



Community Services: Education

Argyll House
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To: Heads of all Educational Establishments

Dear Colleague

Drug and alcohol abuse

1 Introduction and background

Drug and alcohol misuse and its consequences are of concern to us all. The majority of children and young people of early years and school age will not become involved with drugs or incidents of drug misuse. It is however accepted that some will become involved in misusing drugs, alcohol and solvents. Where there is a chance of such incidents occurring, there must be clear guidelines in place for the management of these incidents. All educational establishments fall into this category. Heads of establishments must ensure that guidelines are in place, and well understood by each member of staff, to enable incidents of drug misuse to be managed effectively, and ensure that the safety and welfare of everyone within the educational establishment continues to be of paramount importance.

Drug related incidents involving controlled drugs should be taken to include:

- drug related litter on or near educational premises;
- suspicion and allegations about activities in and out of the educational establishment;
- disclosure about drug misuse taking place in the educational establishment and during out-of-establishment activities;
- child or young person who display symptoms of drug misuse;
- child, young person or adult with drugs on educational establishment premises, trips or transport;
- child, young person or adult taking controlled drugs on educational establishment premises, trips or transport;

- child, young person or adult selling controlled drugs on educational establishment premises, trips or transport.

There should be no doubt as to the seriousness of incidents of drug or alcohol misuse. As well as putting at risk a child or young person's health and wellbeing, any involvement in such misuse can have an adverse effect on attainment and future life chances. It is important that such incidents are dealt with in a forthright manner. As well as providing a deterrent to others contemplating involvement in future incidents of drug or alcohol misuse, a clear message will be conveyed to the community at large, regarding the unacceptability of such incidents in educational establishments.

2 Establishment strategies

It is important that every establishment should be able to respond appropriately to issues concerning drug and solvent misuse. It is expected, therefore, that all heads of establishments will do the following.

- Have strategies for drugs education in line with Argyll and Bute's Framework for the development of health and wellbeing across the curriculum (2009).
- Ensure the delivery of effective drugs education programmes as part of children and young people's health and wellbeing curriculum. These should meet the Substance misuse outcomes and experiences from a Curriculum for Excellence (2009).
- Take steps to inform and educate parents about drugs education, drugs misuse and the establishment's policy on drugs. Approaches to educating parents on the topic of drugs may be undertaken in collaboration with the local police community involvement branch. Establishment policy and curriculum issues should be dealt with at a parents' meeting or in written communication with parents.
- Ensure that staff are well informed about drugs and committed to the establishment's policy on drugs. It is recommended that the establishment involve the police in staff development sessions on drugs. In view of changing patterns of drug misuse staff information should be reviewed and updated as required.
- Consider carefully, in planning drugs education programmes, how personnel other than the police might be involved, eg health professionals.

3 Being prepared

In general terms, in order to deal appropriately with incidents, heads of establishments should do the following.

- Ensure that they have a policy, in line with advice contained in this circular, to deal with incidents. The policy may be free-standing or contained within a more general policy dealing with discipline or aspects of behaviour.
- Maintain contact with key personnel in the police and other agencies. It is important to seek advice at the earliest possible moment when dealing with incidents.
- Have an emergency procedure. Safety is of primary importance when a young person is discovered to be unconscious or semi-conscious or acting in a bizarre manner while under the influence of drugs. The procedures described in appendix 2 of the guidance to heads of establishments on first aid provision should be operated (attached for ease of reference).
- Ensure that staff are aware of their responsibilities under the law. It is important that staff are aware of the legal implications of discovering a young person with a controlled substance and how they would be expected to deal with such an event.

4 Dealing with incidents

The procedures are split into two parts, incidents where medical help is required, and those not requiring medical help. It is vital that the health needs of the child or young person are fully met before any formal investigation involving the child or the young person is undertaken. This should not preclude determining the involvement of others, and finding out from others the facts of the incident.

The head of establishment must ensure that the appropriate steps have been carried out and reported using the reporting form (appendix 1).

A Procedures to follow if medical help is required

- 1 Provide first aid as necessary, minimise the risk of the child/young person damaging himself/herself or others.

And/or

Send for an ambulance. Arrange for appropriate adult to accompany child/young person to hospital.

- 2 Send for head of establishment (depute if head unavailable)
- 3 Access another member of staff for assistance.
- 4 Arrange for safe removal of drug-related litter (in accordance with management procedures).
- 5 Retain evidence (including vomit, for medical analysis) if at all possible.

Head of establishment (or depute/designated person) to do the following.

- 6 Contact police for advice and/or involvement as necessary.
- 7 Inform parent(s)/carer(s) of incident and that police have been contacted, invite parent(s)/carer(s) to come to establishment.
- 8 Arrange for staff and other children/young people involved to be interviewed, with witnesses, to establish the facts of the incident and obtain corroboration. Records of all meetings must be kept.
- 9 Inform Executive Director of Community Services or head of service as soon as possible.
- 10 Arrange interview of children or young people concerned when recovered. Records must be kept.
- 11 Inform the chair of the parent council that an incident has occurred and discuss the nature of the information which will be given to parents/carers.
- 12 Once investigation has finished, give consideration to the guidance that has been given in terms of excluding the child or young person and involving others such as social work staff.
- 13 Complete Managing incidents of drug abuse in educational establishments (see appendix 1) and submit to Executive Director of Community Services and head of service.

B Procedures to follow if medical help is not required

- 1 Send for head of establishment (depute, if head unavailable).
- 2 Access another member of staff for assistance.
- 3 Minimise risk of child/young person damaging him/herself or others. Reasonable restraint may be necessary. Retain evidence (including vomit) if at all possible.
- 4 Child or young person (and belongings) should be taken to a private room and supervised by preferably two members of staff.
5. Arrange for safe removal of drug-related litter (in accordance with set management procedures).

Head of establishment (or depute/designated person) to do the following.

- 6 Remind child/young person of policy regarding drug misuse and the procedures to be followed to investigate the incident, including the intention to contact parents/carers and police.

- 7 Ask child or young person to hand over any drug related material. If reluctant to do so, explain that request will be repeated in presence of parent(s)/carer(s) and possibly police.

Section 5(4) of the Misuse of Drugs Act states that it is acceptable for a person to take possession of a controlled drug if: "*knowing or suspecting it to be a controlled drug, he took possession of it for the purpose of delivering it into the custody of a person lawfully entitled to take custody of it and that as soon as possible after taking possession of it he took all such steps as were reasonably open to him to deliver it into the custody of such a person*".

This legitimises the position of a teacher/adult to whom drugs may be handed over.

- 8 Contact police for advice and/or involvement as necessary.
- 9 Inform parent(s)/carer(s) of incident and that police have been contacted, invite parent(s)/carer(s) to come to the establishment. See important notes below.
- 10 Inform the Executive Director of Community Services or head of service as soon as possible.
- 11 Indicate to the chair of the parent council that an incident has occurred and discuss the nature of the information which will be given to parents/carers.
- 12 Arrange interview of child or young person, with witnesses, to establish the facts of the incident, at what level the child or young person was involved, and whether other children and young people were involved. Records must be kept.
- 13 Arrange interview of staff and other children and young people involved, with witnesses to further establish the facts of the incident and obtain corroboration. Records must be kept.
- 14 Once investigation has finished, give consideration to the guidance which has been given in terms of excluding a child or young person and involving others such as social work staff.
15. Complete Managing incidents of drug abuse in educational establishments (appendix 1) and submit to Executive Director of Community Services and head of service.

5 Important notes

(a) Parent/carer and police involvement

If parent(s)/carer(s) arrive before the police, the parent(s)/carer(s) should be allowed access to their child with a teacher present. If police arrive before parents/carers, the police should be asked to wait until the parent(s)/carer(s) arrive. However

circumstances may dictate the police taking immediate action. In such cases a teacher must be present during the subsequent interview.

Where every effort has been made to trace the parent(s)/carer(s), or emergency contact without success, the emergency stand by team of social work should be contacted to help with supervision.

(b) Alcohol related incidents

For alcohol incidents, the standard management and pastoral care procedures of the school should be followed, with the completion of Managing incidents of drug abuse in educational establishments (appendix 1) being submitted to the Executive Director of Community Services or head of service.

For alcohol related incidents contact with the police is left to the discretion of the head of establishment. However if a criminal activity is suspected, this should be reported.

(c) Recording of incidents

All drug-related incidents must be recorded using the report form (appendix 1). A copy must be sent to the Executive Director of Community Services and head of service, with an additional copy kept in the child's or young person's file and kept there for 5 years. It should be transferred, as necessary, during the child's or young person's career. The record will be subject to the Data Protection Act.

(d) Informing staff

Without disclosing the name(s) of the young person(s) involved, the establishment's staff should be informed that:

A drug related incident has occurred in the establishment; certain action, in keeping with the establishment's procedures, has been taken pending further investigation; the incident may not be an isolated one and staff should be alert.

(e) The media

Staff in Argyll House will advise the press office that an incident has occurred and what action has been taken.

The following action should be taken in any response to press interest.

Refer all enquiries to the press office (01546 606855). By directing enquiries to the press office, difficult or oppressive media interest can be defused with an appropriate press office response. A response to the media will not be made by the press officer without consultation with the education office and head teacher/head of the establishment in which the incident has occurred.

It is appreciated that dealing with drugs incidents is a difficult matter requiring staff to be sensitive in their approach. Your co-operation in this area is appreciated.

Yours sincerely

Executive Director of Community Services

March 2010

Appendix 1

Argyll and Bute Council : Community Services : Education

Managing incidents of drug abuse in educational establishments

Record of drug related incident

Name of establishment	Date of incident	Date and time reported	
		Reported by	
Name of child(ren)/young person(s) involved	Class	Date of birth	Home phone number

Description of incident

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Category of incident	Action taken	By whom	Parent/carer contacted and when
Drug related litter on or near establishment premises			
Suspicion, allegation and disclosure in and out of establishment activities			
Symptoms of drug misuse			
Child/young person/parents/carers with drugs of establishment premises/trip/transport			
Child/young person/parents/carers selling/supplying drugs on establishment premises/trip/transport			

Drug type (if known) or description	Removed by	Where retained	Receipt given and countersigned

Contacts made (where appropriate)	Action taken	By whom	Contact time	Arrival time
Police				
Ambulance				
Other health professionals				
Health promotion department				
Education and social work services				
Child protection team				
Environmental health				
Local drug support agency				
Other (please state)				

Child/young person interview details

If a member of staff is required to be present, a summary should be detailed below

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Record of events

Time	Details	Outcome
Overall outcome(s), including sanctions		

Head of establishment signature..... Witnessed by

Title..... Title.....

Date..... Date.....

Appendix 2

Drugs situations - medical emergencies

The procedures for an emergency apply when a child or young person or others are at immediate risk of harm. A person who is unconscious, having trouble breathing, seriously confused or disoriented or who has taken a harmful toxic substance, should be responded to as an emergency.

Your main responsibility is for any child or young person at immediate risk, but you also need to ensure the well-being and safety of others. Put into practice your school's first aid procedures. **If in any doubt, call medical help.**

Always:

- assess the situation;
- if a medical emergency, send for medical help and ambulance.

Before assistance arrives

If the person is conscious:

- ask the person what has happened and to identify any drug used;
- collect any drug samples and leave any vomit for medical analysis;
- do not induce vomiting;
- keep the person under observation, warm, quiet and conscious.

If the person is unconscious:

- ensure that the person can breathe and place in recovery position;
- do not move the person if a fall is likely to have led to spinal or other serious injury which may not be obvious;
- do not give anything by mouth;
- do not attempt to make the person sit or stand;
- do not leave the person unattended or in the charge of another child or young person.

When medical help arrives:

- pass on any information available including vomit and any drug samples.