

Balcarras Drugs Policy

Introduction

Balcarras School actively seeks to provide an environment where all members of the community are safe from harm. As such, the school takes a robust approach to any individual or group that violates our behaviour, drugs or anti-bullying policies.

This policy seeks to ensure:

- That young people in our school receive common messages about the inappropriateness of drug misuse;
- That drug related incidents are addressed throughout our school in a consistent manner.

Teachers, support staff, governors, parents and young people have been involved in formulating this policy.

Staff responsibility

- Our Head of Personal Development co-ordinator is Hayley Davies
- Our named person for drug related incidents is Neil Baxter.

Rationale

Young people are growing up in an increasingly drug using world. During their early childhood they are exposed to messages about drug use from the media, their peers, their families and our wider society. They may experiment with drugs whilst still of school age and will be confronted by opportunities to use drugs throughout their lives.

If we are to prepare our children for living in a 'drug-using world', we need to ensure all pupils in Balcarras receive an appropriate curriculum matched to their age and readiness.

We recognise that many aspects of the curriculum contribute towards enabling young people not only to know how to stay safe from substance misuse, but also to have the high self-esteem and interpersonal skills that enable them to stay safe and in control.

Balcarras is committed to working towards the principles of the health promoting school. The raising of every pupil's self-esteem and building resilience in all of our pupils are fundamental aims of the school.

Discipline

The majority of young people who misuse drugs are only experimenting with them. This behaviour is still potentially dangerous and young people must understand that the use of illegal drugs and the misuse of any substance in all circumstances are inappropriate

Pupils need to understand that the school will try to support anyone who voluntarily seeks our help with drug-related problems.

They also need to know clearly that bringing recreational drugs into school or on school visits for any purpose will be dealt with severely, as will using the school or educational visits to make deals for the supply of illegal drugs.

Young people who are found in possession of, or have been supplying drugs, will be suspended from school whilst a thorough investigation can take place. During, or immediately following this suspension, a meeting will be held to decide the most appropriate action plan. This may include suspension or exclusion from school.

It is our policy:

- That pupils who bring tobacco, alcohol, solvent or vapes to school will be disciplined, sanctions will be applied, and their parents informed;
- That pupils who bring illegal drugs into school will be reported to the police and disciplined by the school;
- Those pupils who are found in possession of illegal drugs will be reported to the police and disciplined by the school.

The principal goal of the school will be to attempt to re-establish a working relationship with young people who have been disciplined for drug related issues.

The school reserves the right, as a last resort, to **exclude permanently** a pupil who is placing him/herself, other pupils or staff at risk.

Welfare

“We define drug misuse to be the taking of a substance which harms or threatens to harm the physical or mental health or social well-being of an individual, or of other individuals, or society at large, or which is illegal. Within this definition can be placed the use of legal substances such as alcohol, solvents, the use of prescribed medicines and the taking of illegal drugs.” (Adapted from the Royal College of Psychiatrists 1987 – County Child Protection Guidelines)

Problems with drug use can affect any of our pupils, from the youngest to the eldest. This can range from, but not limited to:

- Accidental exposure to a substance (medicines) or drug equipment (discarded needles);

- Inappropriate, experimental or recreational use of a drug;
- Developing a drug habit (losing control of their drug use);
- A sudden, catastrophic health problem (collapse);
- Living in drug using families.

A young person's own problem drug use can be:

- The main cause for concern;
- A symptom of a deeper more complex difficulty;
- One of a number of interrelated issues or concerns.

In all cases our guiding principle will be that:

The welfare of the young person, his/her peers, teachers and parents is paramount.

Confidentiality

Whilst every effort should be made to enable constructive dialogue to take place between pupils requiring support and school staff, no staff member can agree to offer complete confidentiality. All staff are subject to child protection procedures.

The Taught Curriculum

At Balcarras our aim is that every learner has the knowledge, problem solving and decision making skills necessary to be able to make informed choices about drug use and that they have the interpersonal skills, high self-esteem and resilience required to enable them to enact their decision with the least possible harm to themselves or others.

Our curriculum will be delivered in the following ways:

- Through **classroom teaching**, it will take account of the pupil's current level of understanding.
- As part of a spiral programme of **Personal Development (personal, social, moral and health education)**, it will build on concepts that the pupils already know and understand. It will link with work on safety, relationships and communication skills. Pupils will have opportunities to discuss, have challenged and clarify their attitudes and beliefs about drug use.
- It will use **language** appropriate to their age and readiness.
- It will be relevant to the **backgrounds and needs** of pupils and will focus on the drug use and surrounding issues most relevant to the young people.

- It will offer **accurate** rather than sensationalised information, including the legal repercussions of using banned drugs.
- Whilst exploring the possible consequences of drug misuse, it will **avoid** ‘**shock/horror**’ which can serve to glamorise drug use.
- It will ensure that **all pupils regardless of background** and ability can equally access the programme of work.

Balcarras will work to inform parents in order to ensure that messages about drug misuse are consistent.

Where possible we will seek to work with our local education authority to harmonise our provision of drugs education to ensure that our pupils receive the best possible drug education. We will also work with other local agencies, such as Gloucestershire Police, to review our procedures and ensure the information we deliver is accurate and up-to-date.

All visitors to our classrooms will work to these principles.

All staff have a duty to support young people who approach them with problems related to drug use. Prior to any further investigation, such an approach should be considered as a request for help and a pastoral as well as a disciplinary matter. All incidents must be reported to a house head or head of sixth form.

When dealing with any incident, in priority, staff should consider:

- Medical support – immediate first aid if required, then appropriate referral to health services.
- Immediate safety/welfare support – is the pupil ‘at risk’ from his/her own behaviour or the behaviour of others?
- Pastoral support.
- Discipline – by a house head or head of sixth form where appropriate.

All staff should swiftly ensure that a house head or head of sixth form are informed about any such problem.

The school, including grounds, will be regularly checked by the site team, for signs of drug misuse.

Any use of illegal drugs or the offer to supply illegal drugs on or near school premises or on school trips ***will always be reported to the police.***

A pupil’s parents will always be notified of the school’s concern over a drug related incident. The only exception to this is when it is felt that the welfare of the young person

would be placed in greater jeopardy by this action, in which case the designated safeguarding lead will be consulted.

Incident Management

The impacts of drug use are:

- Health difficulties – long term damage to health (e.g. tobacco) or a sudden catastrophic incident (e.g. solvent) – many substances can have both effects (e.g. alcohol).
- Social/financial difficulties – conflict with parents, education, etc.
- Legal difficulties – some drug use is illegal and this can affect freedom, career and travel. (Legal status, however, should never be confused with potential harm to self or others).
- Psychological effects – negative effects on the psychology of any drug user, but particularly on younger users whose brain is still in development.

Staff have a professional duty to investigate and take appropriate action, either individually or by referral, if we have reason to believe that any pupil is at risk.

Balcarras has a legal duty to ensure that illegal drug use or the making or supply of controlled drugs does not take place on the premises or on school trips.

School staff may safely take possession of an unknown substance. The law:

“provides that, if a person took possession of a drug to prevent another committing an offence or continuing to commit an offence and then took speedy action to destroy the drug or hand it to an authorised person, this shall be a defence to the charge.”

SEC.5 MISUSE OF DRUGS ACT 1971

Drug Use Outside of School

The school’s Behaviour Policy makes clear that pupils must not behave in a manner that could bring the school into disrepute or affect the reputation of the school, even when outside of school.

If a student is misusing drugs outside of school, then the school reserves the right to apply sanctions to the pupil, including (but not limited to) suspension and permanent exclusion in extreme circumstances. The school would always inform the police of credible drug use, even outside of school.

Drugs Policy and Staff

1. Teachers have access to information, training and expertise concerning drugs and their misuse.

Drugs Policy and Procedures

2. Appropriate staff and appropriate outside agencies will deliver drug education within Personal Development Lessons (PSHE) and other areas of the curriculum.
3. The Drugs Policy applies to staff. Disciplinary action will be taken if staff contravene their terms and conditions of employment.

Media

The headmaster or a member of staff delegated by the headmaster will deal with all media involvement.

When this policy was reviewed, an equality impact assessment was conducted to ensure any changes did not have an adverse effect under the terms of the Equality Act 2010. Should you have any comments regarding this policy, please contact the school.

Balcarras Drugs Procedure

Scenarios

Drugs or equipment are discovered on school premises:

Staff are required to:

- Take possession and store securely;
- Inform a house head or head of sixth form as soon as possible, who will then, in consultation with SMT:
 - ↳ Seek police advice re identification of substance and safe disposal.

In the event of a syringe being found, it will be placed in a safe container (for example a screw top jar) and placed in a safe location prior to safe disposal – under no circumstances will a used syringe be placed in a waste bin to minimise any risk to health. This will be recorded in the school's Pastoral recording system (CPOMS).

A pupil is found in possession of a drug:

Staff are required to:

- Take possession of the substance and store securely;
- Inform a house head or head of sixth form, who will then, in consultation with SMT:
 - ↳ Seek advice from police re identification of substance and safe disposal/other legal action;
 - ↳ Inform the parents or carers;
 - ↳ Take appropriate disciplinary action.

A pupil is thought to be in possession of a drug:

Staff are required to:

- Isolate the pupil from peers and supervise at all times;
- Inform a house head or head of sixth form; who will then, in consultation with SMT:
 - ↳ Inform the police;
 - ↳ Inform the parents or carers;
 - ↳ Investigate the incident and take disciplinary action if required.

The school reserves the right to search the bag and locker of any pupil suspected of being in possession of drugs and to ask a pupil to empty their pockets.

All the rules regarding the searching of a pupil are clearly detailed in the school's Behaviour Policy.

If a pupil refuses to be searched, the school may judge that the pupil is carrying illegal drugs and the sanction imposed will be equivalent as if illegal drugs were found during a search.

A member of staff suspects a pupil is under the influence of a drug:

Staff will never treat intoxication lightly. The effect of any drug (including alcohol) on a young person can be highly unpredictable. Intoxication or a suspected overdose (even if the young person appears fit and well) will always be deemed a medical emergency.

Under no circumstances should an intoxicated pupil be disciplined until medical advice has been sought. Intoxication from solvent can be lethal if the young person is suddenly shocked and the unpleasant (even horrific) effects of psychedelic drugs can be exacerbated by discipline, with potentially catastrophic results.

Staff are required to:

- Seek medical advice (999 if urgent) and support from any nearby staff;
- Perform appropriate first aid measures;
- Keep the young person as calm as possible;
- Inform a house head or head of sixth form; who will then, in consultation with SMT:
 - ↳ Ensure no other pupils are at risk;
 - ↳ Inform parents and carers;
 - ↳ Inform Social Services, if child is 'at risk';
 - ↳ Inform police, if appropriate;
 - ↳ Take appropriate disciplinary action once the pupil has recovered.

A pupil discloses that they are using drugs:

Staff are required to:

- Inform a house head or head of sixth form; who will then, in consultation with SMT:
 - ↳ Inform designated safety lead, if the child is 'at risk';
 - ↳ Inform parents.

Pupil discloses parents or carers misuse/supply drugs:

Staff are required to:

- Inform a House Head or Head of Sixth Form; who will then, in consultation with SMT:

- ↳ Inform Social Services, if child is 'at risk'.
- ↳ Contact Help Desk to discuss family and seek advice

Senior staff are required to retain the pupil if a parent collecting a child from school (especially by car) appears intoxicated (if unable to retain the pupil – telephone 999 and inform police).

The school discovers that a pupil is 'dealing drugs' in the school:

Staff are required to: *(see above on "A pupil is thought to be in possession of a drug")*.

- Inform a house head or head of sixth form; who will then, in consultation with SMT:
 - ↳ Inform police;
 - ↳ Secure as much evidence as possible;
 - ↳ Work with police to construct an action plan;
 - ↳ Investigate and take appropriate disciplinary action.

Psychoactive Substances previously known as "Legal Highs"

The Psychoactive Substances Act 2016 came into effect as of 26th May 2016

Under the legislation it is an offence to produce, supply, offer to supply, possess with intent to supply psychoactive substances. The offence, if found guilty, could carry a maximum prison sentence of 7 years.

A psychoactive substance is defined in the new law as a drug which is capable of affecting a person's mental functioning or emotional state excluding legitimate ones, such as food, alcohol, tobacco, nicotine, caffeine and medical products.

- Balcarras School does not permit any **Psychoactive Substances (previously known as "Legal Highs")** (including nitrous oxide) to be brought into to school for any reason.
- Balcarras School also does not permit **Electronic Cigarettes** or **"Vapes"** or any other paraphernalia associated with smoking, vaping or substance misuse to be brought into school for any reason.

Possession of these items will be dealt with in the same manner as the school deals with possession of illegal drugs.

Monitoring and Record Keeping

We will record all drug-related incidents in the school's Pastoral recording system (CPOMS).