

STATEMENT OF SCHOOL POLICY ON SUBSTANCE USE AND MISUSE

The Governing Body of St Mary's Catholic School acknowledges the national concern over the growing problem of substance abuse and wishes to state clearly its policy on these matters. This policy has been drawn up within a framework agreed by all secondary schools in Bishop's Stortford/Sawbridgeworth.

Statements of Principle

- **The School condemns the misuse of substances including drugs and alcohol, and the illegal supply of these substances.**
- **The School is committed to the health and safety of all its members and will take every action to safeguard their well-being.**
- **The School acknowledges the importance of its pastoral role and its related educational programmes in promoting the welfare of young people; a comprehensive programme of personal social and health education has been drawn up for every pupil to complement National Curriculum programmes of study, and reflect the importance of these issues**
- **Acknowledging that there is a shared responsibility, the school is committed to an effective partnership with parents and will seek to work in co-operation with them and appropriate external agencies to provide guidance and counselling for those in need of support.**

The School acknowledges that while the number of young people who use and misuse substances is rising, there is a need to support and protect the larger numbers of young people who choose not to use or misuse substances.

Educational Aims

- to provide accurate information about substances
- to increase understanding about the implications and possible consequences of use and misuse
- to widen understanding about related health and social issues
- to enable pupils to make healthy, informed choices
- to enable young people to identify sources of appropriate personal support.

These aims are fulfilled through aspects of the School's curricular and extra-curricular activities and its Personal and Social Education programme. They are also met through active co-operation with other agencies. Other professionals involved in the issue of Drug Education will be given a copy of the policy and we would anticipate full support for its values and procedures.

Procedural Guidelines

The Governing body takes overall responsibility for the framing of the policy. The Headteacher will be responsible for its implementation, and liaising with the Governing Body, parents, LEA and appropriate outside agencies. The Headteacher will ensure that all staff dealing with substance issues are supported and trained.

1. It is an offence under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971

- to supply or offer to supply a controlled drug
- to be in possession of a controlled drug

The Governing Body forbids the supply, use or possession of any illegal substance by any member of the School Community.

2. If there is a suspected substance incident, the School will always seek advice from appropriate external agencies, including the School's Police Liaison Officer, Health Authority or Social Services Department. The School is obliged to contact social services immediately if a child is suspected of being at risk.
3. The School has a statutory duty to inform the police if a serious criminal offence has taken place on school premises. In accordance with national recommendations (DfE Circular 4/93) the School will contact the police should suspected illegal substances be found on the premises.
4. In instances involving substance supply, use or possession, parents will be informed at the earliest opportunity by the Headteacher or his/her representative.
5. The School will take the firmest action against any pupil found to be involved in the supply, use or possession of illegal substances. All drug-related offences will result in permanent exclusion, save exceptionally in extenuating circumstances. Such circumstances will be determined by the participants of the case conference called by the Headteacher prior to the decision whether or not to permanently exclude.
6. The School will consider each substance incident individually and recognises that a variety of responses will be necessary to deal with incidents.

If any member of staff has reason to suspect that a pupil may be involved in any form of substance abuse please inform Mrs. A. Grant.

This policy will be reviewed again in July 2009.

Responsible Governor Committee: Pastoral