

Tandragee Junior High School



Misuse of Substance Policy

November 2025

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Introduction

Rationale

For the purpose of this document the term 'drugs' includes tobacco, vapes and vaping liquids, nicotine products including nicotine pouches, alcohol, over-the-counter and prescribed medication, volatile substances, illegal 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 drugs education as part of our Personal Development programme (PD).

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 and we make use of their expertise where possible in the delivery of the programme.

In today's society, most people will be exposed to and/or use some sort of drug at some time in their lives. Substance misuse affects all communities in Northern Ireland, crossing gender, cultural and social boundaries. No school, parent or carer can afford to be complacent or think that children and young people are not at risk.

Research continues to show that by post-primary school age a significant number of young people are engaging with substances such as alcohol, cigarettes, including electronic cigarettes, or solvents and/or have misused prescribed medicines or other substances. (Drugs: Guidance for Schools in Northern Ireland Revised 2015)

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 (The Vice-Principal) or The Principal.

Copies of the guidance on which this policy is based **DE Circular 2015/23** and **CCEA Guidance 'Drugs: Guidance for Schools in Northern Ireland - Revised Edition 2015'** are available from the Department of Education website www.deni.gov.uk

Refer also to:

PHA's 2025 Youth Vaping Research

Substance Use Strategic Commissioning and Implementation Plan (2024–2028)

Tobacco and Vapes Bill (2024)

Definitions

For the purpose of this document and in line with the guidance issued to all schools by the Department of Education 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, tobacco and tobacco-related products, including nicotine replacement therapy (NRT), and electronic cigarettes (see Circular 2014/25) and **NI-wide ban on disposable vapes from April 2025**; and nicotine pouches.
- over-the-counter medicines such as paracetamol and cough medicine;
- prescribed drugs, such as antibiotics, painkillers, antidepressants, antipsychotics, inhalers and stimulants such as Ritalin;
- volatile substances such as correcting fluids or thinners, gas lighter fuel, aerosols, glues and petrol;
- controlled drugs such as cannabis, LSD, ecstasy, amphetamine sulphate (speed), magic mushrooms, heroin and cocaine;
- new psychoactive substances (NPS) which contain one or more chemical substances that produce similar effects to illegal drugs and are sold as incense, salts or plant food and marked 'not for human consumption' to avoid prosecution; and
- other substances such as amyl or butyl nitrite (known as poppers) and unprocessed magic mushrooms.

Ethos

Tandragee Junior High School is a caring, health promoting school which believes that the self-worth of the individual is of great importance and therefore we do not tolerate the misuse of drugs in the school.

We endeavour to provide an environment and programme which develops self-respect, self-reliance and self-discipline leading to a drug free lifestyle, but taking into account the needs of those individuals for whom prescribed drugs are essential.

In today's society there is no one who will not be exposed to, and use, some sort of drug at some time in their lives. Drugs misuse is beginning to affect many communities in Northern Ireland including our own community. We cannot afford to be complacent or think that our pupils are not at risk and we must help them to live safely in a drug using society.

We have an important role to play in helping our young people respond to this drug culture. We must recognize that we are only one of several interested parties addressing the issue of preventing, delaying or limiting drug use. Drugs education alone will not solve the problem, but the problem will not be solved in the absence of effective drugs education.

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 involve external agencies e.g. PSNI to support the delivery of this topic to our pupils.
- 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.

Development and Implementation

Roles and responsibilities

Pupils

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

Staff

- Be alert to the possibility of drug use / misuse.
- Be familiar with the school's procedures in the handling of suspected drug-related incidents.
- It is not the responsibility of the individual staff member to investigate the circumstances surrounding an incident; however he / she should deal with any emergency procedures if necessary as a safeguarding concern.
- Any information, substance or paraphernalia received should be forwarded to the designated teacher for drugs who will take immediate and appropriate action.

Teachers delivering the drug education programme

In addition to the above:

- Deliver the school's drug education programme.
- Try to create an atmosphere in the classroom in which pupils can freely contribute to discussion, safe in the knowledge that the comments, ideas and feelings of the group are valued.
- Support pupils in their class if necessary.
- Liaise with the designated teacher for drugs regarding any aspect of the programme / policy, as necessary.

The Designated Teacher for Drugs

- Ensure that all staff and parents are aware of and have access to a copy of the policy.

- Have oversight and co-ordination of the planning of curricular provision in compliance with the statutory requirements including periodic update and review of the policy.
- Liaise with other staff responsible for pastoral care in co-ordinating the delivery of the drug education programme.
- Co-ordinate training and induction of all staff in the procedures for dealing with incidents of suspected drug misuse.
- Be responsible for co-ordinating the school's procedures for dealing with incidents of suspected drug misuse.
- Determine the circumstances surrounding the incident.
- Complete a suspected incident report form and forward to principal.
- Act as the point of contact for outside agencies working with the school.

The Principal

- Ensure that members of the Board of Governors have been consulted on and ratified the policy.

In the case of incidents of suspected drug misuse:

- Ensure the welfare and well-being of the pupil(s) involved in the incident and the rest of the school community.
- Ensure that the following people are informed (where relevant):
 - Parents / Guardians
 - PSNI - preferably the school's liaison officer - related to any controlled substance (Class A, B, or C)
 - Board of Governors
 - Designated Officer in the Education Authority
 - Members of staff
 - Other pupils and parents informed within the confines of confidentiality
 - Agree, in consultation with the Board of Governors, appropriate pastoral and disciplinary responses in relation to the incident, including counselling services / support.
 - Retain written records of the incident and ensuring a copy of the reports are submitted to Board of Governors, EA as appropriate.
 - Review procedures and amend.

The Board of Governors

- Examine and approve the completed policy and education programme, prior to their implementation in the school.
- Ensure that a summary of the policy is published in the school prospectus and that it is reviewed at regular intervals.
- Be fully aware of the school policy and procedures in respect of incidents of drug misuse, including tobacco and alcohol, and their appropriate disciplinary response.
- Agree in consultation with the principal appropriate pastoral and disciplinary responses in relation to suspected drug related incidents.

The Chairperson of the Governors, or his nominee, will work with the principal and designated teacher for drugs in relation to drug related issues.

Parents / Guardians

- Support your son / daughter if they have become involved with drugs.
- Support the school in the development and implementation of this policy, including the school's procedures for handling incidents of suspected drug misuse and the drug education programme.

The Building Supervisor

- Be vigilant around and conduct regular checks of school grounds for drug-related paraphernalia. Inform the designated teacher for drugs should any be found.
- Ensure the safe storage, handling and disposal of potentially harmful substances such as solvents and cleaning fluids.

Training and information

All staff (teaching and support) will be provided with training to support the full implementation of this policy including the delivery of the Drug Education Programme and how to deal with an incident.

Governors will be offered training in respect of drugs education and the implementation of the policy, including the procedure in dealing with an incident.

TJHS will commit to **regular, updated training** for all staff (teaching and non-teaching) and specify the training remit for the Designated Teacher for Drugs (DTD)

The drugs education programme

The drug education programme in Tandragee Junior High School is just one part of the whole school response to drug use / misuse. The programme 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; and
- make informed and responsible choices within the context of a healthy lifestyle.

Procedures for dealing with suspected drug related incidents

Fundamental to dealing with incidents of suspected drug misuse is the principle of 'in loco parentis', and Tandragee Junior High School will always take the steps that would reasonably be expected of any parent to safeguard the well-being and safety of all the pupils in their charge.

The school will at all times give careful consideration as to how any information relating to an incident of suspected / confirmed drug use / misuse is communicated to staff, pupils and parents / guardians.

The parents / guardians of the pupil(s) directly involved in an incident of suspected drug use / misuse will be informed of the incident recognising that the future of a child or adult can be adversely affected. Confidentiality is of paramount importance in drug related incidents and subsequent outcomes.

Dealing with the media

If the school receives an enquiry from the media the caller will only be referred to the principal or, in the absence of the principal, a designated nominee.

When responding to the media the privacy of the pupil(s), his / her family and / or any staff members will be respected at all times.

Monitoring and evaluation

Tandragee Junior High School will ensure that procedures are put in place to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of all aspects of this policy.

Procedures to be followed when dealing with specific drug related incidents in school.

These procedures also apply when pupils are in school uniform, taking part in any school approved activity, including sport and educational visits.

A suspected drug related incident is described as:

- Suspect drugs or paraphernalia found on the school premises;
- A pupil suspected of being in possession of drugs;
- A pupil found to be in possession of drugs;
- A pupil suspected of supplying drugs;
- A pupil found to be supplying drugs;
- A pupil suspected of being under the influence of drugs.

When an incident occurs the member of staff should:

1. Ensure the safety of the individual pupil involved, of other pupils, yourself and other staff. On finding a situation with a suspected substance:-
 - Get help immediately from another adult;
 - Contact a first aider and pastoral vice principal (designated teacher for drugs). If they are not available, report to the Principal;
 - Assess situation, to see if this is a life-threatening situation or not.

If an emergency:-

 - If necessary contact an ambulance;
 - Put person under the influence of the drugs in the recovery position;
 - Ensure airways are cleared;
 - Remove any other bystanders from the immediate vicinity.

Then in all cases:-

 - Carefully gather up any drugs / paraphernalia / evidence lying around and keep safely;
 - Try to ascertain which substances / drugs have been taken and how much;
 - Secure all drugs and paraphernalia and give to the Principal / Designated teacher immediately, and lock them away until dealt with by PSNI. If the drug has to be destroyed, do so in the presence of a witness after making a record of the amount/type;
 - Contact the parents as soon as possible.
2. **Ensure all incidents are properly investigated and recorded:-**
 - Never accuse pupils of drug dealing / possession; these are alleged illicit substances until substantiated by the PSNI;
 - Conduct search procedures. (Never search personal belongings without permission. It is okay to search school property such as lockers, cupboards or desks).

Ensure another member of staff is present. If a pupil does not volunteer emptying pockets, await arrival of PSNI.

- Ensure all drugs are safely and securely stored or destroyed (seek advice from PSNI), making sure that this is witnessed by another adult and recorded;
- Gather details and data from all the eye-witnesses at the scene;
 - A signed and dated record should be made of all statements and phone calls;
 - Record all information on official incident form and sign and date, or ensure accurate details are given to whoever is writing the form and co-sign;
- Ensure the Education Authority incident form is filled in and forwarded to the EA;
- Ensure that you follow all the procedures in the Misuse of Substance Policy.

3. Ensure appropriate individuals and agencies are informed and contacted as needed:

- Principal
- Parents/Guardians
- PSNI
- Education Authority
- Chairperson initially and subsequently the Board of Governors;
- No media statements, only the Principal should do this;
- Other pupils, parents and staff are only told on a need-to-know basis.

A pastoral/disciplinary response needs to be made by the school, balancing the need for compassion and the pupil's welfare with the need to send a clear message about illegal actions, behaviour and the impact on the school community. **Pastoral support** (e.g., referral to the Independent Counselling Service for Schools - ICSS, or a pastoral staff member) is valued *in addition to, or alongside,* any disciplinary sanction.

Other related policies:

- Positive Behaviour Policy;
- Anti-Bullying Policy;
- Safeguarding Policy;
- Critical Incident Policy;
- Health and Safety Policy.

Initial Discovery

- Staff member finds suspected substance or observes suspicious behaviour.

Immediate Action

- Ensure safety of all pupils and staff.
- Call for assistance from another adult.
- Contact First Aider and Designated Teacher for Drugs (Vice-Principal).
- If emergency: call ambulance, place pupil in recovery position, clear area.

Secure Evidence

- Collect and secure any substances or paraphernalia - Record what was found and where.
- Do not destroy anything unless advised by PSNI.

Inform Key Personnel

- Notify Principal and Designated Teacher.
- Contact parents/guardians.
- Inform PSNI (mandatory for controlled substances).
- Notify Education Authority and Board of Governors as appropriate.

Investigation

- Do not accuse pupils—treat as alleged until confirmed.
- Conduct searches of school property (not personal belongings without consent).
- Record witness statements and all actions taken.

Documentation

- Complete school and EA incident report forms.
- Keep signed and dated records of all communications and decisions.

Pastoral and Disciplinary Response

- Principal and Governors agree on appropriate response.
- Consider counselling, support services, and disciplinary action.

Review and Follow-Up

- Review procedures and update policy if needed.
- Monitor pupil wellbeing and reintegration.

APPENDIX 1: SCHOOL REGULATIONS CONCERNING ALCOHOL AND TOBACCO

Alcohol: pupils are not permitted to possess or consume alcohol, or to supply another pupil with alcohol when on the School site, when in school uniform, or when taking part in any

school approved activity, including sporting fixtures, school visits and trips. The priority of any member of staff becoming aware of alcohol being consumed by a pupil will be to ensure the safe care of the pupil. In addition, in the event of a member of staff becoming aware of any incident involving alcohol, he or she will:

- Remove the alcohol from the scene;
- Report the incident as soon as possible to the Principal or Vice Principal as the Designated Teacher for Drugs within School;
- The Principal or Vice Principal, having established the details of the incident, will inform parents and decide on the sanctions to be applied and other measures to be taken. The particular circumstances of the incident will determine the response and accompanying sanctions.

Smoking: the School is cognisant of the requirements of The Smoking (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 which took effect on 30 April 2007 and has been a non-smoking environment since November 2004.

Pupils are not permitted to be in possession of smoking materials (including e-cigarettes) or to smoke cigarettes or e-cigarettes. TJHS explicitly forbids the **possession or use of electronic cigarettes/vaping devices** and related paraphernalia on school premises, while travelling to/from school, or while representing the school, or when taking part in any school approved activity, including sporting fixtures, school visits and trips. They should also refrain from being in the company of those smoking cigarettes or e-cigarettes when on the School site, when in school uniform, or when taking part in any school approved activity, including sporting fixtures, school visits and trips. This also applies to nicotine pouches.

A member of staff becoming aware of a pupil smoking will inform the Vice Principal who may remove the smoking materials from the pupil. The particular circumstances of the incident will determine the school's response and accompanying sanctions.

The regulations concerning alcohol and smoking apply to all pupils when on the School site, when in school uniform, or when taking part in any school approved activity, including sporting fixtures, school visits and trips.

An educative, preventative approach, rather than a disciplinary approach, is preferred, but sanctions will also be applied to any pupil in breach of regulations concerning alcohol and smoking.

APPENDIX 2: MAIN TYPES OF CONTROLLED DRUGS BY CLASS

The Misuse of Drugs Act (1971) Principal drugs include:

Class A Opium; Heroin/methadone; Cocaine/Crack; LSD; Ecstasy; Magic mushrooms (processed);

Class B drugs prepared for injection.

Class B Amphetamines e.g. Ritalin, Barbiturates, Codeine, mephedrone, Cannabis resin and Cannabis herb.

Class C Mild amphetamines; Anabolic steroids; Benzodiazepines (minor tranquillisers eg temazepam,

diazepam); Some stimulant, anti-depressant and anti-obesity medicines; Cannabis resin; Cannabis

herb; GHB (Gammahydroxy butyrate)

Offences under the Misuse of Drugs Act include;

- Possession – to be knowingly in possession of a relatively small quantity of a controlled drug for personal use
- Possession with intent to supply another person a controlled drug – possessing a larger quantity of a drug or packaging it in a way that indicates it is going to be supplied to others
- Supplying another person a controlled drug – giving or selling drugs to someone else, including friends
- Supplying or offering to supply drug paraphernalia – this includes equipment for smoking cannabis or crack cocaine (extract from Drugs: Guidance for Schools in Northern Ireland CEA 2004)

The PSNI must be informed in every case where a pupil is found to have, or is suspected of having, controlled drugs in his/her possession, either on his/her person or in their belongings, or where controlled drugs are found on the school premises.

In circumstances where the misuse of 'legal highs', solvents, alcohol or prescription medication is suspected, while there is no legal obligation to notify the police, it is the policy of the School that, if considered appropriate, the PSNI is informed.

APPENDIX 3: DRUGS INCIDENT REPORT FORM

1. Name of Pupil _____ DOB _____

Address _____

2. Date of Incident _____ Reported by _____

Time of Incident _____ Location of Incident _____

3. First Aid given YES/NO Administered by _____

Ambulance/Doctor Called YES/NO Time of Call _____

4. Parent or carer informed YES/NO

Date _____ Time _____

5. Where substance is retained _____

or

Date substance destroyed or passed to PSNI _____ Time _____

6. PSNI informed YES/NO

Date _____ Time _____

7. Education Authority or CCMS Designated Officer informed, as appropriate YES/NO

Date _____ Time _____

8. Form completed by _____ Date _____

Position _____

- Description of the Incident

- Actions taken

- Incident form completed by

Date: _____