

Woolenwick Junior School
Parent Guide:
Drug Education at Woolenwick
Junior School
Spring 2008 **Parent Partnership**

On average over 100,000 children a week between the ages of ten and eleven admit to having taken alcohol or drugs. Some drugs like tobacco, cannabis and alcohol are easily available so children can be at risk from a very early age.

Today's world is hard. Children grow up very quickly and have or are exposed to a lot of information – not all of it good. Children need to know about drug issues so that they can be confident they can make the right choices.

This Parents Guide is an attempt to outline the schools provision for drug education as consistency of approach between home and school is vital if children are going to understand the dangers of drugs and their misuse.

*This school defines the term “**drug**” as any substance which affects the way in which the body functions physically, emotionally or mentally and includes tobacco, alcohol, solvents, aerosols, over-the-counter and prescribed medicines as well as illicit substances.*

Values and aims

Our drugs education reflects whole school aims to provide a caring community in which young people can learn to respect themselves and others and take responsibility for their own actions. We are committed to the health and safety of all members of the school community and will take action to safeguard their well being.

Fundamental to our school's values and practice is the principle of sharing the responsibility for the education with parents and carers. We strive for effective communication and co-operation.

The school will also have an interest in the health and well being of the pupils beyond these school boundaries and we would encourage parents and others in the community to adopt the same principles.

Rationale behind our approach:

We believe that the purpose of drug education should be to give pupils the knowledge, skills and attitudes to appreciate the benefits of a healthy life-style and to relate these to their own actions, both now and in the future.

We aim to:

- Enable young people to make healthy, informed choices through increasing their knowledge, challenging and exploring attitudes and developing and practising skills.
- To increase understanding about the implications and possible consequences of drug use and misuse.
- To listen to young people's thoughts, feelings and concerns and to ensure that drug education responds to their needs.
- To help young people distinguish between different substances, consider their use, misuse, benefit and harm.
- To counter any inaccurate messages which young people receive about drugs.
- To encourage an understanding for those experiencing or likely to experience drug use (including those dependent on medicinal drugs).
- To widen understanding about related health, social and legal issues.
- To enable children to identify where help and support can be found.
- To develop as a Health Promoting School.

We intend to achieve this through:

- A co-ordinated and consistent approach to the curriculum and to possible drug related incidents
- Content and teaching approaches, which match the needs and maturities of all pupils, including those with special educational needs.
- Integration of drug education into the curriculum.
- Involvement of the whole community, including staff, governors, parents, pupils and relevant visitors.
- Training and support for staff in the planning and delivery of drug education.
- Regular revision of policy and practice.

Teaching – curriculum, materials and approaches

Delivery will be:

- Through planned elements of national curriculum subjects
- Through discrete PSHE and citizenship time;
- Through pastoral time;
- Through assemblies;

- Through occasional planned and negotiated visits from school nurse, police officer or other appropriate people;
- Through the use of story, the literacy hour, circle time and other opportunities.
- Through informal curriculum and opportunities for extra curricular activities.

A wide range of teaching approaches can be used and we particularly encourage active and accelerated learning methods, which involve children's full participation. Ground rules will be negotiated when appropriate and the sensitivity of the work will be recognised, safeguarding the interests of the individual child and the whole class.

Confidentiality

Some pupils may chose to mention instances of drug use in class or with individual members of the school community. While staff will want to be supportive, it is clear that they work within child protection guidelines and clearly state that they may not be able to guarantee confidentiality.

Liaison between schools and with parents and the wider community

We will work with other schools in the area to develop consistent practices to support young people. This includes attention to the needs of young people as they transfer from primary to secondary school. We recognise that this and other aspects of community liaison is an important area to which we can contribute with the support of colleagues in Children Schools & Families (CSF) and other local agencies. The work is developing.

Response to possible drug related incidents

Our definition of drug includes medicines, alcohol, solvent or tobacco. It is therefore important that all aspects of an incident are considered. The needs and circumstances of the pupil are paramount.

We will consider each situation individually and recognise that a variety of actions in response may be necessary to drug related incidents as recommended by CSF and national guidance.

If the situation leads to a medical emergency the school emergency aid procedures will be followed immediately.

In the absence of a medical emergency the Headteacher will be informed and an appropriate response considered. The implications of any action we take will be carefully considered. The focus of any response will be the pupil not

the substance and we will seek to balance the interests of the individual, other members of the school community and the wider community. All Actions in each incident will be recorded by the staff dealing with the incident.

Responses will be cross-referenced with related school policies such as: Child protection policy, Medicines policy, Behaviour policy, Anti-bullying policy, Outside visits policy.

Unless there are exceptional circumstances we will inform parents or guardians at the earliest opportunity so that we can work together to support the pupil and to resolve difficulties. We accept that it is never appropriate to respond in a way that is more punitive than that which might be considered by the police so that exclusion, whilst it remains an option, will be used as the very last resort.

We have a range of professional colleagues who can give or obtain advice and support in drug or alcohol related situations. These include the school's Education Welfare Officer, the local YCRO/PCSO, members of the local Youth Offending Team (whose roles include supporting young people at risk of offending) our local Drug and Alcohol agencies and counselling services. The school also maintains regular contact with the CSF Drugs Education Consultant.

*Further guidance can be gained from the **Woolenwick Junior School Drugs Policy**, Hertfordshire County Council Drug Education Guidance document and national guidance, specifically "Drugs: Guidance to Schools"; DfES; Feb 2004.*