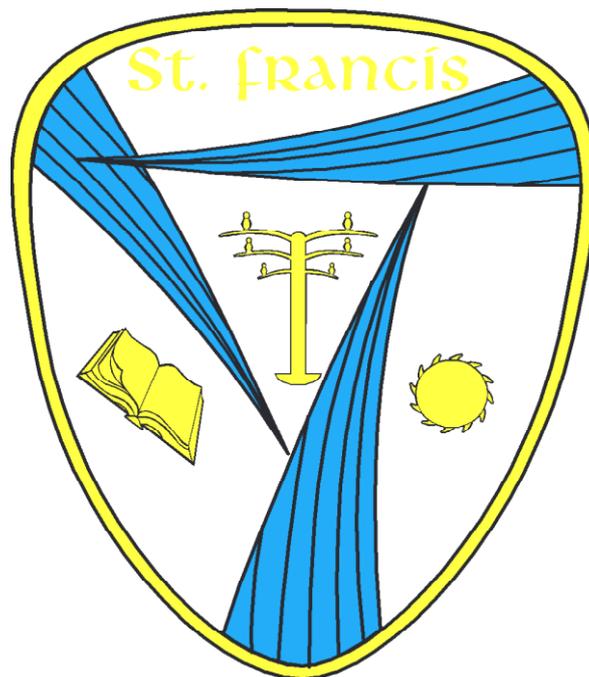


# St Francis' P.S. / Bunscoil Naomh Proinsias

## Drugs Policy



Ratified by the Board of Governors October 18<sup>th</sup> 2017

## Rationale

Our school sees its role as that of a caring community committed to the physical, mental, social, emotional, moral and spiritual health, safety and well being of our pupils and staff. In drawing up this policy consideration has been given to:

- Substance abuse **prevention**
- Methods of **intervention** if a pupil is found to be abusing drugs.

We want our pupils to make informed and responsible decisions about drugs by increasing their knowledge and by developing in them appropriate values, attitudes and skills. However, we recognise that drug misuse is a whole-community issue and that schools alone cannot solve the drugs problem; the school is only one of a number of groups and agencies which must play a part in the education of young people and we make use of their expertise where possible.

## Definitions

For the purpose of this document and in line with the guidance issued to all schools by the Department of Education (2015/23) the terms:

**‘drug’ and ‘substance’ will include any substance which, when taken, has the effect of altering the way the body works or the way a person behaves, feels, sees or thinks.**

As well as everyday substances such as tea and coffee, drugs include:

- Alcohol, tobacco and tobacco-related products, including electronic cigarettes;
- “over-the-counter” medicines, such as paracetamol;
- prescribed drugs, such as antibiotics, tranquillisers, inhalers and Ritalin;
- volatile substances, such as correcting fluids/thinners, gas lighter fuel, aerosols, glues and petrol;
- controlled drugs, such as cannabis, LSD, Ecstasy, amphetamine sulphate (speed), magic mushrooms (processed), heroin and cocaine; and
- new psychoactive substances (NPS), formerly known as legal highs\*, which contain one or more chemical substances that produce similar effects to illegal drugs and are sold as incense, salts or plant food and marked ‘not for human consumption’ to avoid prosecution;
- other substances such as amyl or butyl nitrite (known as poppers) and unprocessed magic mushrooms.

\*We no longer use the term legal high because it is misleading. The public perceived that ‘legal’ meant safe. This is not the case, as these substances are not regulated.

You can find further information on NPS at [www.drugscope.org.uk](http://www.drugscope.org.uk)

## **Ethos**

St. Francis PS/Bunscoil Naomh Proinsias will provide a safe, secure and stimulating environment, which encourages children to be health and safety conscious both in and out of school. The self-esteem and self confidence of pupils will be actively promoted by providing opportunities which will contribute widely to the life of the school and enable children to make choices, take the initiative and exercise responsibility for their own actions. We will create a learning environment in which good relationships, mutual respect and consideration for others flourish and sensitive issues can be discussed. The school ethos will actively promote the health and well-being of all staff and pupils.

## **Aims and Objectives**

- To have a clear and agreed understanding among everyone in the school community about the implications and possible consequences of drug use/misuse.
- To provide appropriate support and assistance for those pupils affected by drug-related issues.
- To make parents aware of this policy and the procedures to be implemented in the management of incidents of suspected drug misuse.
- To establish an environment in which the school is free from the misuse of all drugs.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Pupils**

- Be aware of and adhere to school rules (where relevant) in relation to drug use/misuse, including tobacco/electronic cigarettes, alcohol, over-the-counter and prescribed medication, volatile substances and controlled drugs.

### **Parents/Guardians**

- Support the school in the development and implementation of this policy, including the school's procedures for handling incidents of suspected drug misuse in line with child protection protocols.
- Support your son/daughter if they have become involved with drugs.

### **All staff (teaching and non-teaching)**

- Be alert to the possibility of drug use/misuse.
- Be familiar with the school's procedures in the handling of suspected drug-related incidents.
- It is not the responsibility of the individual staff member to investigate the circumstances surrounding an incident, however he/she should deal with any emergency procedures if necessary.
- Any information, substance or paraphernalia received should be forwarded to the Principal/Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teachers who may have to take immediate action.

### **Teaching Staff:**

In addition to the above:

- Try to create an atmosphere in the classroom in which pupils can freely contribute to discussion, safe in the knowledge that the comments, ideas and feelings of the group are valued.
- Deliver programmes such as 'Smokebusters' in Primary 6 and support workshops such as those delivered by Temperance Society NI in Primary 7.
- Support pupils in their class if necessary.
- Liaise with the Principal/Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teachers regarding any aspect of the policy, as necessary.

### **The Designated Teacher/members of the safeguarding team**

- Be responsible for co-ordinating the school's procedures for dealing with incidents of suspected drug misuse.
- Determine the circumstances surrounding any suspected drug-related incident.
- Deal with all suspected incidents in line with child protection protocols.
- Develop the preventative curriculum for Drugs awareness, e.g. Cancer Focus NI annual workshops, Smokebusters registration etc..

### **The Principal**

- Ensure that members of the Board of Governors have been consulted on and ratified the policy.

### **The Board of Governors**

- Examine and approve the completed policy prior to implementation in the school.
- Monitor suspected incidents of drug misuse on a regular basis through the provision of reports from the Designated Teacher and through the BOG link governor for child protection.

- Agree in consultation with the principal appropriate pastoral and disciplinary responses in relation to suspected drug related incidents in line with child protection protocols.

### The Caretaker

- Be vigilant around and conduct regular checks of the school grounds for drug-related paraphernalia, and inform the designated teacher for drugs as appropriate.
- Ensure the safe storage, handling and disposal of potentially harmful substances such as solvents and cleaning fluids.

### **The policy in practice:**

In the case of incidents of suspected drug misuse:

- Ensure the welfare and well being of the pupil(s) involved in the incident and the rest of the school community.
- Ensure that the following people are informed (where relevant):
  - \* Parents/guardians
  - \* PSNI - preferably the Community and Schools Involvement Officer(CSIO)
  - \* Board of Governors
  - \* Designated Officer in EANI/CCMS
  - \* Members of staff
  - \* Other pupils and parents informed within the confines of confidentiality

**It is a statutory requirement that all schools in Northern Ireland contact the PSNI where any case of drug misuse is suspected.**

- Agree, in consultation with the Board of Governors, appropriate pastoral and disciplinary responses in relation to the incident in line with child protection protocols.
- Review procedures and amend as appropriate.

Fundamental to dealing with incidents of suspected drug misuse is the principle of *'in loco parentis'*, and the school will always take the steps that would reasonably be expected of any parent to safeguard the wellbeing and safety of all the pupils in their charge.

### **Partnership with Parents**

Fundamental to our school's values and practice is the principle of sharing the responsibility with caring and educating pupils with the parents. The school will inform and involve parents/guardians by:

- Direct contact where necessary.
- At parent/ teacher interviews.
- Encouraging parents to contact the school if they have any concerns regarding their child or the school policies.
- Promoting special events e.g. No Smoking Day.
- Providing relevant literature regarding drugs etc. when available.

### Monitoring and evaluation

The Safeguarding Team in St Francis' /Bunscoil Naomh Proinsias will update this policy and related procedures in the light of any further guidance and legislation as necessary and review it annually. The Board of Governors will also monitor incidents of suspected drug misuse and the implementation of the drugs policy on a regular basis through the provision of reports from the Designated Teacher and through the BOG link governor for Child protection.

On-going evaluation will ensure the effectiveness of the Policy.

### Communication and dissemination of this policy

The policy will be available on the school website available to parents via the school website at [www.stfrancisps.co.uk](http://www.stfrancisps.co.uk) and any parent requiring a paper copy of should contact the school office.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Designated Teacher)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Principal)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Chair of Board of Governors)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

K. de Brún and M. Bird, December 2017.

Daye of 1<sup>st</sup> review: December 2019