



Newcastle upon Tyne
Local Education Authority

**HANDLING INCIDENTS OF SUBSTANCE USE
IN SCHOOLS POLICY**



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FOREWORD

Introduction

At Bridgewater our policies are regularly reviewed. This reflects current practice within school and all related government guidance and statutory requirements.

This Handling Incidents of Substance Use in Schools Policy has been written by Newcastle upon Tyne LEA with the support of Northumbria Police, in order to demonstrate commitment to effective drug and alcohol education and a co-ordinated response to drug-related incidents in schools within the Authority.

It has been informed by the following parliamentary acts and key publications:

- Misuse of Drugs Act (1971)
- Police and Criminal Evidence Act (1984)
- Education Reform Act (1988)
- DfEE Circular 4/95: Drug Prevention and Schools
- OFSTED Drug Education in Schools (1997)
- Tackling Drugs to Build a Better Britain:
The Government's 10-Year Strategy for Tackling Drugs Misuse (1998)
- DfEE Guidance Protecting Young People:
Good Practice in Drug Education in Schools and the Youth Service (1998)
- DfEE Circular 10/99 Social Inclusion: Pupil Support
- SCODA The Right Approach: Quality Standards in Drug Education (1999)
- SCODA The Right Response:
Managing and Making Policy for Drug-related Incidents in Schools (1999)
- Guidelines on the Role of Health Professionals and Others in Schools: Newcastle City Council (2000)
- OFSTED Drug Education in Schools: An Update September (2000)

It has also been distributed to staff, governors and key partners for consultation.

RATIONALE

This document has been primarily written to support schools in handling incidents of drug use in school. It is intended that schools will use it to assist them in both writing and implementing their handling incidents policy.

For some time now schools have been requesting a more considered, co-ordinated approach to this area, particularly when an incident arises which has not been previously experienced and consequently there is no history to draw on. Additionally, the question of what to do with the substance found or confiscated can be an issue and so the involvement of Northumbria Police is crucial to the process.

The document has the support and involvement of several services within the Education and Libraries Directorate as well as Northumbria Police and Newcastle's Drug Action Team. It has been written taking account of the needs and welfare of young people and staff as well as the codes of practice of all parties involved.

THE CONTEXT AND KEY ISSUES NATIONALLY AND LOCALLY

- Rising number of drug-related exclusions.
- Increased youth crime.
- High levels of teenage pregnancy.
- Increasing disaffection of many young people.
- Evidence of high numbers of young people actively using drugs.

The LEA support schools in responding to the key aim of the Government's 10-year drug strategy (1998):

“to help young people resist drug misuse in order to achieve their full potential in society.”

SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES

Although schools have no statutory obligation to have a drug education and handling incidents policy, they have a duty to respond to the 1988 Education Reform Act requirement that they should:

“promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils ... and prepare such pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.”

Schools are supported in responding to Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) and DfES requirements as well as the LEA’s Education Development Plan:

- To reduce the incidence of substance use on school premises and deal effectively with any of this which may lead to fixed term or permanent exclusion (ref LEA guidelines on exclusions).
- To deliver an appropriate and co-ordinated drug education curriculum which provides knowledge and understanding about drugs both legal and illegal. The curriculum should also help develop skills for decision-making.
- To respond sensitively and effectively to drug-related incidents in schools.
- To promote and develop an appropriate response to the safe disposal of substances and paraphernalia found on school premises.

DEFINITIONS

Drug / Substance: Mean the same thing – legal, illegal, prescription, non-prescription medicines, solvents, alcohol and tobacco. However, the focus of the policy is on the handling of incidents relating to illegal substances. Schools may refer to other policies where tobacco and alcohol are concerned.

Drug Use: The use of any of the above which may cause harm, whether through intoxication, breach of school rules or the law or the possibility of future health problems, although such harm may not be immediately perceptible.

Staff: All people employed within school establishments – teaching and non-teaching, permanent and temporary, when on school site or on school business.

School: Whole school premises and parameters within off-site and residential visits.

NB: Guidance for administering medication on school premises is still given under the LEA medication in Schools Policy written in partnership with Newcastle City Health Trust. This can be found in all schools in the “Health Help File”.

DRUG EDUCATION

In devising and delivering the curriculum, schools are encouraged to respond to guidance from The Right Approach (SCODA, 1999). Drug Education will be inclusive of all students and will be a whole curriculum issue. Drug education can be delivered through statutory National Curriculum Science, PSHE Guidelines and on an opportunistic level through pastoral and tutorial work and in national and local initiatives. It focuses on both the factual drug awareness-raising, eg physiological and psychological effects on a person – and life-skills based programme to promote informed choice in young people.

Schools will be encouraged to work with key partners (LEA Healthy Schools Team, Northumbria Police Youth Issues Officers, City Health Trust, etc) to keep themselves up to date with drug education developments and make full use of training, which increases drug awareness and the scope of their responses to this crucial area of the curriculum.

The Healthy Schools Team is actively working with its schools to support them in the implementation, review and development of rigorous and practicable policies and programmes for drug education. They can be contacted on Tel: 274 3620.

MANAGING DRUG-RELATED INCIDENTS

This Policy will work to safeguard the pastoral welfare and safety of pupils and staff whilst protecting the legal status of all members of the school community. All schools will be advised on developing a protocol for managing drug-related incidents in school, which indicates to all staff how they might respond in such a wide range of drug-related situations.

This protocol should pertain to any incident occurring on school premises or during an off-site or residential visit.

Advice and support is available from the LEA's Healthy Schools Team on Tel: 274 3620, Northumbria Police on tel: 221 8216 and others as well as key government publications and the most recent, *The Right Response* (SCODA, 1999) and *Circular 10/99* (DfEE 1999).

The Drug-Related Incident flow chart (Appendix 1) provides a guide to the steps which may be taken in a range of scenarios relating to use of, and discovery of substances on or off school premises.

The following chart on Incident Reported to Drug Co-ordinator (Appendix 2) follows on from this with a more detailed breakdown of individual substances and how schools can deal with each of these.

Some issues within the two flow charts merit additional exploration:

Searching Pupils

If there are strong grounds for suspecting that a pupil is in possession of a controlled substance then steps must be taken to recover it. The 2010 White Paper gave increased power to schools to search.

In the presence of an adult witness, a member of staff may search a pupil's desk or locker where there is reasonable cause to believe it contains unlawful items, including illegal drugs. A pupil's bag may be searched by a member of staff without consent. Where pupils are suspected of concealing illegal drugs on their person, every effort should be made to secure the voluntary production of any unlawful substances for example by asking them to turn out their pockets.

Staff do have the right to search the pupil without his / her consent.

Staff could give a pupil a choice of two options at this point; to surrender the substance to a member of staff or to surrender it to the police. In the majority of cases, pupils will choose the former option. If such a situation were to occur again however, it might prove helpful to ask the parents to come in to discuss events with them. The threat alone of contacting parents can often cause a previously unhelpful pupil to co-operate.

Interviewing Pupils by Staff

A clear policy of confidentiality and its boundaries must be given and explained to pupils at the outset. Where a young person discloses to a member of staff that he or she is taking drugs, no guarantee of confidentiality can be given. It may be beneficial for the staff involved to apply the same principles to drug incidents 'interviews' as they would if concerned about activities such as aggressive behaviour or theft.

Interviewing the Pupil by Designated Officer

Only in extreme circumstances will the police decide to interview the pupil on school premises. Where possible a parent or independent appropriate adult will be invited and this will not usually be the teacher. The involvement at interview of another adult only applies to juveniles aged 17 or under.

Circular 4/95 adds 'in exceptional cases the police may interview pupils on school premises, with the Headteacher's agreement and provided efforts have been made to inform the pupil's parents.'

Contacting Parents

Ideally, the teacher should first negotiate the contacting of parent(s) or carers with the young person concerned so that it may be done on his / her terms as far as possible. It is advisable to speak with the parent(s) face to face if possible.

Schools are under no legal obligation to inform parents and in the first instance it may be in the pupil's best interests to carefully consider parental contact. However, if parents are not initially contacted, there needs to be a clear understanding as to how this will be explained if they become involved at a later date.

In most cases it is appropriate to inform parents if their child is involved in a drug-related incident. However, there may be rare circumstances where their involvement is not initially appropriate. This might be where over-reaction by parents could have dangerous outcomes for pupils or where the parents themselves are involved in drugs either as users or suppliers. It is advisable that staff check the child protection registers and consult with others if there are any doubts about contacting parents.

Contacting the Police

Although there is no statutory requirement to do so, schools are encouraged to inform the police when illegal drugs are found on a pupil or on school premises. It is obviously important that a positive partnership between schools and the police is nurtured. The designated officer specifically in role to implement the collection and disposal of substances is key to the process. Not only is he/she fulfilling a collection and disposal service he/she will also be involved with the Healthy Schools Team in supporting the school with advice, training for staff and curriculum support.

Unless the school requests further action to be taken the pupil's name will remain confidential to the school.

Use of Visitors

Guidance and advice as to who should deliver the drug education curriculum is given within DfEE documents. This guidance states:

“Many schools find that visiting speakers such as a local Health Promotion Officer or a Community Police Officer can fulfil a valuable expert role, but there should be no question of schools abdicating their responsibility for drug education by simply arranging an outside talk or screening a video. Where outside speakers are involved, their contribution must have been properly planned as part of an overall programme. Their contribution should complement other teaching, the tone and content should match the age and maturity of the pupils involved, and teachers should always be involved so they are able to deal with any follow-up questions and concerns.”

‘Drug Prevention and Schools’ (DfEE, 1995).

This is reinforced by advice in ‘Protecting Young People’ (DfEE, 1998):

“The effectiveness of drug education depends on teachers’ contributions. Occasional interventions from experts need to be supported by the sustained contribution of trained teachers. Teachers are most aware of the needs and circumstances of their pupils, and teachers provide continuity to an ongoing educational programme.”

‘Protecting Young People’ (DfEE, 1998).

Additionally ‘developing a policy on visitors on schools as well as a checklist of steps to be taken when visitors are involved is in Newcastle’s ‘Guidelines on the Role of Health Professionals and Others in School’ (2000).

Discipline and Sanctions

The school will require a repertoire of responses in order to deal with each incident on an individual basis in order to take into account the nature and / or severity of the incident. Obviously, whether this is a first-time offence or not will be taken into account.

Pressure on schools to demonstrate their opposition to drug taking can cause decisions to be made in haste. Punishing those caught using drugs by immediately and permanently excluding them is unlikely to be the best course of action and should be avoided if at all possible.

Staff may be concerned about the message that unless an extreme measure such as permanent exclusion is used parents and others will assume that it is acceptable to be involved with drugs in school. There are, however, a range of disciplinary responses available to schools which can be used and it is for the school to develop a repertoire of responses incorporating both sanctions and counselling.

Any decision to exclude a pupil, either temporarily or permanently, is a serious one and should be seen as the final step in the process. Schools are legally obliged to follow guidelines set down in Chapter 6 of Circular 10/99 "Social Inclusion: Pupil Support" (DfEE 1999), and in particular paragraph 6.9:

"in many cases exclusion will be the appropriate course. But it is for schools to decide whether or not to exclude permanently for all incidents connected with drug misuse. Fixed period exclusion may in some cases be more appropriate. Schools need to ensure that the course of action takes into account the needs of the individuals involved (as well as their peers) both in terms of their educational and personal development and in terms of recognising that permanent exclusion may make a young person more vulnerable to exposure to drugs."

COMMUNICATION AND RESPONSE TO MEDIA

Schools are advised to make their drug education and handling incidents policies available to all staff and others on whom they impact. This includes governors, non-teaching staff and temporary staff such as supply teachers and ITT placement students. It is recommended that a policy statement outlining the school's position on drug education and handling incidents be placed in the school prospectus and therefore made available to parents.

Media

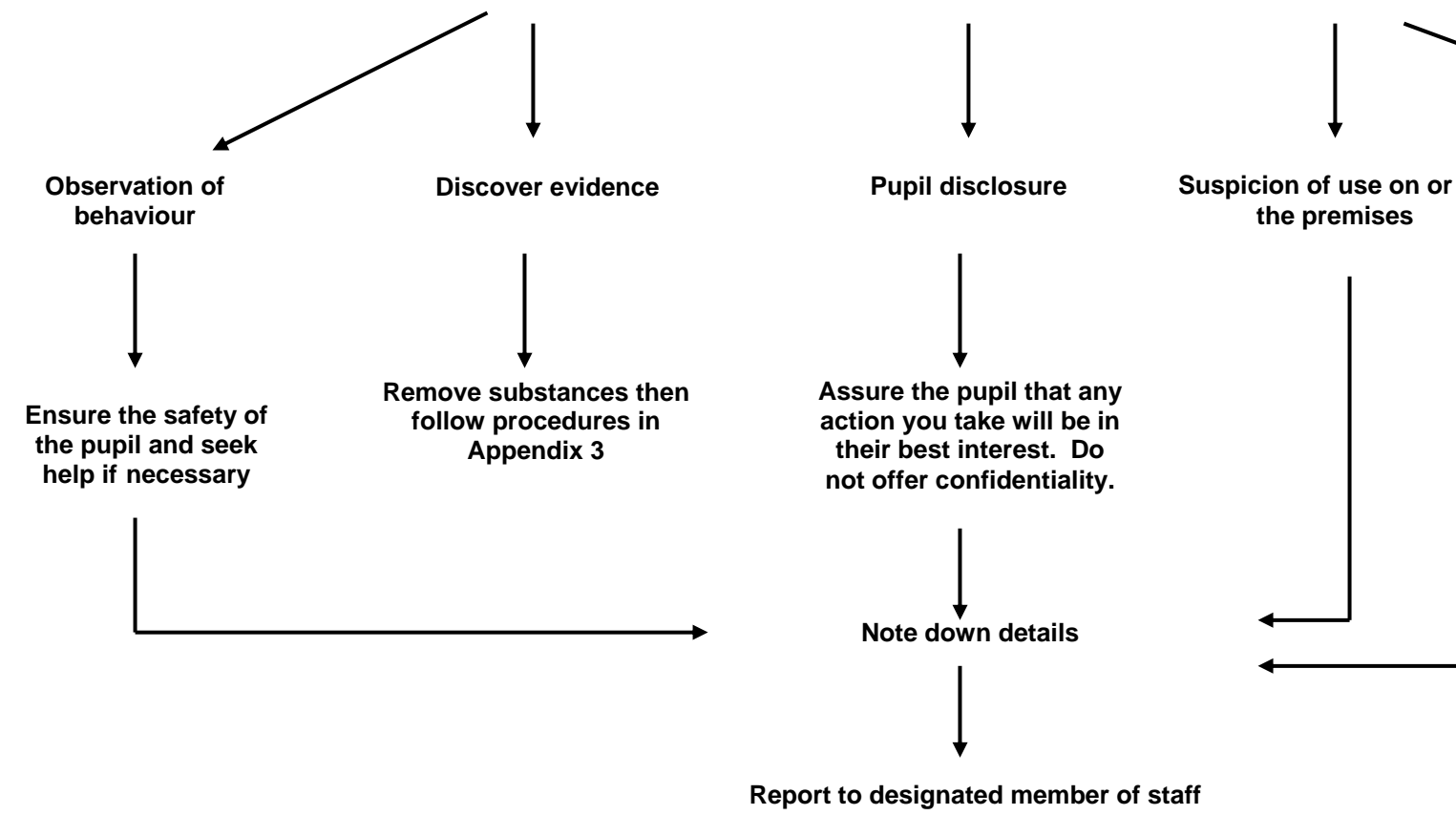
Any request by the media for information regarding the school's drug education and handling incidents policies, or a particular incident involving the school community, should be directed to the headteacher – or designated member of staff. The LEA will support the school in responding to the media in such an event.

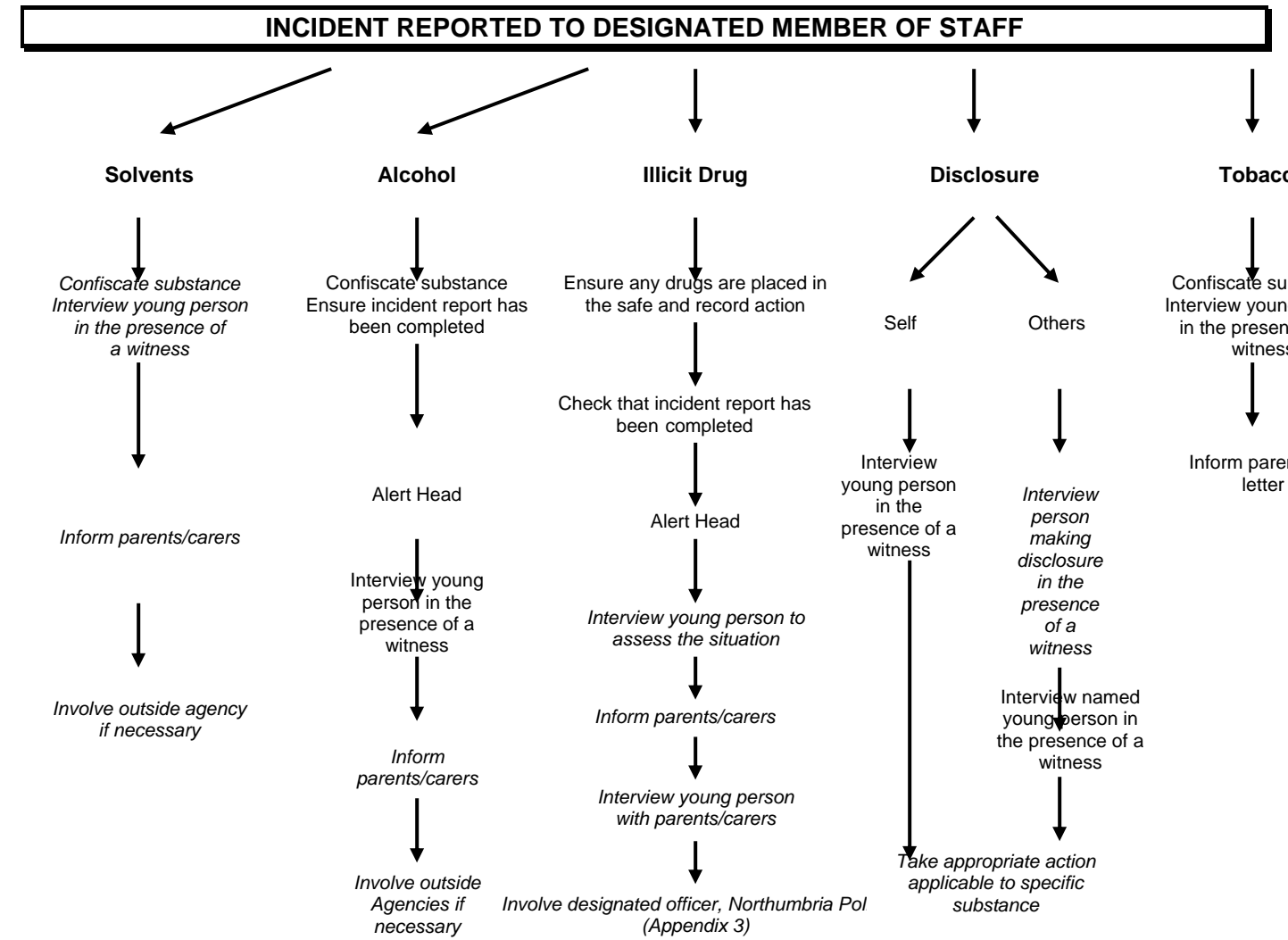
Schools will usually conduct any negotiation with the press through the Authority's Press Officer for Education, Tel: 211 5097.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Schools are advised to review their drug education and handling drug-related incidents policies biannually (OFSTED 2000) in conjunction with key partners such as governors, the LEA's Healthy Schools Team and Northumbria Police.

DRUG-RELATED INCIDENT





**NORTHUMBRIA POLICE – NEWCASTLE AREA COMMANDS
AND NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE LEA**

POLICY FOR COLLECTION OF SUBSTANCES ON SCHOOL PREMISES

The aim of this Policy is to:

- 1) Ensure drugs are collected and disposed of safely.
- 2) Provide a consistent approach.
- 3) Maintain the integrity of school staff and offer support, liaison and further advice.

On finding a suspicious substance or someone in possession of such substance, the following procedures must be followed:

- Inform designated officer, tel: 221 8216 and where additional advice is required the Healthy Schools Team, tel: 274 3620.
- If appropriate, take possession of the substance and place it in a clear plastic bag, which will be supplied by Northumbria Police. Care should be taken when handling any unknown substance. The bag should then be sealed with a numbered tag / seal and placed in a secure store to await collection. The whole procedure should be witnessed.
- Record details of incidents on substance collection form and inform the designated police officer as soon as practicable. The form should be countersigned by a suitable witness.
- No attempt should be made to identify the substance, but a brief description should be included on the form which includes a brief description of the circumstances, including where, how, and from whom the substance was taken. As previously stated the pupil's name may remain confidential.
- To provide continuity, the whole procedure should be carried out, where possible, by the member of staff who found or took possession of the substance.
- Drugs paraphernalia and needles will be dealt with in the usual way re health and safety guidelines. Needles can be disposed of by Cityworks by contacting Envirocall, Tel: 274 4000. There will be a small charge for this service.
- The designated officer will keep schools updated as to the progress of any enquiries.

SCHOOL SUBSTANCE COLLECTION FORM

To be completed by person taking possession

Person Taking Possession:	Person Completing Form:
Date, Time and Where Taken / Found:	Name of Person from Whom Taken: (this is optional and may be left blank)

Brief description of substance:	Brief Description of incident:
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Signature:	Witness:
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Further Support / Follow up Required:

Tag Number:	Time and date informed: Tel: Mob:	By whom:
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FOR POLICE USE ONLY

Date and Time Collected:	Officer Collecting: Signature:
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Any Other Information:



SOURCES OF SUPPORT

LEA

Healthy Schools Team
Tel: 0191 274 3620

Northumbria Police

Designated Officer: 0191 221 8216
Youth Issues Officers: 0191 214 6555

Discarded Needles:

Cityworks Envirocall:
Tel: 0191 274 4000

Child Protection:

Senior Education Welfare Officer:
Tel: 0191 274 0911

Other Sources of Help and Information

Health Promotion Unit:	Tel: 0191 220 5720
Streetwise (Information and Counselling)	Tel: 0191 219 5610
NECA (Young Persons' Worker)	Tel: 0191 222 1262
National Drugs Helpline	Tel: 0800 77 66 00
Drinkline	Tel: 0800 917 8282
Adfam National	Tel: 020 7928 8900

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Next review 2012

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