



## MANAGEMENT OF SUBSTANCE ABUSE POLICY

### Rationale

At The Wallace High School ("the School"), we take seriously our role in educating all young people in our care about drugs and other harmful substances, their uses and abuses, and how to handle situations in which pupils may be offered legal or illegal highs. We will also try to help pupils, parents and staff to be more knowledgeable about, and better prepared to deal with, any drug related issues or concerns. Details can be found in the School's Drugs Education Policy.

This policy covers the procedures regarding the suspected or actual abuse of drugs.

### Aims

The aims of this policy are as follows:

- To define what the School regards as a drug in the context of possible or actual abuse of such.
- To clarify the responsibilities of staff, pupils and parents in this regard.
- To clarify the jurisdiction to which this policy applies.
- To explain the procedures that will be followed by the School if suspected or actual drug abuse has taken place.
- To explain the likely sanctions when drug abuse has taken place.

### Definitions

(i) Drugs:

Substances covered by this policy include alcohol, cigarettes, volatile substances, certain permanent ink markers, all forms of medicines, pain killers whether prescribed or bought over the counter, and all other legal and illegal drugs. It also applies to glue, aerosol sprays, and other substances where they are used as intoxicants. Involvement in the abuse of any such substances constitutes "involvement in drug related activity".

(ii) School jurisdiction:

This policy applies on School premises and/or when it involves any member of the School community during School hours, on visits and trips, at School events and other occasions related to the School and on any occasions when the pupils are the responsibility of the staff. The effects of previous use are unacceptable in School time and as such pupils should not be under the influence of

substances which contravene this policy. This policy applies when pupils are of the School's premises because of study leave or other arrangements are in place. When pupils are travelling to and from the School in uniform they are considered to be representing the School and therefore the School rules apply.

(iii) Substance Misuse:

This is the engagement by a pupil of any drug related activity whilst under the jurisdiction of the School. Pupils are forbidden to share, or attempt to share, ingest or use any substance or be under the influence of any substance which, when used by the student with the intention to bring about a state of intoxication, causes the behaviour of the student to be a threat to the health and safety of the student concerned or any other member of the School; or otherwise disrupt the orderly operation of any part of the educational process for which the School is responsible.

### **Incidents Relating to Drug Abuse**

Pupils must not engage in substance misuse whilst under the jurisdiction of the School. This will include involvement in the purchase, possession, supply, intent to supply, being concerned in supply or consumption of drugs as described in (i) above. A pupil who is found under the School jurisdiction in possession of a drug, or any illegal substance, for abusive purposes is in breach of the School rules, even if the pupil was not planning to consume the drug while under the School's jurisdiction.

### **Involvement of Other Pupils (Dealing)**

Involvement in the supply of drugs can take many forms. Any of the following, for example, would be seen as involvement in the supply of drugs and therefore a most serious offence:

- Sharing a drug with others
- Helping or facilitating another pupil to gain access to drugs or come into contact with someone willing to provide or deal drugs.
- Making arrangements for another pupil to buy drugs, even if the transaction itself were to take place outside the School and outside School hours.
- Making drugs or any illegal substance accessible to other pupils.

Please note the above list is not exhaustive. The individual case of involvement in the supply of drugs will be assessed independently. Intent to supply or attempt to supply is a serious offence, even if no supply actually takes place. A pupil does not have to make a monetary or any other gain from passing on a drug to be guilty of involvement in supply. A pupil who supplies a drug to another as a drug of abuse commits a serious offence even if he/she is passing over a substance which is not an illegal drug and is not harmful. For a pupil to lead another to unwittingly consume a drug of abuse is a serious offence. Pupils who place themselves in such a way as to give support and encouragement to drug related activity (e.g. by joining pupils who truant from class to take a drug of abuse) should expect to face serious sanctions for

offering that support or encouragement, even if they bought no drug and consumed no drug themselves. Abuse of drugs which can be bought commercially or obtained under prescription is strictly forbidden and a serious offence. The School is not able to legislate for every eventuality. The above examples demonstrate the type of conduct which would be in breach of the School rules and in some cases the criminal law also.

### **The role of the School Nurse and Medical Room**

Any prescribed medicines to be taken in school need to be left with and taken at the Medical Room. In the case of inhalers and epipens a spare should be left at the Medical Room AND one carried by the pupil at all times. Other prescribed medicines may only be carried by pupils with the permission of the School Nurse following consultation with the parent/guardian of the pupil.

### **The Responsibilities of Staff**

All staff should:

- be aware of the definitions of drugs and substance misuse as outlined in this policy.
- be aware of what constitutes engagement in substance misuse as outlined in this policy.

On discovering an incidence of suspected or actual drug abuse a member of staff should:

- make the situation safe.
- inform the school nurse and Vice Principal (Pastoral).

### **The Responsibilities of Pupils**

All pupils should:

- be aware of the definitions of drugs and substance misuse as outlined in this policy.
- be aware of what constitutes engagement in substance misuse as outlined in this policy.
- be aware of their responsibility to other members of the school community and the physical and emotional damage that misuse of drugs can cause to both them and others.
- refrain from all types of substance misuse as described above.
- report to any member of staff any suspected or actual substance misuse.

### **The Responsibilities of Parents**

All parents are expected to:

- familiarise themselves with this policy and make every effort to ensure that their son/daughter has done the same.

- support the School in any investigative or disciplinary procedures following a suspected or actual case of drug abuse.

### **Procedures for Dealing with Suspected or Actual Drug Abuse**

Following a report to the Vice Principal the Principal will make a judgment as to the point where it may be necessary to contact a parent to report a suspicion of possible drug involvement by a pupil.

During an investigation, the School reserves the right to insist that a pupil empties their pockets or other belonging (e.g. school bags, locker, etc) if that pupil is suspected of possessing drugs. This will only be done in the presence of at least 2 members of staff, one of whom will be a senior member of staff.

Whilst confidentiality is of prime importance the legal requirements of drug legislation and The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 have implications for this issue. Where a pupil discloses to a member of staff that he/she (or another pupil) is taking or has taken drugs, the member of staff will make it clear that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. The pupil will be advised of other sources of support and, if appropriate, will be encouraged to talk to their parents/ guardians. Where possible all information pertaining to the investigation will be in written format.

If it is suspected or confirmed that a 'controlled drug' is involved the matter will immediately be reported to the PSNI. In such instances the School reserves the right to restrict the movements of the pupil until the PSNI have had an opportunity to speak with the pupil. In such an instance the School will make every effort to inform the parent/guardian of this action.

It will be necessary to explore a range of factors to determine the seriousness of the incident and there may be a variety of responses and sanctions used e.g. counselling, advice and support from external agencies as well as School-imposed sanctions.

Any material breaches of the School's rules as set out in this policy will be treated by the School as a gross breach and may where appropriate be expected to lead to a period of exclusion from the School. Where appropriate, the Principal has the right to impose a fixed period or permanent exclusion, following the implementation of proper procedures, on any pupil involved in a breach of this policy and any drug related misconduct. The duration of the exclusion, and whether it is fixed term or permanent, will depend on the circumstances of the case, however it is expected that any breach relating to involvement in supply of drugs of abuse may warrant permanent exclusion. Immediate fixed term exclusion may also be necessary whilst further investigation takes place, or if on the balance of the evidence available, the Principal considers that this is an appropriate course of action. In that event, the normal exclusion procedures will be followed. This may also apply to situations where the substance is not illegal, but considered to pose a danger to the individual or others.

The Vice Principal (Pastoral) should be informed of any matter connected with drug abuse or any instance where substances or use of banned drugs is suspected. In the event of the Vice Principal (Pastoral) being unavailable, another member of the School's Senior Management Team is to be contacted.

Parents will normally be informed of the outcome of any investigation as soon as possible after the completion of the School's investigation. In circumstances where a student is to be excluded from the School parents will be required to attend an interview with the Principal, in line with the School's Exclusions Policy. At all times the well being of the student involved will be paramount.

### **Drugs Education**

At The Wallace High school we recognise that the misuse of drugs is a significant problem in society today but that, equally, the majority of young people decide not to misuse drugs. It is important not to underestimate the importance of education in this area and there are, therefore, a number of initiatives in place.

Drugs education is not taught in isolation. It is a continuous process which involves the development of skills and attitudes which enable pupils to make informed choices.

Drugs education provides opportunities for pupils to:

- acquire knowledge and understanding in relation to drug use/misuse;
- identify values and attitudes in relation to drug use/misuse;
- develop skills to enable them to consider the effects of drugs on themselves and others;
- make informed and responsible choices within the context of a healthy lifestyle.

Aspects of Drugs Education are specifically included in Biology, Home Economics, Religious Education and Learning for Life and Work (Personal Development) where there are opportunities for considering drug-related issues from a variety of perspectives. This is recorded in an Appendix to this policy and is updated annually in June.

In addition the Personal Development programme, workshops led by external agencies and assemblies cover important aspects of drugs education.

The school also appreciates the support of parents and also maintains contact with a number of outside agencies which provide advice and support as required.

### Training and Information

Staff are provided with training to support the full implementation of this policy including the delivery of the Drug Education Programme, key signs of drug abuse and how to deal with a drug-related incident.

Appendix:

Curricular input into Drugs Education is normally:

Biology:

Year 12: the misuse of drugs and the costs to the individual and society.  
Material covered is limited to that of smoking, binge drinking, cocaine and cannabis.

Home Economics

Year 10: alcohol as a risk factor for CHD and obesity  
Years 11 -12: alcohol as a risk factor for CHD, obesity and hypertension  
Year 13: alcohol as a risk factor for the development of CHD, obesity, hypertension and some cancers. Health risks and benefits of including alcohol in the diet

Personal Development:

Year 8: Alcohol discussed in the context of risk taking  
Year 9: Smoking & health implications  
Year 10: Alcohol revisited in health context, drugs education, effects of alcohol considered.  
Year 11: Further age appropriate consideration given to drug and alcohol abuse  
Year 12: Dangers of alcohol & drug & abuse - considered in scenarios for discussion.

Extra-curricular 2012-13:

Year 10: Alcohol Awareness workshop by YMCA  
Year 11: Jackie Burke - presentation on his personal experience of drug abuse.

**Links with other school policies**

Exclusions Policy  
Behaviour Management Policy

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years (or sooner if required by legislation) during which pupils parents & staff will be consulted.