



WELLINGTON COLLEGE BELFAST

Drugs Policy

Reviewed by The Board of Governors May 2020

Introduction: The Role of Education

The school Drugs Policy is a statutory document, in accordance with Drugs: Guidance for Schools in Northern Ireland (2004). This policy follows the guidance given in the Education Authority Drug Policy Document. Wellington College Belfast believes that the misuse of drugs endangers not only our pupils but also affects the wider community in which we live. It is the school's responsibility to ensure the child's health and safety while in our care and we also strive to promote their personal and social well-being. Drug misuse undermines this and hinders the development of the young person.

Wellington College Belfast wishes to promote the development of the 'whole person' which encompasses physical, mental, emotional, social and environmental health; by equipping pupils with the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values to handle their lives effectively in the present and prepare them for adulthood. Research cites personal inadequacy, a lack of self-esteem and peer pressure as the main reasons for drug misuse among young people. The school seeks to address such factors as part of its mission to better prepare young people for adult life.

The Policy

The policy reflects an integrated and consistent approach to the overall education and well-being of the individual pupils and the wider school community. This policy is intended to cover prescription drugs, Novel Psychoactive Substances (NPS)/'legal highs', tobacco, tobacco-related products, electronic cigarettes and alcohol, which enables the school to:

- ensure that all members of the school community adopt a consistent approach to drug-related issues;
- define the roles, responsibilities and legal duties of different people, including the principal, the designated teacher for drugs, all staff (teaching and nonteaching), governors, pupils and parents or carers;
- identify how it will implement and deliver drugs education as part of the overall provision for PD in the curriculum;
- develop procedures and protocols that address drug-related issues across all areas of school life and deal with specific incidents of suspected drug misuse; and
- consider the wider issues of drug use or misuse as part of a whole-school approach.

The policy has key links with policies such as the Safeguarding Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Health and Safety Policy and the Positive Behaviour Policy.

Drugs Education in Context

'A drugs education programme is just one part of a whole school response to drug misuse. It should provide opportunities for pupils to acquire the knowledge, understanding and skills to enable them to consider the effects of drugs on themselves and others, and to make informed and responsible choices within the context of a healthy lifestyle'
(Drugs: Guidance for Schools in NI 2004)

The programme of education is integrated within the Personal Development Strand of the Curriculum. A life skills approach to drug prevention is essential and within the programme, pupils will learn about raising self-

esteem, self-confidence and assertiveness to prepare them for making informed decisions about drug use, the main focus being on knowledge, social skills, attitudes and values.

Drugs Education is specifically addressed in Personal Development lessons.

In addition to the drugs education provided within the curriculum, the school offers support for pupils to explore their own attitudes and values as well as an opportunity to discuss any drug related problems they may have. This is generally done through the pastoral system within the school and the pupils are informed that confidentiality cannot always be guaranteed.

Managing Suspected Drug-related Incidents on School Premises or on School activities:

This section provides information and direction on how we will manage suspected drug-related incidents on school premises, travelling to and from school and when engaged in authorised school-related activities.

Range of Substances:

The school's policy on drugs education covers any substance under the DENI definition: (CCEA 2004)

'A drug is any substance which, when taken, has the effect of altering the way the body works or the way a person behaves, feels, sees or thinks. As well as everyday substances such as tea and coffee, drugs include:

- *Alcohol and tobacco*
- *'over the counter medicines' such as paracetamol for headaches*
- *Prescribed drugs, such as antibiotics and tranquilisers*
- *'legal highs'*
- *volatile substances such as glues and aerosols*
- *illegal drugs such as cannabis, LSD and ecstasy*
- *other substances such as amyl/butyl nitrate ('poppers') and magic mushrooms'*

What constitutes a drug-related incident?

For the purposes of this guidance, a drug-related incident may include:

- a pupil displaying unusual or uncharacteristic behaviour
- an allegation that someone may be in possession /taking or peddling drugs on the school's premises
- suspicion of possession, possession with intent to supply and/or supply of any drug-related substance
- finding substance-related paraphernalia

Dealing with suspected substance-related incidents requires extreme sensitivity. This guidance helps empower those charged with handling difficult and complex issues to be fair and consistent in their dealings

with pupils. Linking the drugs policy with the school's policy on managing critical incidents and safeguarding and child protection will further support the school in handling drug-related situations appropriately.

Appendix Two: Handling Drug-Related Incidents provides clear and step-by-step guidance on how to respond to suspected drug incidents, including:

2.1 Finding a suspected substance or drug-related paraphernalia on or close to the school premises

2.2 Pupil suspected of having taken drugs/alcohol on school premises

2.3 Pupil suspected of possessing/distributing an illegal substance

2.4 Pupil in possession of alcohol or unauthorised prescribed medication on the school premises

2.5 A parent or carer arrives at school to collect a child and appears to be under the influence of alcohol or another substance

Roles and responsibilities in a school¹

The roles of individual staff members (teaching and nonteaching) including all ancillary staff.

All staff should be familiar with the content of the school's drug policy. They should also be fully aware of their responsibilities, should a suspected drug-related incident occur. It is not the individual staff member's responsibility to determine the circumstances surrounding the incident, but they will:

- assess the situation and decide on the appropriate actions to take;
- notify the principal and the designated teacher for drugs at the earliest opportunity;
- deal with any emergency procedures to ensure the safety of pupils and staff, if necessary
- forward any information, substance or paraphernalia received to the designated teacher for drugs, who will inform the principal;
- use the school's Drugs Incident Report Form [**see Appendix Three: Drugs Incident Report Form**] to complete a factual report on the suspected incident and forward to the designated teacher for drugs;
- consider the needs and safety of a pupil when discharging him or her into the care of a parent or carer who appears to be under the influence of alcohol or another substance (staff should maintain a calm atmosphere when dealing with the parent and, if concerned, should discuss with the parent alternative arrangements for caring for the pupil); and
- invoke safeguarding procedures, if there are reasonable grounds for believing that a parent or carer's behaviour may place a pupil at risk

The role of the designated teacher for drugs

The designated teacher is responsible for:

- co-ordinating the school's procedures for handling suspected drug-related incidents and training and inducting new and existing staff in these procedures;

¹ A summary of staff roles, responses and emergency procedures can be found in **Appendix One: Checklist of Roles and Responsibilities When Managing an Incident**

- ensuring that the school's disciplinary policy has an appropriate and proportionate statement about any disciplinary response resulting from suspected drug-related incidents;
- ensuring that the school's pastoral care policy has an appropriate statement about any pastoral response resulting from suspected drug-related incidents;
- liaising with other staff responsible for pastoral care;
- being the contact point for outside agencies that may have to work with the school or with a pupil or pupils concerned;
- responding to advice from first aiders, in the event of an incident, and informing the principal, who should contact the pupil's parents or carers immediately;
- taking possession of any substance(s) and associated paraphernalia found in a suspected incident;
- ensuring the well-being of pupil(s) involved in a suspected incident;
- completing a factual report using the schools Drug-Related Incident Form [**see Appendix Three: Drugs Incident Report Form**], which they forward to the principal; and
- reviewing and if required updating the policy at least annually and after a drug-related incident, where learning from the experience could improve practice.

In view of the responsibilities involved, the designated teacher will be a member of the school's senior management. In the absence of the designated teacher, the school recognised deputy for drug-related incidents is the Vice-Principal.

The role of the Principal

It is the principal's responsibility to determine the circumstances of all incidents, but it is the responsibility of the PSNI to investigate any criminal or suspected criminal offence. In any suspected drug-related incident, the principal will contact the parents or carers of those pupils involved. The principal must ensure that in any incident involving a controlled substance there is close liaison with the PSNI.

Failure to inform the PSNI of a suspected incident involving controlled drugs is a criminal offence.

After contacting the PSNI, the principal will confine their responsibilities to:

- the welfare of the pupil(s) involved in the incident and the other pupils in the school;
- health and safety during the handling, storage and safe disposal of any drug or drug-related paraphernalia, using protective gloves at all times;
- informing the Board of Governors;
- agreeing any appropriate pastoral or disciplinary response;
- reporting the incident to the Education Authority if appropriate, for example if an incident:
 - is serious enough to require PSNI involvement;

- requires that a child protection procedure is invoked; or
- leads to the suspension or exclusion of a pupil; and
- completing a written report and forwarding a copy to the Board of Governors and the designated officer in the Education Authority.

The role of the Board of Governors

School governors are responsible for their individual school. They will work with the appropriate staff, pupils and parents or carers to foster and support the school when it is developing and reviewing its drugs policy. They will also:

- facilitate a consultative process where the school community can respond and contribute to the policy's effectiveness and quality, which the governors should examine and approve before implementing in the school;
- ensure details of the policy are published in the school prospectus and that these are reviewed at least annually and after a drug-related incident; and
- be fully aware of and adequately trained to deal with suspected drug-related incidents, including alcohol and tobacco, tobacco-related products, electronic cigarettes, and their appropriate disciplinary response.

As a matter of good practice, the Board of Governors has a **designated governor for drugs** who has received specific training in drug-related issues.

Legal responsibilities and involving the PSNI

The school will ensure that all staff are aware of their legal responsibilities. It will notify the PSNI in all instances where there is an allegation or suspicion that a crime has been committed.

Failure to notify the PSNI is a criminal offence.

Staff will be made aware of the legal implications of:

- receiving information about a controlled drug;
- discovering a young person in possession of a controlled drug; or
- discovering a young person is involved in supplying a controlled drug.

A summary of relevant legislation is available at www.deni.org.uk

Contacting the PSNI

The school will contact the designated officer in their local PSNI area to ensure an appropriate response when dealing with suspected drug-related incidents in school. Each PSNI area has a designated officer who will advise on and agree procedures for schools to follow. The PSNI will always try to handle all incidents promptly and with discretion, understanding and tact. A non-uniformed officer will respond, wherever possible, depending on the circumstances and the nature of the suspected offence.

The school will notify their local PSNI officer in every case where a pupil has or is suspected of having controlled drugs in their possession, either on their person or in their belongings, or if controlled drugs are found on the school premises. This may include new psychoactive substances or prescription medication (that has not been brought to the attention of the school by the pupil and/or his or her parents). The school is not legally obliged to notify the PSNI if we suspect the misuse of solvents or alcohol, although we reserve the right to make such contact. The officer will be available to work with the school, pupils, parents or carers and other appropriate agencies to provide support, advice and assistance to help prevent reoccurrence and ensure the pupil is no longer at risk.

Interviewing pupils

In certain circumstances, the PSNI may interview a pupil on school premises with the principal's agreement. This may be a less intrusive and upsetting option for a pupil than going to a police station. If the school takes this course of action, the PSNI will conduct the interview in accordance with The Police and Criminal Evidence (Northern Ireland) Order (PACE) 1989. This has strict guidelines about when and where to exercise this option. The school needs to make all possible efforts to inform the pupil's parents or carers before a PSNI interview takes place. The PSNI will not conduct an interview without the correct persons being present.

Responses in the event of a suspected drug-related incident

Illness, unusual or uncharacteristic behaviour

Young people may behave unpredictably or in a bizarre fashion for many reasons during their time at school. Changes in behaviour may indicate a range of difficulties and problems and may be related to a medical condition, rather than substance misuse. It is, however, important to note that intoxication, physical collapse or unconsciousness can also result from an initial experiment with drugs.

Staff will bring any indications of illness, unusual or uncharacteristic behaviour, which are suspected of being caused by substance misuse, to the attention of the designated teacher for drugs. They will not make any judgment until they have determined the circumstances surrounding the incident. Where staff believe a pupil may have taken a substance they suspect is a drug, they will seek medical assistance immediately after following the recommended emergency procedures. The school will inform parents and the PSNI.

For further details, search for *Signs and Symptoms of Drug Use* at www.deni.org.uk

Taking possession of a suspected controlled substance and/or associated paraphernalia

The law permits school staff to take temporary possession of a substance suspected of being a controlled drug to protect a pupil from harm and prevent the pupil committing the offence of possession. The teacher should, using appropriate safety precautions, take the suspected substance and any associated equipment

and/or paraphernalia to the designated teacher for drugs as soon as possible and ideally on the day in question. They should arrange for its safe storage until the school can hand it over to the local PSNI officer to identify whether it is a controlled substance. School staff should not attempt to analyse or taste an unidentified substance. An adult witness should be present when staff confiscate the substance and the school should keep a record of the details, using the school's Drug Incident Report Form.

An allegation of a suspected controlled drug-related incident

Carrying out a search

If the designated teacher for drugs receives an allegation of possession, he or she may need to search a pupil's desk or locker, if he or she has cause to believe it contains unlawful items, including controlled drugs. **However, teachers cannot search personal belongings in the desk or locker without the consent of the pupil or his parent or carer.** Staff should only search the pupil's personal belongings, including schoolbag, coat or other items in the presence of the pupil and another adult witness.

If the school suspects pupils of concealing controlled drugs on their person or in their personal belongings, staff should make every effort to encourage them to produce these substances voluntarily. Staff should ask pupils to turn out their pockets or schoolbags. If the pupils refuse, staff should contact their parents or carers and the PSNI to deal with the situation.

A member of staff should never carry out a physical search of a pupil, unless there is compelling evidence that the pupil has committed an offence.

If staff recover a substance or an object that they suspect has a connection with drugs, they should take possession of it and make a full record using the school's **Drug Incident Report Form**.

If a pupil refuses to be searched the school must establish whether the probability that the pupil has committed an offence outweighs their right to privacy, before deciding whether to carry out a search without consent. The school drugs policy should clearly explain the procedures and circumstances for searches where there is reason for suspicion.

Possession, Possession with Intent to Supply and Supply of Controlled Drugs

The school is aware that pupil involvement in suspected controlled drug-related incidents may take several forms. These could include:

1. possession;
2. possession with intent to supply; and/or
3. the supply of controlled drugs.

It is illegal for pupils to be in possession of a controlled drug. If a member of staff encounters a pupil in possession of what they believe or suspect to be a controlled drug, they should immediately attempt to take possession of the substance and detain the pupil. They should then send for assistance from the designated teacher for drugs, who will deal with the incident as outlined in the school policy.

It is not illegal for a pupil to possess or use other substances that are not controlled, for example alcohol, solvents, tobacco, tobacco-related products, electronic cigarettes, over-the-counter medication or prescribed medication. Prescribed medication, however, may be considered a controlled substance if it has been prescribed for someone else. The teacher will make a preliminary enquiry to clarify who the medication is for. This will establish whether the school should contact the PSNI about the incident.

Although some unknown substances may be new psychoactive substances, schools should treat all unknown substances as suspected controlled drugs and respond accordingly.

The school will deal with a pupil in possession of substances that are not controlled, using the school's disciplinary or pastoral care procedures in line with the school's child protection and safeguarding policy. It will also notify the pupil's parents or carers. In these circumstances, the school has no legal obligation to notify the PSNI. Where the principal feels that there are issues about the origin of these substances, the school may notify the designated officer in the local PSNI area for advice and guidance.

Finding drug-related paraphernalia

Paraphernalia in the school grounds is an indication of drug use or misuse. Any member of the school community who encounters any paraphernalia should use extreme care, as these items may be hazardous. Anyone who finds paraphernalia associated with drug use or misuse should report it to the designated teacher for drugs, who will assess the situation and respond accordingly. This response may include contacting the PSNI.

The following list is not exhaustive. It gives teachers examples of what may indicate the presence of controlled substances:

- small bottles or pill boxes;
- hypodermic needles;
- twists of paper;
- cigarette papers, lighters and spent matches;
- electronic cigarette liquid refill bottles (there is a potential risk that refillable cartridges used in some electronic cigarettes could be filled with substances other than nicotine, serving as a new and potentially dangerous way to deliver drugs);
- roaches (ends of rolled-up cigarettes);
- punctured cans, plastic bottles or containers;
- aerosols or butane gas refills; and
- drugs themselves.

Recording an incident

If the principal considers an incident to be serious, the school will call the Education Authority designated officer to alert them to the incident and then make a full written factual record of the incident. The PSNI may also be informed about the incident.

The school will record any statements that are provided by pupils who are suspected of having been involved in, or having witnessed, an incident. For an incident that requires only an internal school investigation, for example finding cigarettes on school property, the school must treat any sensitive information about pupils in a confidential and secure manner. The school may need to engage the help of another adult to support both the designated teacher for drugs and the pupils involved in the incident, particularly when the pupils may need to be interviewed separately. **[see Appendix Three: Drugs Incident Report Form]**

For an incident that requires a PSNI investigation, the principal is responsible for determining the circumstances of all incidents. The PSNI is responsible for investigating any criminal or suspected criminal offence. Under these circumstances, schools should not take any written statements from individuals involved in the incident. The investigating officer is responsible for dealing with the incident so that he or she might co-ordinate the recording of all statements that might be required for a court case.

School response to drug-related incidents

Deciding on appropriate sanctions

It is not appropriate in this document to prescribe specific sanctions that the school will apply to suspected drug-related incidents. The principal is responsible for deciding how to respond to particular incidents, taking account of factors such as:

- the age of the pupil concerned;
- whether the incident involved one pupil or a group of pupils;
- whether there has been evidence of particular peer group pressure; and
- the level of involvement;
- whether the PSNI should be informed about the incident.

The school should consider what sanctions or actions would be in the best interests of the pupil in the longer term, while ensuring the safety and well-being of other pupils. Permanent expulsion can be considered as one of a range of possible options.

The school will explore the relevant factors to determine the seriousness of the incident and the needs of those involved and then respond appropriately. For example:

- Does the pupil admit or deny the allegations?
- Is this a first offence?
- Is the substance legal or illegal?

- What quantity of the substance was involved?
- What was the pupil's motivation?
- Is the pupil knowledgeable and careful or reckless about their own or others' safety?
- Does the pupil have a parent or carer or family member who is misusing drugs?
- Does the pupil know and understand the school policy and school rules?
- Where does the incident appear on a scale from 'possession of a small quantity' to 'persistent supply'?
- If the school suspects the pupil of supplying, how much was supplied and was the pupil coerced into the supply role or the one 'whose turn it was' to buy for others, or is there evidence of organised or habitual supply?

The school will access a range of responses, incorporating both sanctions and counselling and potentially guiding young people towards appropriate treatment and support. These responses should reflect different kinds of drug-related offences, such as:

- being under the influence of alcohol or a controlled drug;
- possession of alcohol for individual use or selling or sharing with other pupils;
- possession and/or possession with the intent to supply a controlled drug; and
- supplying a controlled drug, either giving or selling to someone else.

There is no legal distinction between supply with or without money and the school may not make a distinction in their disciplinary responses. The school must always consider the needs of individual pupils and have appropriate interventions and support mechanisms in the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

The school will develop a range of options for responding to the identified needs of those involved in a drug-related incident. Whatever response we put in place, it will always aim to give pupils the opportunity to learn from their mistakes and to develop as individuals. The school will justify any sanction it imposes, according to:

- the seriousness of the incident;
- the identified needs of the pupil, which are particularly important under such circumstances;
- the needs of other pupils, the school and the community;
- the published school rules and expectations; and
- disciplinary action for breaches of other school rules (such as theft, violence or bullying).

The school will take into account whether a pupil involved in an incident has previously displayed good discipline and engagement with the school, and how the proposed sanction might affect the pupil's educational outcomes. Are there other issues on-going in a young person's life that perhaps leaves them more vulnerable to influence from others or to making poor choices? In some cases, it may be more appropriate for the school to permit a pupil to remain for a period to complete their current studies, rather than to proceed with their immediate exclusion.

Behavioural contracts

In the case of serious breaches of discipline or while the school is investigating a suspected drug-related incident, the school may draw up a behavioural contract to be agreed with the pupil and the parent or carers. The contract will clearly set out the terms allowing the pupil to remain at school and include provision for monitoring their progress. The school may withdraw the pupil from normal contact with peers during the school day for a fixed period at first, until their behaviour has improved. This approach may require additional support from outside agencies to help facilitate change (see Appendix 10).

Suspension or exclusion

The school will not automatically exclude a pupil because they have broken the law. However, it should be aware, particularly in cases of supplying, of its duty to protect all pupils from exposure to potentially dangerous substances. It should bear this in mind when deciding how to respond to individual incidents.

The school will consider and carry out any suspension or exclusion within the terms of schemes prepared by the Education Authority and/or the Board of Governors. When the school permanently excludes a pupil on a drug-related offence, the Education Authority will work to secure an alternative school place for the pupil, if police involvement has not made that impossible.

Involving parents or carers

The school will ensure that parents or carers are kept fully informed of school procedures in the event of suspected drug-related incidents. The designated teacher for drugs will carefully consider their approach when contacting parents or carers. They will do this as a matter of course for all incidents involving possession or misuse of drugs. They will make every effort to contact the parents or carers before involving the police. They will also consider parents or carers who may be emotionally distressed in response to a suspected drug-related incident.

The school will also direct parents or carers to the booklet *Dealing with Young People's Alcohol and other Drug Misuse – a guide for parents and carers* as a source of support. This can be downloaded from the DENI website: www.deni.org.uk

Pastoral care

During and after any incident, the school will consider the individual needs of any pupil or pupils involved. This should involve the pupil or pupils, the principal, parents or carers, the designated teacher for drugs and appropriate pastoral care staff. It may also involve the PSNI officer and an education welfare officer, where appropriate. Communication between staff and early involvement of parents or carers may set the scene for early, supportive, pastoral intervention.

In some instances, either before or following a drugs incident, the school will identify counselling or other appropriate support as potentially valuable to a pupil. The school has access to a range of specialised agencies, support and counselling services available that may support a pupil at risk. Schools can find specialist support for smoking at www.publichealth.hscni.net and www.want2stop.info

As part of planning a pastoral care response, the school will consider developing referral pathways that identify specific support agencies and contacts in their local area for a range of incidents.

Role of counselling

Counselling rarely focuses on drug misuse alone. It can consider more holistic needs that may underlie or indicate drug-related problems, for example the 'toxic three':

- hidden harm, where a young person is affected by their parents' or carers' substance misuse;
- domestic violence; or
- parental mental health.

Counselling is only appropriate when a pupil wishes to take advantage of what it offers. The Independent Counselling Service for Schools (ICSS), funded by DE, offers a free school-based service to post-primary aged pupils in mainstream and special schools. Pupils can refer themselves or a parent or member of school staff can refer them.

It is usually neither constructive nor effective to attempt to impose counselling on a pupil. The school counsellor, where present, and/or the school's pastoral lead may assess appropriate support needs for individual pupils and identify who is in the best position to meet these.

Schools should always seek the pupil's consent before referring them for counselling. They should explain the purpose and benefits of counselling or other appropriate support. Schools should ensure confidentiality in line with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Where the school has identified a pupil as having experimented with a controlled substance or as being at risk of doing so, it should offer the pupil appropriate counselling or support within the school's general arrangements for the pastoral care of its pupils. The school should also inform the pupil's parents.

Confidentiality

Teachers cannot and should not promise total confidentiality. They should make the boundaries of confidentiality clear to pupils. Members of staff should carefully consider their response, if a pupil approaches them for individual advice on drug use or misuse. In the case of controlled substances, the staff member should explain to the pupil that they cannot offer a guarantee of confidentiality. If the pupil discloses information concerning controlled substances, the staff member must pass this on to the designated teacher for drugs.

Communication following a suspected or confirmed drug-related incident

Staff, pupils and parents or carers

Schools should carefully consider how they communicate any information about a suspected or confirmed substance-related incident to staff, pupils and parents or carers. They should only disclose information to members of staff concerned with the pastoral needs of the individual pupil. They should inform only the parents or carers of the pupil or pupils directly involved of the incident and subsequent outcomes.

Teachers should not discuss individual cases with other pupils. The school may, however, need to make a general statement informing the school community after an incident where rumours may create a negative atmosphere. Such statements are never to identify the pupil, or pupils, by name or contain information that may reveal the identity of the pupil(s) in question.

Dealing with the media

If the school receives an enquiry from the media, only the principal or a designated nominee should respond to the call. When responding to the media, it is essential that the school respect the privacy of pupils and their families. The principal should prepare a checklist of the appropriate key facts and decide whether to liaise with the PSNI before issuing a statement. Any statements made should be positive, short, factual and without elaboration. Concluding statements should be reassuring and restate that the school has managed the incident effectively and in accordance with its drugs policy. If any further comments are necessary, the principal should reiterate the original statement.

Reporting to relevant authorities

The school should inform the PSNI, if a principal has concerns about a substance found in a pupil's possession. The Drugs and Alcohol Monitoring Information System (DAMIS) operates as an early warning system in Northern Ireland. It gathers information about emerging trends in drug misuse and alerts government organisations so that they can act quickly and provide relevant information or advice to those who misuse drugs. DAMIS monitors:

- sudden increases in a particular drug being misused;
- drugs being misused in new ways;
- new drugs becoming available (for example NPS/legal highs); and
- contaminated drugs or bad batches available on the streets.

If schools have any concerns about substances found on their premises, and in particular any adverse reactions that these may have caused, they can contact DAMIS at damis@hscni.net.

The Department of Health oversees DAMIS with support from the Public Health Agency, the Department of Justice and the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI). DAMIS treats all information as confidential and does not identify the provider of information.

Appendix One

Checklist of Roles and Responsibilities When Managing an Incident

Individual **staff** members should:

- assess the situation and decide upon appropriate action;
- make the situation safe for all pupils and other members of staff, secure first aid and send for additional staff support, if necessary;
- carefully gather up any drugs and/or associated paraphernalia or evidence and pass all information or evidence to the designated teacher for drugs; and
- write a brief factual report of the incident and forward it to the designated teacher for drugs.

The **designated teacher** for drugs should:

- respond to first aider's advice or recommendations;
- inform parents or carers immediately, in the case of an emergency;
- take possession of any substance(s) and associated paraphernalia found;
- inform the principal;
- take initial responsibility for pupil(s) involved in the suspected incident; and
- complete a Drugs Incident Report Form (see Appendix 5) and forward it to the principal.

The **principal** should:

- determine the circumstances surrounding the incident;
- ensure that the following people are informed:
 - parents or carers;
 - designated officer in the local PSNI area, if required
 - Board of Governors; and
 - designated officer in Education Authority.
- consult and agree pastoral and disciplinary responses, including counselling services or support;
- forward a copy of the Incident Report Form to the chairperson of the Board of Governors and the designated officer in the Education Authority, if appropriate; and
- review procedures and amend, if necessary.

Recognising Signs of Substance Use

What to look out for. If someone is having a bad time on drugs, they may be:

- anxious / tense;
- panicky;
- overheated and dehydrated;
- drowsy; or
- having difficulty with breathing.

What to do

The first things you should do are:

- stay calm;
- calm them and be reassuring, don't scare them or chase after them;
- try to find out what they've taken; and stay with them.

If they are anxious, tense or panicky, you should:

- sit them in a quiet and calm room;
- keep them away from crowds, bright lights and loud noises;
- tell them to take slow deep breaths; and
- stay with them.

If they are **really drowsy**, you should:

- sit them in a quiet place and keep them awake;
- if they become unconscious or don't respond, call an ambulance immediately and place them in the recovery position;
- don't scare them, shout at them or shock them;
- don't give them coffee to wake them up; and
- don't put them in a cold shower to 'wake them up'.

If they are **unconscious** or having difficulty breathing, you should:

- immediately phone for an ambulance;
- place them into the recovery position;
- stay with them until the ambulance arrives; and

- if you know what drug they've taken, tell the ambulance crew; this can help make sure that they get the right treatment straight away.

Emergency Procedures

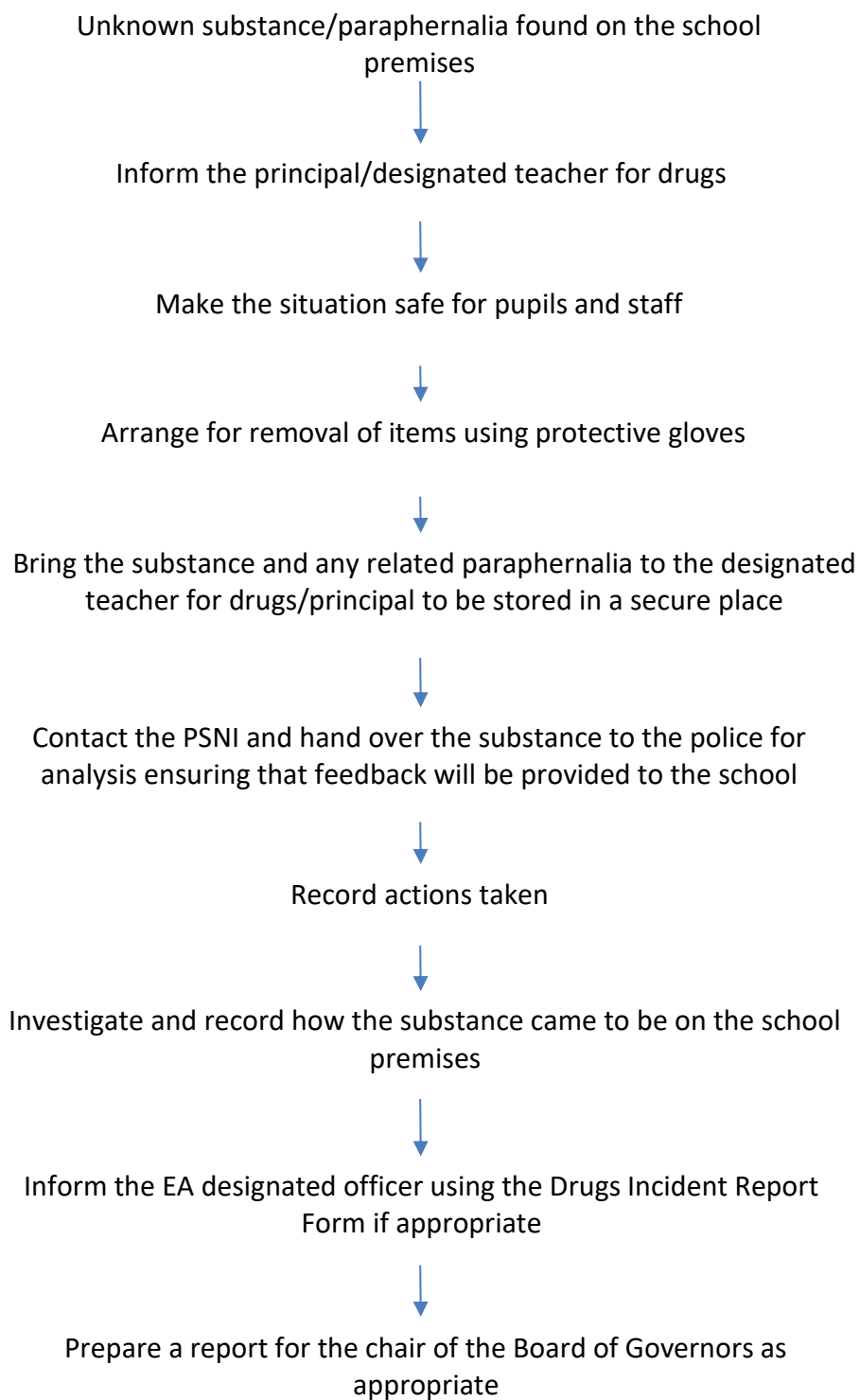
This is the current best advice on what to do if someone is in difficulty because of misusing drugs.

- It is important to find out what they have taken as this could affect emergency aid, for example it will help the ambulance crew. Loosen clothing and call for an ambulance immediately.
- If the person has taken a depressant substance, for example solvents, alcohol, sleeping pills or painkillers, it is likely that they will be drowsy or unconscious. If the person is drowsy, it is important to try to keep them awake by talking to them or applying a cool damp cloth or towel to the back of their neck. You should not give them anything to eat or drink as this could lead to vomiting or choking.
- If they are or become unconscious, put them into the recovery position, clear their airway if blocked and keep checking on any changes to pulse and breathing rates.
- If they stop breathing, begin mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, starting with chest compressions. (If you have not been trained in CPR or are worried about giving mouth-to-mouth resuscitation to a stranger, you can do chest compression-only (or hands-only) CPR). Stay with the person until the ambulance crew arrive and then tell them all the facts, including what the person has taken. This is very important as it could save his or her life.
- If the person has taken a stimulant, such as amphetamines (speed) or ecstasy, they may show various signs of distress. If the person is panicking, try to reassure them. It is important that they calm down and relax. Get them to breathe in and out, deeply and slowly. Help them by counting aloud slowly. If they start to hyperventilate – that is they can't control their breathing – ask them to breathe in and out of a paper (not a plastic) bag, if there is one available.
- If the person has taken a hallucinogen, such as LSD, magic mushrooms or cannabis in combination with ecstasy, they may become very anxious, distressed and fearful. They may act in an unusual way. It is very important to reassure the person – tell them that you will look after them, that they are in no danger, that it is the effects of the substance and that these will soon wear off. You may want to take them to a quiet place, keep other people away and continue to reassure them. Just stay with them and talk calmly to them until the ambulance arrives.

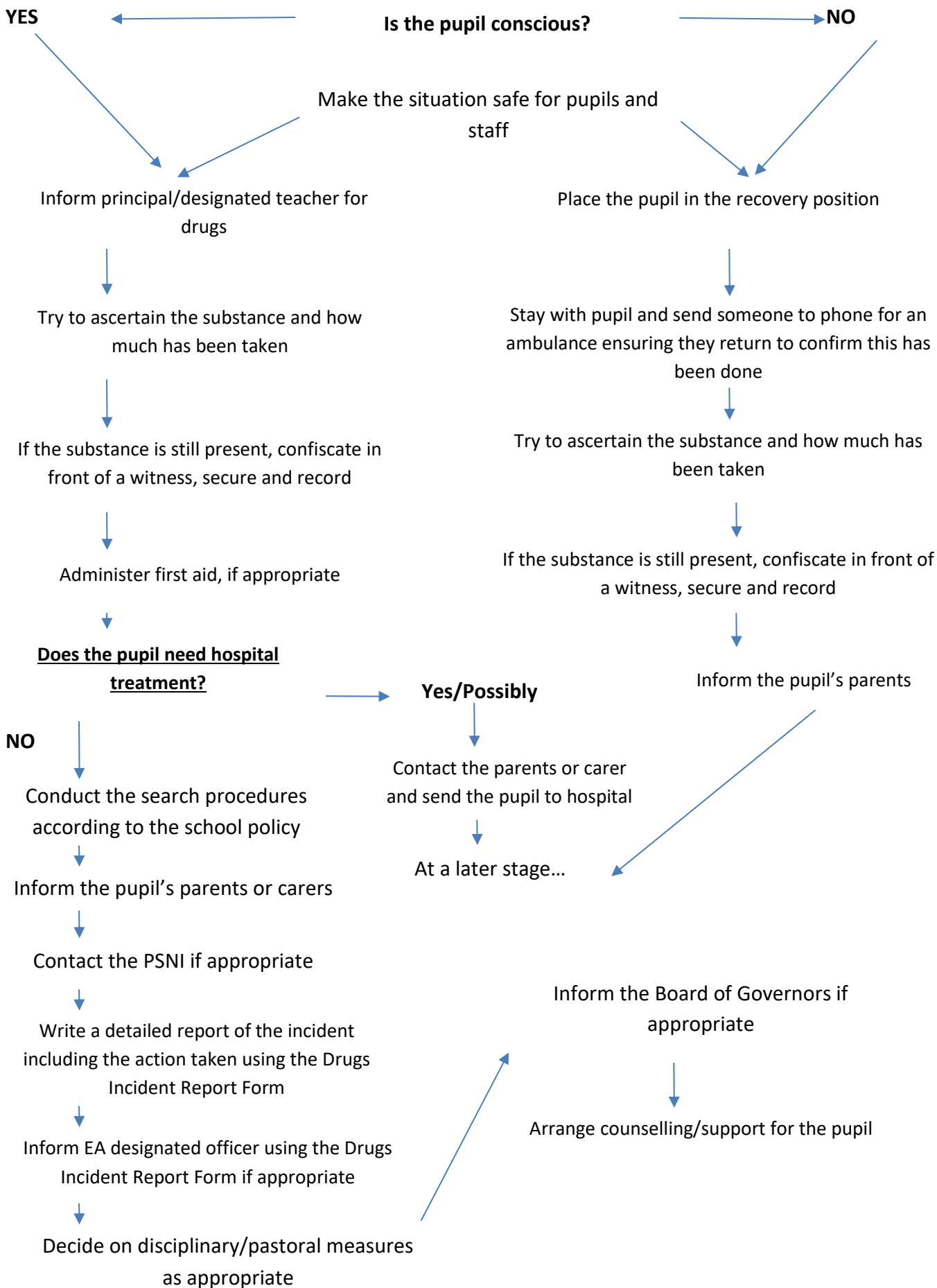
Appendix Two

Handling Drug-Related Incidents

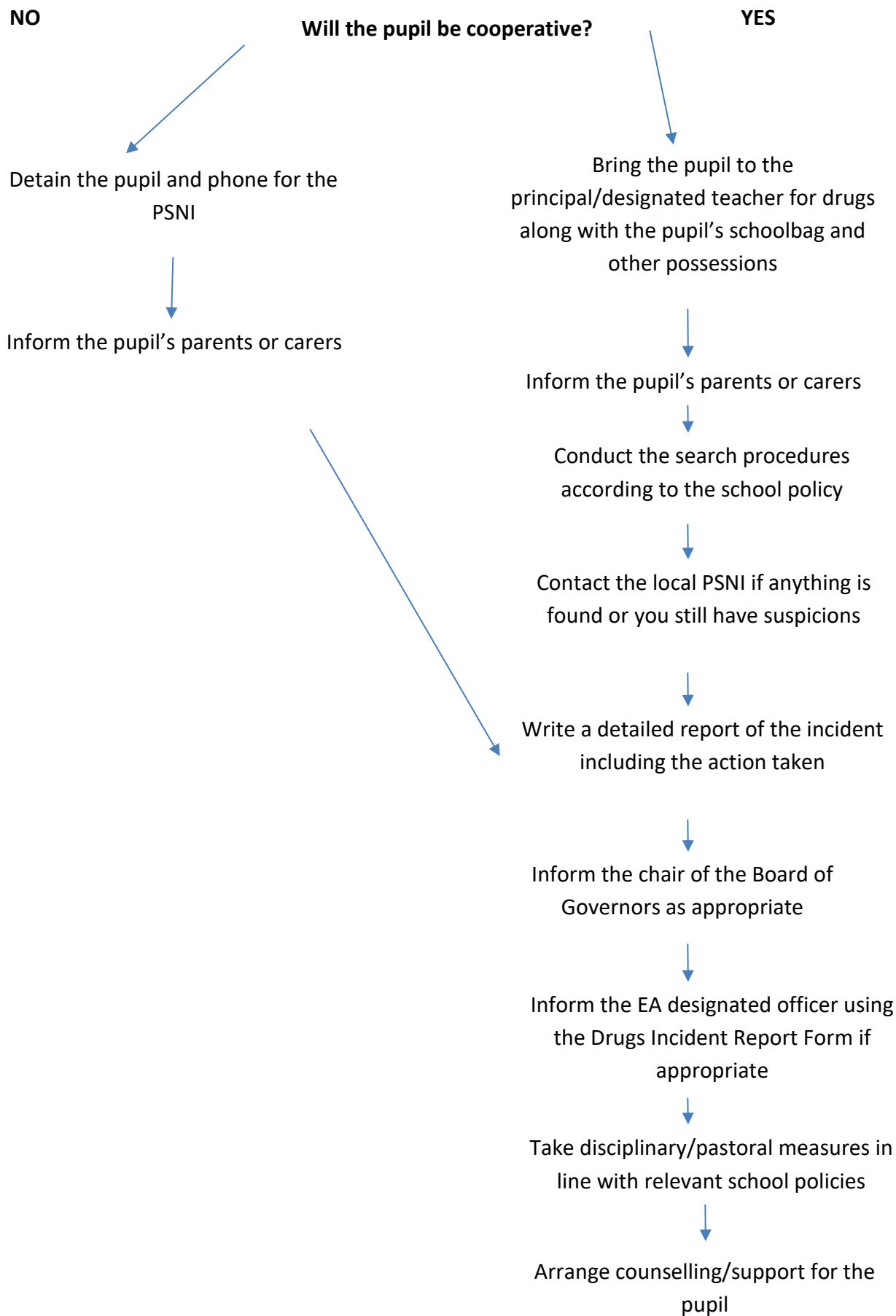
2.1 Finding a suspected substance or drug-related paraphernalia on or close to the school premises



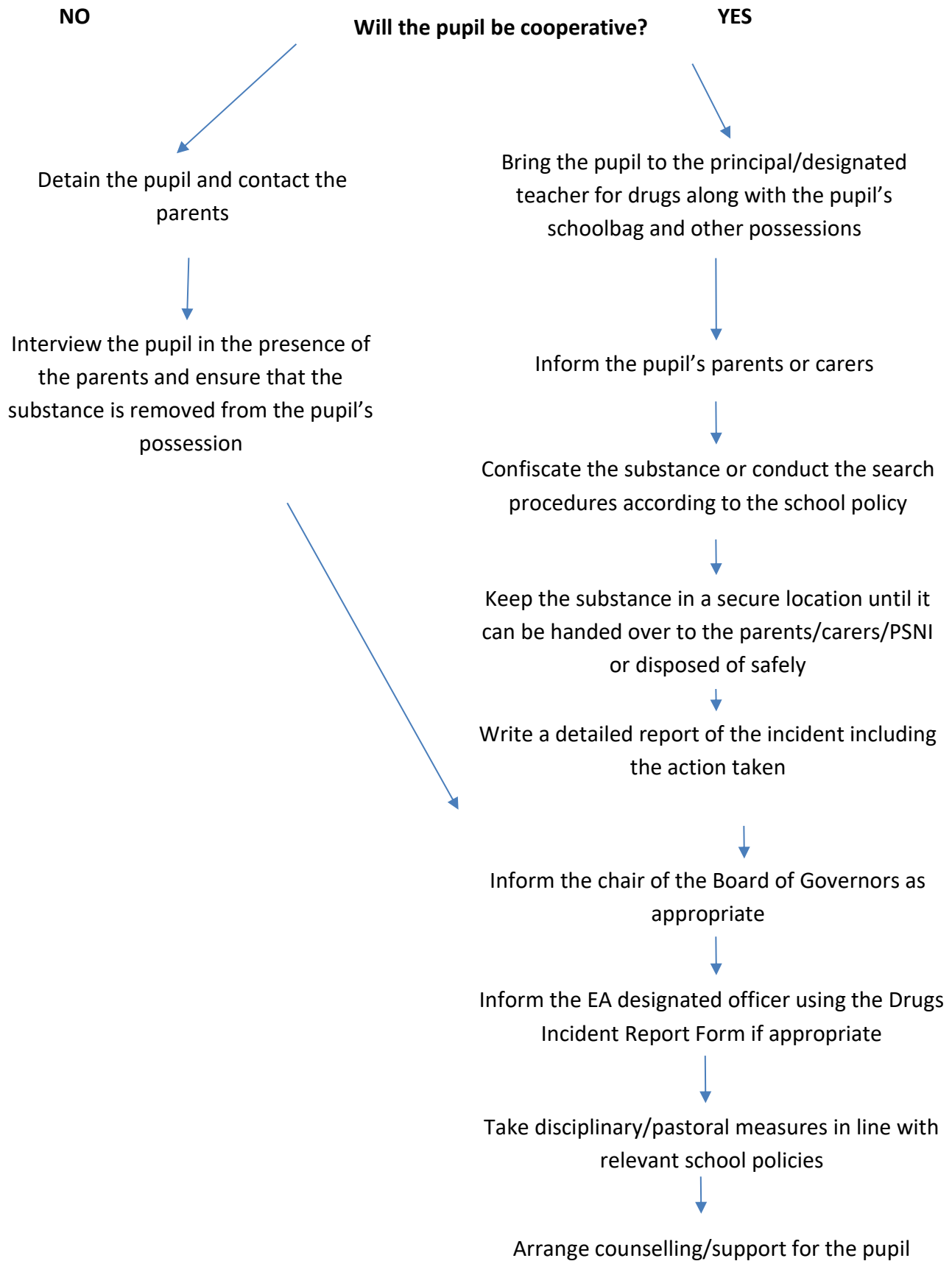
2.2 Pupil suspected of having taken drugs/alcohol on school premises



2.3 Pupil suspected of possessing/distributing an illegal substance



2.4 Pupil in possession of alcohol or unauthorised prescribed medication on the school premises



2.5 A parent or carer arrives at school to collect a child and appears to be under the influence of alcohol or another substance

Parent or carer suspected of being drunk/high



Discretely detain the pupil in the classroom and send for the designated teacher/principal



Principal speaks to the parent or carer to assess the situation



Can the pupil be released to the parent or carer?

YES

Release the pupil to their parent or carer once the principal is satisfied that it is safe to do so

NO

Contact another relative to come and collect the child



Ask the parent or carer to come into the school to quietly discuss the school's concerns



Contact social services in line with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy



If the parent or carer becomes violent, tries to forcibly remove the child or intends to drive while under the influence, contact PSNI



Write a detailed report of the incident including action taken



Inform the chair of the Board of Governors as appropriate



Inform the EA designated officer using the Drugs Incident Report Form if appropriate

Drugs Incident Report Form

Description of the Incident:

Date: