

SCHOOL DRUGS POLICY

Rationale:

For the purpose of this document the term 'drugs' includes tobacco, alcohol, over-the-counter and prescribed medication, volatile substances and controlled drugs. Tandragee Junior High School does not condone the misuse of drugs but recognises that there has been a considerable increase in the abuse of drugs in recent years in Northern Ireland. Drug misuse appears to be affecting an ever-younger population and the so-called "recreational" use of drugs can lead to a dangerous acceptance of illegal and harmful drug misuse as part of everyday life.

We believe that Tandragee Junior High School has a vital preventative role to play in combating the misuse of drugs by young people and we therefore include a Drug Education programme in our curriculum.

Tandragee Junior High School sees its role as that of a caring community committed to the physical, mental, social, emotional, moral and spiritual health, safety and well being of our pupils and staff.

We want our pupils to make informed and responsible decisions about drugs by increasing their knowledge and by developing in them appropriate values, attitudes and skills. However, we recognise that drug misuse is a whole-community issue and that schools alone cannot solve the drugs problem; the school is only one of a number of groups and agencies which must play a part in the education of young people in and we make use of their expertise where possible in the delivery of the programme.

"There is a public perception that drug misuse is mainly an issue in disadvantaged inner city areas Drug misuse is just as much an issue in rural areas and affluent communities: it extends across socioeconomic, geographical and cultural boundaries. Educationally successful young people are just as likely to put themselves at risk as low attainers."(DENI 1996/16)

All staff (teaching and non-teaching), should familiarise themselves with the information included in this policy and further copies may be obtained from the Designated Teacher for Drugs (Mr D T Gillespie).

Copies of the guidance on which this policy is based (Drugs: Guidance for Schools in NI) are available from the Department of Education website www.deni.gov.uk

Definitions:

For the purpose of this document and in line with the guidance issued to all schools by the Department of Education (Circular Number 1996/16) drugs will include any substance which, when taken, has the effect of altering the way the body works or the way a person behaves, feels, sees or thinks.

As well as everyday substances such as tea and coffee, drugs include -

- alcohol and tobacco.
- “over-the-counter” medicines, such as paracetamol.
- prescribed drugs, such as antibiotics, tranquillisers, inhalers and Ritalin.
- volatile substances, such as correcting fluids/thinners, gas lighter fuel, aerosols, glues and petrol.
- controlled drugs, such as cannabis, LSD, Ecstasy, amphetamine sulphate (speed), magic mushrooms (processed), heroin and cocaine; and other substances such as amyl/butyl nitrite (‘poppers’) and unprocessed magic mushrooms.

Ethos:

“Our primary aim is to provide a safe and happy learning environment for all our pupils so that we protect property and equipment and ensure the smooth running of the school.

It is our intention “to promote positive attitudes to learning so that each child develops his/her full potential.”

Aims and Objectives:

- To have a clear and agreed understanding among everyone in the school community about the implications and possible consequences of drug use/misuse.
- To provide all staff (teaching and non-teaching) with adequate training and support to enable them to deal effectively and confidently with incidents of suspected drug misuse, and to ensure that the procedures are sensitively and consistently applied in all situations.
- To empower teaching staff through appropriate training and support to develop and deliver an effective drug education programme.
- To provide a drug education programme which
 - develops pupils’ self esteem and promotes positive attitudes in their relationships with others.
 - gives pupils opportunities to develop the values, skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to make informed and responsible decisions about the use/misuse of drugs including tobacco, alcohol and volatile substances, within the context of a healthy lifestyle; and
 - helps pupils develop the skills necessary to assert themselves confidently and resist negative pressures and influences.
- To provide appropriate support and assistance for those pupils affected by drug-related issues.

- To inform parents of the content of this policy and the procedures to be implemented in the management of incidents of suspected drug misuse.
- To establish an environment in which the school is free from the misuse of all drugs.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Pupils:

- Be aware of and adhere to school rules in relation to drug use/misuse, including tobacco, alcohol, over-the-counter and prescribed medication, volatile substances and controlled drugs.

A copy of the full Policy may be obtained from the School Office