and should not be imposed without a thorough investigation unless there is an immediate threat to the safety of others in the school or the pupil concerned. It should not be used if alternative solutions have the potential to achieve a change in the pupil's behaviour and are not detrimental to the whole school community. In some cases fixed-period exclusion will be more appropriate than permanent exclusion.

7.3 A decision to exclude a child permanently is a serious one. Permanent exclusion should usually be the final step in the process for dealing with disciplinary offences after a wide range of other strategies has been tried without success. Supplying an illegal drug is a serious breach of school rules and it may be one of the exceptional circumstances where the headteacher judges that it is appropriate to permanently exclude a pupil, even for a one-off or first-time offence. In making this judgment the headteacher should have regard to the school's policy on drugs and consider the precise circumstances of each case, including the nature of the incident and the evidence available. This may also include the precise nature of the supply. Where pupils are permanently excluded for supplying an illegal drug, repeated possession and/or use of an illegal drug on school premises, the Secretary of State would not normally expect the governing body or an independent appeal panel to reinstate the pupil.

8. VULNERABLE GROUPS

8.1 Some pupils are more vulnerable to drug misuse and other social problems. Circumstances are set out below:

The vulnerable	Risk Factors	Protective factor
Homeless	Chaotic home environment	Strong family bonds
Looked after	Parents who misuse drugs or suffer from mental illness	Experiences of strong parental monitoring with clear family rules
School truants	Behavioural disorders	Family involvement in the lives of children
Pupils excluded from school	Lack of parental nurturing	Successful school experiences
Sexually abused	Inappropriate and/or aggressive classroom behaviour	Strong bonds with local community activities
Prostitutes	School failure	A caring relationship with at least one adult
In contact with mental health and criminal justice system	Poor coping skills	
Children of parents with drug problems	Low commitment to school	
	Friendship with deviant peers	
	Low socio-economic status	
	Early age of first drug use	
	Being labeled as a drug misuser	

8.2 When known, staff will be made aware of the impact that parental or family member drug misuse may be having on a child and their education. Children whose parents/carers misuse drugs may be at greater risk of emotional and/or physical harm.

8.3 Where problems are observed or suspected, or if a child chooses to disclose that there are difficulties at home and it is not deemed a child protection issue, the school should follow the procedures set out in the school's drug policy. This should include protocols for assessing the pupil's welfare and support needs and when and how to involve other sources of support for the child and, where appropriate, the family.

9. THE MEDIA

9.1 Staff at Ryecroft will seek advice from their Local Authority press officer on how local media enquiries should be handled to encourage any reporting on the school's drug policy or drug incidents to be fair, accurate and timely.

9.2 The local press may also be used proactively by schools for positive promotion of, for example, healthy schools initiatives or successfully evaluated drug education programmes.

Signed on behalf of the Governing Body:

Chair

Date

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