

ADDICTION

Developing a Policy for Substance Misuse

Guidelines include:

1. A statement of intent

Explain why the policy has been written and what it should be used for.

EXAMPLE: This policy sets out clear guidelines on the school's procedures for dealing with students who misuse substances and is for students, their parents, carers and staff. It is consistent with the school's overall values and aims.

2. A definition of substance misuse

A brief description of substance misuse.

EXAMPLE: The NICE guidelines define substance misuse as follows: 'Intoxication by – or regular excessive consumption of and/or dependence on psychoactive substances, leading to social, psychological, physical or legal problems.' It includes problematic use of both legal and illegal drugs (including alcohol when used in combination with other substances).

3. Policy Objectives

Who the policy is for and why.

EXAMPLE: This policy is intended for students, parents / carers and staff.

How the school will help support pupils who misuse substances

EXAMPLE: The school will help pupils who misuse substances by developing a common understanding through training such as the use of the stem4 website and stem4 treatment workshops to inform and educate students, their families and staff; named staff for support; listening to concerns from friends; chain of action. There will be long-term strategies to enhance underlying causes such as social anxiety and develop emotional literacy. Students will be made aware of the policy and who the named staff and student mentors are if they wish to report a concern.

How the school will respond when a concern is raised

EXAMPLE: If a student wishes to disclose that they misuse substances the staff member(s) to approach are
(names of members). These members will record all incidents and discuss with the student the chain of command.

A similar route will be taken if a friend discloses that there is substance misuse.

There will be a time scale for the designated staff member to take the various steps.

The recommended Chain of Action is as follows:

1. The student is spoken to re concerns (by nominated teacher).
2. Parents/carers are informed (and also referred to the school nurse/counsellor/child protection office).
3. Parents/carers are invited to school for a meeting with senior staff.
4. Parents/carers are recommended to seek consultation with family GP and to inform the school of the outcome within a nominated period of time.
5. School is given permission by parents to have feedback from the GP.
6. If no follow up occurs with the GP and the school remains concerned, the school may arrange an appointment with the school doctor/other specialists that may be associated with the school. In situations of extreme concern the school is also able to refer directly to CAMHS.
7. Follow up meetings are arranged between the parents/carers and senior staff so that progress can be assessed and any targets reviewed.
8. Nominated staff member from a named core team will act as a link with the student.
9. Timetable changes, such as suspension from lessons may be decided by the school.
10. Any student who uses a substance at school will be suspended until they are able to contain this behaviour at school.
11. Disciplinary steps will be taken by a school if a student is found with substances or implements (e.g. Pipes, matches) at school which may include suspension.
12. Based on medical feedback, the suitability of the students continuing attendance at school will be assessed.
13. Contagion will be managed by staff keeping an eye on the peer group and other potentially vulnerable young people in the year, by continued education on the fact that substance misuse is an expression of distress rather than a risk behaviour that should be 'tried out'.
14. Steps may be taken to ensure that parents of the year group are informed (without naming) and that they monitor their children.

4. Named Core Team

Names and roles of people involved may be listed.

The team will be based on appropriate experience, seniority and training.

Students will be informed on whom to approach

5. School Policy on Confidentiality

EXAMPLE: Our school policy will inform parents/carers if we feel the student is at risk to themselves or to others.

We will inform the student that the information will be passed on and also about the content of the information. The school may, in the first instance, encourage the student to tell their parents/carers or with the support of a member of the core team.

The school may also need to pass on the information to some of the staff. The student and their parents/carers will be informed and the reasons why such staff need to know.

If concerns about a student have been raised by a friend/s, it should be decided with the student what feedback is given to the friends about the action the school will be taking on their behalf. The school will also make sure that any friends presenting needs will be supported. In the case of friends presenting with concerns their parents may need informing and again the need to know policy in terms of confidentiality will be used.

6. Management of other relevant circumstances

EXAMPLE: The school will consider managing the return of a pupil to school after a period of in-patient treatment or period of time off school (for example having attended a detox programme) in a way that is as supportive to the individual student but also supportive of the rest of the pupils.

7. Documentation

A record will be made of all incidents, discussion points and dates and the decided course of action.

8 Staff Support

The designated staff member will have a duty to keep up to date with information regarding substance misuse and forms of support available. Staff who have been involved with a pupil who has misused substances may need support and will be offered this opportunity through a number agreed ways with the school. These may include discussion with another experienced staff member, stem4 teacher support, counselling.

9. Roles of Responsibility

The Head Teacher has a responsibility to appoint a designated member of staff for dealing with incidents of substance misuse (this is often the child protection officer). The head teacher and governing body should ensure the policy is in place, communicated to staff and implemented. Staff at all levels and pastoral leaders should be offered training and updated on the policy.

10. Implementing and Reviewing the Policy

Parents, students and staff should all be aware there is a policy and of its content. Parents and carers should work in partnership with school to support students who misuse substances. Students need to be aware that they can be confident any disclosure of sensitive information will be supported and dealt with efficiently and sensitively.

The policy should be reviewed and reference to other policies, whether they be other mental health issues or policies such as child protection, behaviour, health and safety and special educational needs available as reference.

11. Related Policies

Attach other relevant policies such as Safeguarding, Child protection, Data Protection.