

Collaton St Mary C. of E. Primary School
Statement of Policy on Substance Use and Misuse

Rationale

- ❖ The school does not condone either the misuse of drugs and alcohol by members of the school, or the illegal supply of these substances.
- ❖ The school is committed to the health and safety of its members and will take action to safeguard their well-being.
- ❖ The school acknowledges the importance of its pastoral role in the welfare of young people, and through the general ethos of the school, will seek to persuade any pupils in need of support to come forward.

Guidelines

In response to our shared concerns at a local and national level, we wish to state that as part of its care for the welfare of its pupils, the school believes it has a duty to inform and educate young people on the consequences of drug use and misuse. The school takes a pro-active stance on this matter, believing that health education is a vital part of the Personal and Social education of every pupil. This will be undertaken in an age related manner, in line with childrens' development.

Fundamental to our school's values and practice is the principle of sharing the responsibility for education of young people with parents, by keeping them informed and involved at all times. Effective communication and co-operation is essential to the successful implementation of this policy.

Whilst we acknowledge that the number of young people who use and misuse substances is rising, it is seen as important to recognise that a larger number of young people are choosing not to use or misuse substances. We will continue to support their differing needs, by developing strategies to tackle peer pressure.

We believe and support the following educational aims in respect of substance use and misuse:

- ❖ to enable pupils to make healthy, informed choices by increasing knowledge, challenging attitudes and developing and practising skills
- ❖ to provide accurate information about substances
- ❖ to increase understanding about the implications and possible consequences of use and misuse
- ❖ to encourage an understanding for those experiencing or likely to experience substance use
- ❖ to widen understanding about related health and social issues

- ❖ to seek to minimise the risks that users and potential users face
- ❖ to enable young people to identify sources of appropriate personal support.

These aims are fulfilled through aspects of the pupil's experiences in the taught curriculum, the informal curriculum and through opportunities for extra-curricular activities. We deliver in the taught curriculum mainly through PSHE, Science and English areas, but other opportunities to reinforce learning will occur in other parts of the teaching programme. The school actively co-operates with other agencies such as Community Police, Social Services, LEA and Health and Drug Agencies to deliver its commitment to Drugs Education and to deal with incidents of substance use and misuse. Visitors who support the school will be informed of the values held within this policy.

The Roles of the Head Teacher and Governing Body

The head teacher takes overall responsibility for the policy and its implementation, for liaison with the Governing Body, parents, LEA and appropriate outside agencies and for the appointment within the school of the Head as Substance Co-ordinator, who will have general responsibility for handling the daily implementation of this policy. The head teacher will ensure that all staff dealing with substance issues are adequately supported and trained.

If there was substance misuse supply on the premises, and following discussion between staff members who know the pupil well, parents will be informed at the earliest opportunity by the head teacher. The school and the parents can then work together to support the young person involved.

The Governing Body will be involved in substance education and substance related incidents in the same manner as any other matter concerning the direction of the school.

The school will consider each substance incident individually and recognises that a variety of responses will be necessary to deal with incidents. The school will consider very carefully the implications of any action it may take, It seeks to balance the interests of the pupil involved, the other school members and the local community. Permanent exclusion is seen as a last resort as it may only transfer the problem.

Regarding the welfare of staff, the school will follow the Council Policy on Drug and Alcohol Misuse as part of its Health and Safety Policy, which is designed to reduce to a minimum the possible effects of substance misuse on the user, other employees and the environment.

The philosophy of LEC is:

Prevention is a range of strategies which are designed to create a change in knowledge, attitudes and behaviour over a period of time. The strategies involve three strands: provision of information, acquisition of skills and promotions of self-esteem or self-worth, which will enable the individual to make a decision not to use drugs and be able to assert him/herself in going through with this decision.

In order for prevention to be effective, it must involve all aspects of the individual's community, from education to law enforcement, so that the message is consistent, reliable, and accurate.

Prevention is a long-term process as it involves creating awareness that there is a need for a behaviour change, finding information to reinforce the awareness (research), making the decision to change the behaviour, actually managing to change it, and finally creating some sort of social policy to ensure that the behaviour change is universally maintained. The stages listed below illustrate the progression. The prevention process is gradual: the first stage, raising awareness, takes the longest time. Thereafter, the longer the process continues, the more people become involved, and the longer-lasting the impact.

Stages in the Prevention Process:

- ❖ Creating Awareness
- ❖ Getting the Facts
- ❖ Thinking About Changing Behaviour
- ❖ Examining the Social Consequences
- ❖ Changing Behaviour
- ❖ Making a Lifetime Commitment to Behaviour Change

Life Education Centres use this model of prevention because we seek to change or create a certain behaviour in children and young people over a period of time. By starting with children in their formative years and providing them with information and decision-making skills, it is hoped that their behaviour will be that of healthy individuals who do not use drugs. In our early programmes, we are laying the foundations of an understanding of good health and what affects it, so that by the time we directly address the issue of drugs, the children have acquired information and skills to assist them in participating in sensitive discussions on the subject. By involving all sectors of the community in our work, we hope to create the environment that is required for effective drug prevention.

Practicalities

The Governors will use the Life Education Centre, funded by Rotary Club sponsorship to work with all the children in the school at least once in each key stage of their time with us.

LEC works in the following way:

Life Education aims to be a cross-curricular as possible in order to allow teachers to fit the resource into an already bulging curriculum. Following the prevention model, LEC aims to:

- ❖ raise awareness and provide information
- ❖ develop and apply skills
- ❖ engender a strong sense of self-esteem or self-worth

If a thematic approach is used, work from the LEC resource can achieve these aims in all subject areas.

LEC and parents

Prevention of drug use is a community issue and cannot be seen as solely the responsibility of the school and Educators. Where school, family and community viewpoints are shared, progress will be made towards achieving healthy lifestyles. Involvement by parents will help them to understand the reasons some young people use substances and give opportunities to look at practical ways they can help children avoid using substances which may be harmful to them.

Involvement by parents and the community may encourage parents to focus on their own use of alcohol and other drugs and the influence of this on children. It is therefore essential that parental involvement is encouraged by holding parents' sessions either in the mobile classroom itself or showing the LEC Parents' Video and holding a discussion in school. It is important that these sessions are held at a time when parents can come.

LEC also offers resources especially designed for parents. The book **How To Talk To Your Child About Drugs**, and the video **You Make The Difference**, can be used in a meeting at school or as resources either bought by the school and loaned to parents or bought by parents themselves. The advantage of both these resources is that they do not require use of the mobile classroom so the prevention message can be reinforced in the normal environment.

