

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Drugs Education Policy

Curriculum Committee
Non-statutory
CC Reviewed: Feb 2021
Next Review: Feb 2023

Mission Statement: To live, love and learn in a caring Christian community.

Aims and objectives

We aim to equip children with the knowledge, understanding and skills that enable them to make choices that lead to a healthy lifestyle. Our drugs education programme has the primary objective of helping children to become more confident and responsible young people. We teach children about the dangers to health posed by drug-taking, alcohol and tobacco. We aim to equip them with the social skills that enable them to make informed moral and social decisions in relation to drugs in society.

The objectives of our drugs education programme are:

- to provide children with knowledge and information about illegal drugs, alcohol and tobacco and the harmful effects they can have on people's lives
- to help children to recognise the differences between harmful and helpful drugs and to understand that many drugs can be used safely under medical supervision
- to enable children to discuss moral questions related to drug taking, and so provide a safe environment for young people to share their thoughts and ideas
- to help children become more self-confident so that they are able to make sensible and informed decisions about their lives
- to let children know what they should do if they come across drugs or equipment used in drug taking, or are aware of other people misusing drugs
- to help children respect their own bodies and, in so doing, reduce the likelihood that they will be persuaded to become involved in drug abuse
- to show that taking illegal drugs is a moral issue, and that choices about drugs are moral choices
- to ensure that all children are taught about drugs in a consistent manner, following guidelines that have been agreed by parents, governors and staff

Organisation

We regard drugs education as a whole-school issue, and we believe that opportunities to teach about the importance of living a healthy lifestyle occur throughout the curriculum. Each class teacher answers questions about drugs sensitively and appropriately, as they occur. In routine circle-time sessions, we encourage children to discuss issues that are important to them, and we help children to be aware of the dangers of the misuse of drugs. For example, if a child raises the issue of smoking, the teacher takes time to discuss its harmful effects with the whole class. In science lessons we teach children what a drug is, and how drugs are used in medicine. We also teach them the difference between legal and illegal drugs.

Drugs education is an important part of our school's personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum. Drugs education is taught throughout the school in a manner appropriate to the age of the children involved. Children are taught what a drug is, and how drugs are used in medicine. We also teach them the difference between legal and illegal drugs, and the dangers involved in taking illegal drugs. In teaching this element of the curriculum, we follow the guidelines provided by the Local Authority, and we receive advice and support from the Local Health Authority.

The resources and materials that we use are recommended either by the Health Authority or the Local Authority. Lessons that focus on drug education form part of a sequence of lessons that are designed to promote in children a healthy lifestyle

The teachers teach drug education during normal lesson time and through the use of 'Crucial Crew'. Sometimes the class teacher seeks support from the school nurse or another health professional. The teaching style we use encourages children to ask questions and reflect on the dangers to health of drug misuse. Children explore issues, such as why people take drugs, peer pressure and how they can avoid putting themselves in danger in the future. We give children the opportunity to engage in role play, talk in groups or to the whole class. We encourage them to listen to the views of others, and we ask them to explore why drugs are such a problem for society.

The role of the head teacher

It is the responsibility of the head teacher to ensure that staff and parents are informed about this drugs education policy, and that the policy is implemented effectively. It is also the head teacher's role to ensure that staff are given sufficient training, so that they can teach effectively and handle any difficult issues with sensitivity.

The head teacher will liaise with external agencies regarding the school drugs education programme and ensure that all adults who work with children on these issues are aware of the school policy and work within this framework.

The role of governors

The governing body has the responsibility of setting down these general guidelines on drugs education and for ensuring that policies are up to date. The governors will support the head teacher to follow these guidelines. Governors will support the SLT to inform and consult with parents about the drugs education policy. Governors will also support the SLT to liaise with the Local Authority and health organisations so that the school's policy is in line with the best advice available.

The role of parents

The school is well aware that the primary role in children's drugs education lies with parents. We wish to build a positive and supporting relationship with the parents of children at our school through mutual understanding, trust and co-operation. In promoting this objective we will:

- inform parents about the school drugs education policy and practice
- invite parents to view the materials used to teach drugs education in our school
- answer any questions parents may have about the drugs education their child receives in school
- take seriously any issue which parents raise with teachers or governors about this policy or the arrangements for drugs education in the school
- encourage parents to be involved in reviewing the school policy and making modifications to it as necessary
- inform parents about the best practice known with regard to drugs education so that the parents can support the key messages being given to children at school.

Monitoring and review

The Curriculum Committee of the Governing Body, on a bi-annual basis, will monitor the drugs education policy. This committee will report their findings and recommendations to the full governing body as necessary, if the policy appears to need modification. The curriculum committee takes into serious consideration any representation from parents about the drugs education programme and comments will be recorded.

ACJ Feb 2021