

Responding to Drug and Alcohol Related Incidents

A guide for staff working
in schools in the city of
Stoke-on-Trent

Responding to Drug and Alcohol Related Incidents

This guide is intended to provide staff with the information they need in order to identify and respond to drug incidents involving pupils. It covers the various types of incidents and how to apply a graduated approach in responding to them.

Prominence is given to emergency/first aid procedures and to respecting the rights of the children in question. The guide is not intended to replace or override the provisions laid out in schools' own drug policies. It provides general guidance which should be useful to staff working in all schools, though the different ethos of each school, and the differing needs of the pupils, will have a bearing on this.

Any enquiries relating to this guidance can be directed to:

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Children and Young Peoples Service
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Stoke ST4 1HH
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What is a drug and alcohol related incident?

- Drugs or drug paraphernalia found on school premises
- Pupil/s found in possession of an illegal or banned substance (including alcohol, solvents, legal highs)
- Pupil/s suspected of selling or distributing illegal or banned substances
- Pupil/s suspected of being under the influence
- Rumours/concerns/disclosures – about particular pupils, groups of pupils, or parents
- Concerns that a young person is being affected by someone else's drug use

Rumours, Concerns, Disclosures

Concerns about a young person, or group of young people affected by substance misuse can arise as a result of information received from parents, staff, other pupils, or from the pupil concerned. A range of different measures needs to be available to the member of staff involved so that the response is both proportionate and appropriate.

- How credible and detailed is the information? Rumours and gossip about drug taking can often be unfounded, and sometimes are simply a function of young people's normal social interaction. Staff may wish to disregard them altogether

where they are deemed not credible or not sufficiently detailed; or they may choose to record their concerns via the 'Drug Incident Recording Form' (see below).

- Where the concerns relate to specific young people and the names of those young people are divulged, staff may wish to take more concerted action. Fact finding conversations with pupils should take place in private. Pupils interviewed in that context should be made aware that support can be offered for substance misuse issues, but also that there may be behavioural consequences under the school's drugs and behaviour policies, or possible legal consequences where a crime has been committed.
- Where concerns are deemed to be well-founded, a screening for drug and alcohol use should be carried out, with the young person's consent, and at the earliest opportunity, using the Safer City Partnership Drug and Alcohol Screening Tool (tel 01782 235708 for more copies or visit the 'Drug, Alcohol and Tobacco Education interest space on the Learning Platform to download the electronic version).
- The behavioural response should not be enacted by the same member of staff as the screening. It should be in accordance with the school's behaviour policy and proportionate to the seriousness of the offence. It may involve a behaviour support plan, loss of privileges, or short term exclusion or, in particularly serious cases (such as drug dealing), permanent exclusion.

Young people affected by other people's drug and/or alcohol use

The Safer City Partnership Drug and Alcohol Screening Tool should also be used to identify issues experienced by young people who are affected by the substance misuse of parents, carers or older siblings. The 'Dreams' team, based at the Integrated Young People's Drug and Alcohol Project (see under List of Local Services, Appendix 3) provides support to children and young people affected by the substance misuse of others and schools can make referrals to them directly. Staff may also wish to consider initiating a common assessment 'CAF', when the support of more than one service is required. This can help to identify the needs and strengths of the young person and ensure that the actions put in place to meet those needs are properly co-ordinated. More information on the CAF can be found at www.safeguardingchildren.stoke.gov.uk

How best to respond to an incident involving a young person suspected of being under the influence of drugs, or being in possession:

- Two members of staff should be present, preferably one senior, and if possible the designated 'drugs lead'.
- Have the emergency procedures handy and follow them closely. Investigations should take a back seat while you establish that no-one is in danger.
- Respect the rights of the pupils under suspicion:
 - Don't rush to judge - ask open ended questions
 - Provide some privacy – particularly when conducting searches
 - Allow them the opportunity to respond to any allegations
 - Seek their consent before conducting a search of their person. Refer to separate guidance under 'Searches'.
- Any illegal substances discovered should be handled according to the 'Handling Illegal Substances' procedure.
- Schools may wish to involve the police, but are under no obligation to do so. See under 'Role of the Police'.
- Government guidance (DfE, 2012) makes clear that schools are not required to inform parents before a search takes place or seek their consent to search a child. However, schools will usually wish to involve parents at the earliest opportunity. the young person's need for confidentiality and any risk issues that may exist in the home environment (see guidance under 'Confidentiality').
- Never send a young person home unaccompanied while they are 'under the influence'.
- Seek the young person's consent to carry out a screening for drugs and alcohol using the Stoke on Trent Safer City Partnership's Drug and Alcohol Screening Tool.
- Consider the outcome of the screening and whether it is appropriate to refer them to an external service.

Searches

Since September 2010, and under the 'Apprenticeships, Skills and Learning' Act (2009), teachers have the right to search pupils where they suspect them of being in possession of illegal drugs. Searches can be carried out of any items of 'outer clothing', bags or lockers.

- Seeking the consent of the young person concerned, prior to the search, should continue to be regarded as best practice. Head teachers have the discretion to allow the search without consent having first been obtained from the pupil or the pupil's parents, and the use of 'reasonable force' is permitted under the legislation. Guidelines as to the circumstances in which a search without consent can be carried out, how to carry out a search, and what constitutes 'reasonable force' in the event that a restraint is used, are available on the Department of Education website (see under 'Links and reference' below).
- Teachers cannot be compelled to carry out searches and the legislation provides them with the right to refuse to do so.
- The search should be carried out by a member of staff of the same gender as the young person in question.
- There should always be at least one other member of staff present, and the search should be carried out in a private room where no other pupils are present and they are not likely to be disturbed.
- Any substances found should be dealt with according to the guidance laid out below under 'Handling Illegal Substances'.

Confidentiality

Careful consideration needs to be given as to a pupil's right to confidentiality. According to the 'Fraser guidelines', a young person under the age of 16 has the right to be treated in confidence, where they are deemed competent to consent to that treatment themselves. Young people under the age of 13 are not generally to be regarded as competent in this regard.

'Treatment' in this context can be assumed to refer to drugs counselling, support and advice services. The position is the same as that for sexual health services where young people can elect to receive the service without parental involvement. Where there are serious safeguarding concerns (i.e. an immediate danger to the life of that young person), these are generally regarded as taking precedence over the young person's right to confidentiality. However, a young person does not automatically lose their right to confidentiality as a result of their involvement in an incident involving illegal drugs.

Though best practice suggests that parents should be informed and kept as closely involved as possible, the young person has the right to access treatment – including treatment for substance misuse issues – without parental knowledge or involvement.

Schools will need to come to a decision that balances their duties to the parents and the young person and that takes all of these factors into account. Staff are advised to seek further advice and guidance on confidentiality from the young people's drugs services (i.e. Tier 3 Young People's Drug and Alcohol Service and the Integrated Young People's Drug Project) when making referrals. Contact details for these services are listed below and are also provided on the Safer City Partnership Drug and Alcohol Screening Tool.

Safeguarding

Where a young person is judged to be in danger as a result of their own, or someone else's drug use, and particularly where there are concerns about exploitation of that young person by adults, the matter should be referred to the school's designated Child Protection or Safeguarding lead member of staff. That member of staff can then make a judgement as to whether specialist support is required from Vulnerable Children and Corporate Parenting (see 'List of Local Services' below). It may be necessary to have the young person's and/or their parents'/carers' consent for the referral to be made before it can be acted upon, though this is not always strictly necessary, depending on the age of the child and the circumstances giving rise to the concerns.

The role of the Police

Schools are under no legal obligation to report crimes, including crimes involving illegal drugs, to the police. In the majority of circumstances, where small amounts of illegal drugs are involved, and are clearly for personal use, schools can consider managing the incident internally. Where the incident is more serious, involving drug dealing or possession of Class A substances such as heroin or crack cocaine, the schools should provide the police with the names of the pupils concerned, so that further investigations can take place.

- Arrests should only take place on school premises as a matter of last resort.
- The use of police 'drug detection dogs' is not generally advocated on schools' premises, though it may be necessary where there is clear evidence of the presence of drugs on school premises. Drug detection dogs should never be used as a deterrent measure.
- Schools should make available any information to the police likely to be of assistance in the pursuit of criminal enquiries, particularly as it relates to child abuse and exploitation, gang related violence, drug dealing or the supply of alcohol or solvents to minors.

Handling Illegal Substances

- Any substances suspected of being illegal drugs should not be disposed of by schools' staff. The substance should be sealed in an envelope or sealable bag and labelled with the time, date, location and a description of the substance and signed by the member of staff and a witness.
- The local police unit should be informed and arrangements be made for the substance to be delivered there by a member of staff, or collected from the school by a police officer or police community support officer. It is a good idea to obtain the name of the police contact in advance of the substance being collected.
- The substance should be stored in a secure location (e.g. the school safe) for as long as it remains on site.
- The incident should then be recorded via schools' own drug incident recording procedures. Disclosure to the police of the names of pupils involved will be at the discretion of the head teacher.
- Where the quantity of drugs discovered is relatively small, clearly for personal use, and not a Class A substance such as crack cocaine or heroin, head teachers may choose to manage the incident internally.
- Any such incidents should be recorded via the Drugs Incident Recording Form (attached). An anonymised copy of the form should be sent to the Healthy Schools Team for data recording purposes.

Incidents involving other types of substances

- Alcohol and tobacco: parents should be informed (unless this would jeopardise the safety of the pupil involved), and given the opportunity to collect the alcohol or tobacco.
- 'Legal highs': schools should follow the same procedure as for illegal substances when handling substances which do not fall clearly under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 and have not been placed in a 'temporary' category.
- Volatile substances: given the clear danger posed by volatile substances (e.g. gas, glue, aerosols, petrol) schools should arrange for their immediate safe disposal.
- Medicines: disposal of medicines should be covered in schools' medicines policies. Parents and carers should collect and dispose of unused or out of date medicines.

Links and References

The following documents have been used in developing this guidance:

DfE and ACPO (2012) 'Drug Advice for Schools'

DfES (2004), 'Drugs: Guidance for Schools'

(available for download from
<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/behaviour/drugs/>)

ACPO (2006), 'Joining Forces: Guidance for Police Working With Schools and Colleges'

(available for download from <http://www.drugeducationforum.com/useful-documents/>)

Stoke on Trent Safer City Partnership Drug and Alcohol Screening Tool (Contact Safer City Partnership, Tel: 01782 235708)

DfES (2004) 'Crime Recording in Schools'

(available for download from
<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/docbank/index.cfm?id=6388>)

Department of Education (2011) 'Guidance for headteachers and governors on screening and searching powers'

(available for download from
<http://www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/advice/f0076897/screening-searching-and-confiscation>)

Department of Education (2011) 'Guidance for headteachers and governors on the use of reasonable force'

(available for download from
<http://www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/advice/f0077153/use-of-reasonable-force-advice-for-school-leaders-staff-and-governing-bodies>)

Appendix 1

Dealing with an Emergency

Responding to the medical or safety concerns arising from a drug related incident must be the first and highest priority:

- Assess the situation. Is the young person struggling for breath/slipping in out of consciousness or claiming to have taken an overdose?
 - Call for medical assistance immediately: dial 999 and request an ambulance, and summon a trained first aider
 - Stay with the young person and watch them closely till help arrives, do not leave them in the care of another young person

- If the young person is unconscious:
 - Check their breathing, put in the recovery position
 - Do not move if they have fallen as they may have a spinal injury
 - Do not give anything by mouth
 - Do not attempt to make them sit or stand

- While waiting for assistance:
 - Talk to them. Ask them what happened. Ask them what they have taken
 - Collect any drug samples and vomit for hospital testing
 - Do not induce vomiting
 - Do not chase them or do anything to over-excite them, particularly if they have been using solvents
 - Keep them warm, keep them calm
 - Inform the parents

- Where the incident involves injecting equipment, do not attempt to handle any uncapped needles by hand, ring 'Streetscene' on 234234 who will attend within 2 hours to collect and dispose of them.

- Where 'needlestick' injuries have occurred:
 - Encourage the wound to bleed
 - Do not suck
 - Wash with soap and water, dry and apply a waterproof dressing
 - If a used/dirty needle is involved, seek advice from a doctor

- When help arrives
 - Hand over any samples and share any useful information
 - Complete medical record and drug incident report forms

Appendix 2

List of Local Services

- **T3 Stoke on Trent Young People's Drug and Alcohol Service**

46 Roundwell Street
Tunstall
Stoke-on Trent
ST1 UR
Tel: 01782 221099
Text: 07507 411733
Secure email: t3@cri.org.uk

- **Integrated Young People's Drug Project/Dreams**

Queensbury Centre, Queensbury Road,
Normacot,
Stoke on Trent, ST3 1QZ
Tel: 01782 234195

- **Vulnerable Children and Corporate Parenting**

Hanley Area Office
Regent Centre
Regent Road
Hanley
Stoke-on-Trent
ST1 3TD

Tel: (01782) 235100
Fax: (01782) 235168

- **Youth Offending Service**

Ringway House
Bryan Street
Hanley
Stoke-on-Trent
ST1 5AJ

Tel: 01782 235858
Fax: 01782 235860

email: youth.offending.services@stoke.gov.uk

www.youthoffending.stoke.gov.uk

- **Common Assessment Framework Team**

CAF
Children and Young People's Services
Floor 2
Glebe Street
Stoke-on-Trent
ST4 1HH

Telephone: 01782 231969

- **Re-solv**

30a High Street
Stone, Staffs
ST15 8AL

Tel: 01785 817885

- **Stoke on Trent Stop Smoking Service**

The stop smoking service offers free support and advice to any smoker who wants to quit in a range of settings across the city. Stop smoking medicines, such as patches and gum, are available for the cost of a prescription (or free to those who don't pay for their prescriptions) where suitable*. For more information on support available call **0800 085 0928**.

*Nicotine replacement therapy, e.g. patches and gum, can be provided for smokers over the age of 12 where appropriate. Other stop smoking medicines can only be prescribed to over 18's.

- **Smokefree**

The website: <http://smokefree.nhs.uk> contains helpful information about stopping smoking and offers people the opportunity to order a free Quit Kit.

- **Blitz**

The Blitz website: www.blitzblog.co.uk has been specially put together for young people who live in Stoke-on-Trent. The website covers a number of different lifestyle issues such as fashion, music, smoking and football. The website is funded by NHS Stoke-On-Trent and is designed to try and reduce the number of young people taking up smoking in Stoke every year, this, by providing prevention information in a format that they are used to. Young people can sign up to this website whether they are a smoker or not.

- **CONNECT CAMHS and First Steps South Stoke team**

Blurton Health Centre
Ripon Road
Blurton
Stoke-on-Trent
ST3 3BS

Tel: 0300 123 0977

- **CONNECT CAMHS and First Steps North Stoke team:**

Roundwell Street
Tunstall
Stoke-on-Trent
ST6 5JJ

Tel: 0300 123 0987

