

Drugs Education Policy

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Person Responsible: Head of PSHE

Contributed to by: Headmaster and senior management team

It is good practice in schools to have a drugs education policy, irrespective of perceived need. In having this policy we are making explicit the values that we believe in and we feel best prepared all of our school community when in contact with drugs, in whatsoever form.

Background Information

Brighton College Prep School is one of the three schools that make up Brighton College. Brighton College is an independent school on an urban site in a busy, fashionable city. The prep school works within the ethos of Brighton College but maintains a separate identity with a separate head teacher. The prep school caters for children from year 4 to year 8 (8-13 years).

The children come from both single and dual families. There is a social and ethnic mix. Brighton College has a Christian foundation. The school also includes children of various faiths and none.

This policy is a reflection of the Senior School's Policy on Illegal Drugs, Substance Abuse and Alcohol Abuse, modified where appropriate as befits a younger age group with differing pastoral, social, and behavioural needs. Within the context of this policy the term 'drugs' is deemed to include, although not be limited to, chemical stimulants (both legal and illegal), alcohol, tobacco, and household substances that can be misused and abused.

Policy Aims

1. To ensure compliance with the criminal law
2. To help develop in all our pupils the moral courage to reject anything that is potentially harmful to their health, integrity, independence, future prospects, and to nurture respect for the law.
3. To provide an environment in which all pupils and staff can work in safety, and which reflects the ethos and shared values of Brighton College
4. To provide a framework for support and advice
5. To protect, maintain, and enhance the reputation of Brighton College

Drugs education in this school contributes to the requirement of the Education Reforms Act 1988 that the school curriculum should be one which:

- promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society; and,
- prepares our pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

Why do we need to teach about drugs?

Nigel Flynn wrote of his belief in prep schools being the appropriate place in which to tackle these issues -

"Prep school is the right place to deal with it because pupils genuinely listen to their teachers at prep age in a way they do not always do when they are teenagers..... I remember being given some pretty strong anti-smoking teaching at age 10. I decided there and then not to smoke and never have done. If we could have the same effect with drugs we would have made an important contribution to the health and safety of our young people"

Danger exists for our children, whatever their age, and accidental abuse of drugs and substances (cleaning fluids accidentally inhaled perhaps) happens - if we educate for safety, we reduce these health risks.

Educational Aspects

Peer pressure and media influences are pervasive, and one of the roles of any PSHE framework is to give children the critical tools, analytical faculties, and knowledge base from which to make informed decisions. A school cannot regulate a pupil's behaviour at all times, but it seeks to demonstrate positive, beneficial, and legal modes of behaviour. Elements of the PSHE framework deal explicitly with self esteem, peer pressure, and modelling appropriate behaviour in response to potentially difficult scenarios.

Drugs education is taught primarily through PSHE (one thirty-five minute lesson once a week, taught by form tutors), although it happens at other times where necessary as well.

In year 5 we follow a life skills and drugs awareness programme developed by the Ride Foundation, a charity set up to provide drugs education. This programme is delivered through a unit of study produced by the Ride Foundation (Ride 1000 course). This unit provides a workbook for each child, with space for comments and with scope for parental discussion after each section of the workbook. All teachers have extra supporting materials.

In year 7, a term of PSHE work is allocated to drugs education. The work is supported by the 'Your Life' textbooks and there will be a visit from the police liaison officer.

We also cover dangerous substances, including hazardous chemicals and drugs, in other years. Years 4 and 6 address these areas in a range of lessons. In year 8, as part of the post-CE course, the police liaison officer comes to speak over the course of a half-day.

Pastoral Aspects

Sister Vernon, the school nurse, has a good understanding and knowledge of the types of drugs the children are most likely to encounter and their physiological effects, and other members of staff are available to support form tutors where counselling may be appropriate, or more information is required. The school has further drugs education supporting materials and contact details for pupils or staff needing additional information or confidential helplines.

The values encouraged by the school include:

- respect for self
- respect for others
- responsibility for one's own actions in all forms of behavior
- consideration for others (friends, family, school and the wider community)

As a school we should recognise that a pupil or member of staff wanting help may need this not for themselves, but for a colleague, friend or member of their family.

Resources

The Ride Foundation booklets and the Your Life textbooks are the chief resources at present for years 5 and 7. Other sources of information are currently under review.

Specific Issues

Prior to the delivery of the years 5 and 7 programmes of study, letters are sent to the parents of these children informing them of this, and any concerns may be voiced with the head of PSHE or the deputy head. Parents have a key role in this work, allowing children to explore topics brought up in the classroom in a different way to their range of life experiences.

Sometimes pupils will ask a difficult or personal question in the classroom. Questions do not have to be answered directly, and if a teacher is uncomfortable with the nature of a question they should decline to answer it. A child should not be made to feel uncomfortable for having asked a question. At the beginning of a lesson it should be made clear that a teacher will usually try to answer all questions, but that it may not always be appropriate for some questions to be answered in that situation. These questions may, at the teacher's discretion, be referred to the head of PSHE or the deputy head.

Confidentiality

As a general rule a child's confidentiality will be maintained by the form tutor or other member of staff concerned. However, should a child request in advance that nobody else be told, this cannot be agreed to, and the member of staff will stress that this may not be possible. If the member of staff believes that a child is at risk or in danger, he or she is to talk to the deputy head (the designated person responsible for child protection issues) who will confer with the headmaster before any decision is made.

Disciplinary Matters

It would be unusual for a child at the prep to be involved in taking or dealing in illegal drugs, or substance or alcohol abuse. However, any incident where a child is suspected of involvement with illegal drugs, possession of illegal drugs or carrying or using materials used in substance or alcohol abuse, will be immediately investigated and the parents or guardians contacted straight away. Appropriate actions may include serious written warnings, suspension or in extreme cases, exclusion. The procedures that will be followed by the prep school are those more fully set out in the Brighton College Policy on Illegal Drugs, Substance Abuse and Alcohol Abuse. If any parent requires a copy of the Brighton College policy it will be supplied on request.

Updated September 2009