

# South Otterington Church of England V.C. Primary School



## Drugs Education Policy

## **Drugs education policy statement**

This policy statement concerns educating children about drugs. There are many kinds of drugs. Some like tobacco and alcohol are legal, others like ecstasy, cannabis, certain solvents, hallucinogens and a number of amphetamines, sedatives and tranquillisers are not. We will strive to give information about drugs and related health issues which is accurate and up to date of the effects, risks and legal aspects of drug taking.

## **Young People and Drugs**

The average age of first misuse of drugs appears to be falling and the range of drugs available is expanding. Drugs misuse now affects many communities in this country and crosses gender, ethnic and social boundaries. Research has shown that primary school children are surprisingly aware of both illegal drugs and the misuse of other substances. Although very few will have used illegal drugs, studies show that a few will have inhaled solvents and a number will have tried cigarettes or alcohol.

Children and young people are influenced by information and images about drugs from a variety of sources: the home, through the mass media and popular music and by mixing with older people who have knowledge of, or use, drugs.

## **Signs That May Indicate Drug Taking**

All of the following signs can be caused by many other psychological and behavioural changes in addition to an involvement with drugs, e.g. growing up, bullying, etc.

- the keeping of secret and private places;
- the keeping of a friend's belongings for 'safe keeping';
- the loss of interest in school, hobbies, sport, friends;
- association with a new group of friends;
- unexplained drowsiness/tiredness;
- unusual, sudden or regular changes in mood;
- unexpected or excessive aggressiveness;
- the loss of appetite;
- the loss of money or other objects from the home;
- the uncharacteristic telling of lies;
- the presence of unusual stains, marks or smells on the body, clothes or around the home.

## **Drugs Education: Aims and Principles**

The purpose of drugs education should be to give young people the knowledge, skills and attitudes to appreciate the benefits of a healthy lifestyle and relate these to their own actions, both now and in their future lives. Programmes which rely simply on slogans or vivid and frightening images are not necessarily the best means of achieving this purpose; perversely, they may glamorise drug misuse.

## Specific Aims

- To develop positive pro-active attitudes, patterns of behaviour, lifestyles, values and skills in the pupils towards their personal Health and Safety, e.g. those appropriate to informed decision making.
- To approach Drugs Education by a process of enquiry and investigation through practical projects and surveys - to include observation and analysis.
- To give pupils knowledge and understanding of the following in order for them to make informed choices:
  - the use/misuse and dangers of drugs such as alcohol, tobacco, medicines, etc.
  - the safety of the individual in different environments, e.g. at home, at school, at work, during leisure activities, etc.
- To endow pupils with responsibility to themselves and others particularly in relation to drug practices.

## Key Principles

A number of key principles have been found to underpin effective approaches to drug education.

1. the introduction of appropriate drug education at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2;
2. content and methodology which are appropriate to the needs and maturities of pupils, including those with special educational needs and which reflect pupils' local circumstances and current knowledge and attitudes towards drugs;
3. training and support for teachers in the planning and delivery of drug education;
4. regular review, evaluation and revision of policies and programmes.

## Drugs education within the curriculum

**Science** - In Year 6 pupils are taught to: recognise the impact of drugs and lifestyle on the way their bodies function. Pupils consider biological information and health and safety issues.

## The Content of Drug Education Programmes

As a school we must as a minimum teach those elements of the science programmes of study which relate to drugs; however we encourage all children to live a healthy lifestyle.

In developing our own programme we need to consider the implications of the following points:

- pupils with special educational needs may require additional support. It may be more suitable for some pupils to follow the content associated with another key stage but presented in an age-appropriate way;
- pupils' awareness of, and attitudes towards, drugs may vary between localities and communities. Pupils' needs should be considered in relation to their circumstances.

- Patterns of drug misuse vary over time. We may need to take account of this and to adjust our drug education programmes accordingly.

## **Drugs education in the classroom**

### **Who should Teach Drug Education?**

Drug education is best led by the classroom teachers, who have an established and continuing relationship with the pupils. Although teachers do not need to be specialists to teach the programme successfully, they do need a knowledge of key facts, and a clear understanding of their implications for young people. Access to good quality training and information resources will help to build teacher confidence.

Some pupils may choose to mention instances of drug misuse in class, or approach a teacher individually. While teachers will want to be supportive, it is important they make clear to pupils that they may not be able to guarantee absolute confidentiality.

Pupils may sometimes know more about certain drugs and local circumstances relating to drug misuse than their teachers. Teachers should establish factual information about the drugs most likely to be encountered and be wary of misconceptions surrounding their use and misuse.

### **Teaching Materials and Approaches**

A wide range of teaching approaches can be used in drug education. There is a place for direct teacher input and the use of audio-visual material. This may be supplemented by activities such as small group discussions; questionnaires; case study material; role play and other drama techniques. The school has a range of resources including the Tacade Skills for the Primary School child files; Health for Life 2 (Nelson) and I am, I know, I can. These offer classroom strategies and activities based on extensive research with pupils.

### **Involving Parents, Carers and Governors**

We will endeavour to involve parents, carers and governors in drug education by involving them in school curriculum and policy development.

### **Training and Support for Teachers**

Access to good quality training and information/ resources will help to build teacher confidence. The Headteacher is the co-ordinator for drugs education.