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## ST. ANNE'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

### DRUGS POLICY

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*“The purpose of a Drugs Education Programme is to provide opportunities for young people to acquire knowledge, understanding and skills which enable them to consider the effects of drugs and other substances on themselves and on others. It enables them to make informed and responsible decisions about the use of such substances within the context of a healthy lifestyle.”*

DENI Misuse of Drugs – 1996

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#### INTRODUCTION

At St. Anne's we believe that young people in today's society are exposed to messages about drug use from an early age.

Research cites personal inadequacy, a lack of self-esteem and peer-pressure as the main reasons for drug misuse among young people. This places a responsibility on the school to “better prepare young people for adult life.” (Education Reform (NI) Order 1989).

Drugs education should therefore form an integral part of the school curriculum.

The policy follows the guidance given in the Education Authority's Drug Education Policy Document. It complements our Discipline Policy, Health and Safety Policy, Pastoral Care Policy, and our Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy. It does not exist in isolation.

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#### THE RANGE OF SUBSTANCES

The school's policy on drugs education covers any substance under the DENI definition:

“A drug is any substance which, when taken, has the affect of altering 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
- volatile substances such as glues and aerosols
- illegal drugs such as cannabis and ecstasy

## PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING AND REPORTING INCIDENTS

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A suspected drug related incident is described as:

- Suspect drugs 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 being under the influence of drugs

When an incident occurs the member of staff involved should:

- Make the situation safe
- Send for support
- Administer first aid if necessary
- If an illegal drug is found it should be secured in a safe place until dealt with by the police
- Report the incident

The incident in the first place will be reported to the designated teacher and then to the principal, who will contact the juvenile liaison officer in this area. The parents will also be contacted and made aware of the situation. The incident will be recorded by the teacher involved and by the designated teacher. A Record of Action will be filled out. One copy will be sent to the E.A. and a copy will be retained for the school's confidential file. The Board of Governors will also be informed.

School staff are not permitted to search pupils' clothing or possessions. However, it is acceptable to ask the pupil to empty pockets and school bags. Staff may search school property such as desks.

Procedures relating to discipline will be carried out in line with the Discipline Policy.

## AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE DRUGS EDUCATION PROGRAMME

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AIMS:

- to promote positive attitudes towards personal health
- to develop self-discipline and self-respect
- to build pupil self-esteem
- to develop decision-making skills which may delay or prevent the onset of experimentation.
- to inform pupils of the effects of drug abuse, and the risks involved
- to help pupils understand how they can positively influence their peers.
- to develop and understanding of themselves and others as individuals.

## OBJECTIVES:

Pupils should be able to:

- Understand their own personality, needs, abilities and interests.
- Understand the process of reasoning required to make informed choices.
- Explore their own attitudes to drugs and drug issues.
- Develop coping strategies to deal with peer pressure.
- Develop self-discipline.
- Understand how some drugs affect the body.
- Be aware of the benefits of healthy lifestyles.

## ALCOHOL AND TOBACCO

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The school premises are an alcohol-free zone. The school does not allow any alcohol to be brought onto or consumed within school premises. This applies to visitors, staff and pupils.

The school is a restricted environment with no one being permitted to smoke on the school premises.

## PRESCRIBED MEDICINES AND SOLVENTS

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At the start of the school year, parents must complete a medical form indicating any medical illness their child has. In most cases, prescription medicines can be given at home before and after school. In exceptional circumstances, if a pupil needs to bring a prescribed medicine to school, the following guidelines must be adhered to:

1. Only prescription medicine labelled with the pupil's name can be given.
2. A letter from the parent explaining the nature of the illness and the dosage required must be sent with the pupil, or the child's parent should speak directly to the child's teacher.
3. The medicine must immediately be given to the class teacher.
4. The class teacher will store the medicine in a secure place and ensure that only the pupil for whom the medicine is prescribed, takes the medicine.
5. Pupils are not permitted to take any shop/chemist – bought “cough drops”, lozenges, etc.

Pupils are not permitted to bring solvents or aerosols into school. This includes (but not limited to) correction fluid and pens, tippex thinners, glue, marker pens and spray deodorants. Pupils are permitted to bring felt tip pens to school.