

St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Drugs Policy

*Here at St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, we learn and grow through the love of Jesus.
Our community is a safe, caring and happy place where everyone is supported and valued.
We encourage and challenge everyone to achieve their full potential,
Spiritually, academically, morally and socially.
We inspire others with a love of learning and aim for excellence in everything we do.
Through our own faith, we treat one another the way we would like to be treated.
We help every child to be gentle and fair: to always do their best.*

'Learning through the Love of Jesus Christ'

Introduction

Here at St Joseph's we are committed to giving all of our children every opportunity to achieve the highest of standards. We offer a broad and balanced curriculum and have high expectations of all the children. The achievement, attitude and well-being of all our children matter. This policy helps to ensure that this school promotes the individuality of all our children, irrespective of ethnicity, attainment, age, disability, gender or background. We do this by taking account of pupils' varied needs.

We believe every child has a right to be safe and healthy. The school plays an important role in supporting and promoting attitudes, practices and understanding which encourage the child to develop self confidence and self esteem to make informed decisions enabling them to choose a healthy lifestyle. We therefore strive to create an atmosphere which the child feels safe and able to discuss the problems and concerns whilst developing an understanding of drugs and their use and misuse.

St Joseph's is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for its pupils and staff. The governors and staff are committed to promoting British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths, cultures and lifestyles.

As a primary school we have a responsibility to provide our pupils with an education about drugs and, when appropriate, to adopt a consistent approach to the management of drug related incidents on school premises. We appreciate that schools alone cannot 'solve' the problem of drug misuse in society but an effective programme of drug education as St Joseph's is an important step in the right direction. It is about helping pupils to make responsible choices.

Definition

For the purpose of this policy a 'drug' is a substance people take to change the way they feel, think or behave. This includes both legal and illegal substances, volatile substances (solvents), alcohol, tobacco and prescribed drugs.

Aims

We aim to:

- help children to know the risks of drug taking;
- help children to have the knowledge and skills to resist taking drugs;
- help children to develop positive attitudes towards living healthy lives;
- provide support for pupils' parents.

St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Drugs Policy

Objectives

Drugs education is primarily involved in the Personal, Social & Health Education (PSHE) programme at St Joseph's. The objectives we have set in our PSHE Policy are referred to when planning and implementing a drug awareness programme.

Teachers and other adults who work in St Joseph's:

- teach children the definitions of drugs, drug use and misuse;
- offer a credible, consistent message which emphasises the benefits of a healthy lifestyle;
- act as positive role models in relation to drugs awareness in school;
- maintain the consistent approach and response to drugs issues as outlined in this policy;
- teach children the skills to make informed and responsible choices;
- teach skills to help children resist pressure to experiment with drugs;
- engage children in decision making in every day school life;
- provide a consistent system of pastoral care for all pupils;
- be aware of to whom young people can be referred outside school, and under what circumstances.

Certain aspects of drug education can be linked to Science, English, Religious Education, and Physical Education.

Organisation

We regard drugs education as a whole school issue, and we believe that opportunities to teach about the importance of living a healthy lifestyle occur throughout the curriculum.

Drugs education is an important part of our school's (PSHE) curriculum. The main teaching about drugs takes place in Years 5 and 6, where the children are taught about illegal drugs, and the dangers involved to those who take them. Drugs education forms part of a sequence of lessons that are designed to promote in children a healthy lifestyle.

Class teachers deliver drug education in normal lesson time. Sometimes the class teacher may seek support from the school nurse or another health professional. Each class teacher answers questions about drugs sensitively and appropriately, as they occur. In the routine circle time sessions, we encourage children to discuss issues that are important to them, and we help children to be aware of the dangers of the misuse of drugs. For example, if a child raises the issue of smoking, the teacher takes time to discuss its harmful effects with the whole class. In science lessons we teach children what a drug is, and how drugs are used in medicine. We also teach them the difference between legal and illegal drugs. The teaching style that we use encourages children to ask questions and reflect on the dangers to health of drug misuse. Children explore issues, such as why people take drugs, and how they can avoid putting themselves in danger in the future. We give children the opportunity to talk in groups or to the whole class. We encourage them to listen to the views of others, and we ask them to explore why drugs are such a problem for society.

The role of the Headteacher

The Headteacher will ensure that a named person will be trained in order to carry out the role of PSHE subject leader.

The role of the subject leader

Whilst all members of staff at St Joseph's are expected to provide a consistent system of pastoral care, the PSHE subject leader is ultimately responsible for coordinating curricular and pastoral aspects of drug prevention. It is the responsibility of the subject leader to ensure that staff and parents are informed about the drugs education policy, and that the policy is implemented effectively. It is also the subject leader's role to ensure that staff are given sufficient training, so

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St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Drugs Policy

that they can teach effectively and handle any difficult issues with sensitivity. We acknowledge that teachers responsible for teaching about drugs need to be given the confidence to deliver clear and consistent messages about drugs; they need access to up-to-date facts about drug misuse and to new materials and successful teaching approaches. Support may be obtained either from or through the PSHE subject leader, according to the nature of the information sought.

The role of governors

The governing body has the responsibility of setting down these general guidelines on drugs education. The governors will support the Headteacher in following these guidelines. Governors will liaise with the Headteacher so that the school's policy is in line with the best advice available.

The role of parents

The school is well aware that the primary role in children's drugs education lies with parents. We wish to build a positive and supporting relationship with the parents of children at our school through mutual understanding, trust and cooperation. In promoting this objective we will:

- inform parents about the school drugs education policy and practice by publishing the policy on the website;
- answer any questions parents may have about the drugs education their child receives in school;
- take seriously any issue which parents raise with teachers or governors about this policy or the arrangements for drugs education in the school;

Pastoral Care

If a member of staff is approached by a pupil for individual advice on substance misuse, the procedure to be adopted is:

- provide factual information; questions asked should be answered. (Staff should try to find out whether the questions have been asked on a 'needs' basis or whether the child is just seeking information.)
- record the incident. At the teacher's discretion, if deemed appropriate, an 'Incident Record' may be completed.
- inform the Headteacher if there is cause for concern.

Where a pupil discloses to a member of staff that they are taking drugs the teacher should make clear that they cannot guarantee confidentiality where the child's health and safety is at risk. The procedure to be adopted is:

- listen to the child – do not show shock or disapproval;
- adopt a 'no blame' approach;
- assess the seriousness of the disclosure and seek clarification of unclear issues;
- report to the Headteacher immediately – it may be a child protection issue.
- Headteacher will inform the child's parents and decide on the appropriate action to be taken, depending on the situation.
- The school nurse is a further resource.

Discovery of Suspected Illegal Substances at School

The following guidelines will be followed when school staff discover substances which are suspected to be harmful, illegal or requiring further investigation:

- if possible, find any adult witness;

St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Drugs Policy

- seize substance or equipment and take it immediately to the Headteacher (do not delay doing this; for a member of staff to retain the substance on their person or elsewhere could place them at risk);
- substance should be placed in a sealed envelope which is signed; the date and time should be written on it, along with, where possible, a witness's signature; care should be taken when handling unknown substances – school staff should wear gloves if possible, and always wash their hands afterwards;
- record incident in detail (this is especially important in the case of pupils using drugs where the need for medical intervention is necessary);
- Headteacher will inform parents
- if necessary, the Headteacher will inform the police – substance may need to be confirmed with them. The chair of Governors will be informed if the police are to be involved.
- once the police have been contacted, the substance will be retained until the police have identified it – they will then dispose of it;
- if necessary, the Headteacher will investigate any further actions considered appropriate.

Parental Involvement

Any new initiatives in drugs awareness will be shared with the parents and carers of pupils at St Joseph's. This will be done through parent meetings. The school's approach to drug education will be explained and parents can then have an opportunity to see teaching materials, ask questions and meet any outside professionals. Through these meetings the school aims to overcome any initial alarm parents might have about their children being "taught about drugs". Information may sometimes be disseminated in writing to parents.

Parents will always be contacted if there is reasonable evidence for us to believe that their child is involved in taking drugs. If this is the case every effort will be made to support the child and their parents in finding help from specialised agencies.

Special Educational Needs

Children with learning difficulties may need more help than others in understanding what sorts of behaviour are and are not acceptable and desirable, in resisting peer group pressure and in developing the confidence and skill needed to resist drugs.

Equal Opportunities

One of the guiding principles in the school's Equality Policy is "to foster positive attitudes and relationships", as such we will avoid thinking in terms of labels and stereotyping when planning and implementing drugs education, as evidence shows that drug use is a potential danger to any pupil.

Working with the Metropolitan Police and other Agencies

Working in partnership with the police means that we recognise the potential benefits to be gained from developing a professional relationship with our local police. These benefits may involve the following:

- police officers assisting with drug education in the curriculum;
- exchanging of information in order to establish a comprehensive picture of drugs activity and the impact on the school and the wider community;
- provision of legal and practical advice about drugs information and incidents;
- agreeing and implementing joint tactics and strategies.