

HOLY FAMILY PRIMARY SCHOOL
MAGHERAFELT



MISUSE OF DRUGS

POLICY STATEMENT

HOLY FAMILY PRIMARY SCHOOL

MISUSE OF DRUGS POLICY

Introduction

Ethos

Holy Family P.S. is committed to serving the Magherafelt community through the provision of a caring and effective Catholic education, which will enable children to fulfil their potential for Christian, academic and personal development. We value and respect all members of our school community and recognize that each is unique and gifted differently. We encourage everyone to share responsibility within the school and to participate in its life and work, developing and using all their talents.

Family life is important to us and therefore we actively seek the support of our parents and the wider community. For Holy family Primary school, there is no better way to build family – working hard together, sharing, caring, loving, forgiving and always being loyal.

Rationale

We recognize that young children are exposed to messages about drug use from an early age. They are likely to have seen older family members smoking, drinking or taking pills and medicines. They are now more drug literate, being exposed to the terminology of drugs and drug use through contact with older children, popular music, television programmes, children's magazines and through the increasing availability of drugs in general. Often the messages they receive are confusing and seem to glamorise the use of drugs.

It is our aim to attempt to promote within our pupils knowledge of drugs and their long-term adverse effects and to equip them with the skills to manage their lives effectively and make informed and responsible decisions.

Drugs Education is a statutory requirement for all schools and recent research has shown that such education is beneficial in preventing some children from experimenting with drugs and delaying the onset with others.

Drugs Definition

We understand 'drug' to be any substance which, when taken, has the effect of altering the way a person behaves, feels or thinks. When we speak of drugs we are also referring to the illicit drugs or socially unacceptable legal drugs such as poppers, solvents and the underage consumption of alcohol and tobacco.

Illegal drugs are those listed as controlled drugs.... Cannabis, ecstasy, Magic Mushrooms, LSD etc

Prescribed drugs are those which are issued on prescription by a doctor.

We recognise that some pupils will have to take prescribed drugs on a regular basis in order to maintain bodily functions.

Aims of the Drugs Policy

- To ensure a consistent approach to drug-related issues by all members of the school staff including teachers, classroom assistants and all ancillary staff.
- To define the roles and responsibilities and legal duties within the school concerning drugs
- To implement and deliver drugs education in the school curriculum.
- To develop procedures for dealing with any drug-related issue.
- To ensure our children acquire the knowledge, skills and understanding to make sensible decisions with regard to drugs.
- To safeguard existing good practice

We need the full co-operation of parents and agencies to help us in this work.

Roles and Responsibilities

Board of Governors

- Support the development and on-going review of the drugs policy and programme.
- Ensure a summary of the policy is published in the school prospectus
- Ensure they are fully aware and adequately trained to deal with any drug related incident including alcohol and tobacco.
- Have one member of the Board specifically trained in drugs-related issues.

The Principal, Mr P. Donnelly, as Principal will: -

- Determine (not investigate) any drug-related incident. (The PSNI will investigate)
- Contact the parents and or guardians of any pupils involved in any drugs-related incident.
- Contact the PSNI, then confine his responsibilities to the welfare of the pupil(s) involved
- Inform the Board of Governors about the incident
- Agree with them any appropriate pastoral or disciplinary measures to be taken
- Store or dispose of any drug or drug related paraphernalia
- Report the incident to CCMS and Philip Hewitt at Antrim Board Centre.

The Designated Teacher for Drugs is Mrs Marley her responsibilities will be:

- To oversee and co-ordinate the drugs education programme
- To co-ordinate the school's procedures for handling suspected drugs-related incidents
- To ensure procedures are reviewed regularly
- To act as contact point for outside agencies coming into the school
- To take possession of any substance or drugs paraphernalia found in the event of any drugs-related incident.
- To complete a report following any drug-related incident.

Individual Staff Members (teaching and non-teaching)

- Deal with any emergency procedures surrounding the incident they have just encountered.
- Forward any information, substance or paraphernalia to designated teacher.
- Complete a factual report for the designated teacher.

Staff Training

All staff, including ancillary and auxiliary staff and members of the Board of Governors will be given the opportunity to receive drugs awareness training. Trainers may include NEELB Field Officer for Drugs, PSNI Drug Squad and Health Promotion Agency.

Overview of our Drugs Education Programme

Drugs education is an integral part of our health education programme and takes into account the personal, social and environmental issues relating to our pupils. However, from September 2007, for P1 and P5 it will be included in the statutory learning area of Personal Development.

Within subjects such as English and Physical Education, there are opportunities for considering drug-related issues from a variety of perspectives.

Our drugs education programme, which is a preventative one, will be related to the maturity, present knowledge and expertise of the children and will be pupil centred, where pupils will be helped to acquire and develop the skills and attitudes necessary for them to be able to handle this knowledge and information sensibly.

Active learning methodologies such as discussion, debates, circle time, role-play etc. will be used. These will also help develop their decision-making and thinking skills.

An example of the aims would be:

- To help young people distinguish between useful and harmful drugs
- To inform children of the effects of drug abuse and provide accurate and up to date information on drugs and their effects on health
- To help pupils acquire skills in managing the pressures of the youth culture they live in.
- To establish skills and behaviour which enable children to communicate effectively, assert themselves and take responsible decisions
- To help pupils come to an understanding of the 'rightness' and 'wrongness' of certain behaviours
- To help pupils acquire skills in managing peer pressure
- To create a climate where a young person feels comfortable to discuss drugs.
- To build up the self-esteem and confidence of our children
- To ensure progression and continuity in knowledge and understanding, matching these to the age, maturity and circumstances of the pupils concerned

Staff Use of Smoking and Alcohol

As from 30 April 2007, it is a legal requirement that our premises are completely smoke free. No-Smoking signs have been displayed, clearly visible to all members of staff or visitors to the school. Anyone smoking will be advised that they are committing an offence and will be politely asked to stop smoking and advised that it is also an offence for the school to allow anyone to smoke.

For issues relating to staff use of alcohol, we refer them to the Alcohol and Drug Misuse Policy (TNC 2005/5) available from the D.E. or the C.C.M.S websites

Communicating the Policy to Parents/Agencies

The Drugs Policy will be available on the school website so that parents have access to this information at any time. Their views and ideas will be welcomed whenever the policy is being reviewed. The Board of Governors is fully aware of the policy and the discipline measures to be followed.

All outside agencies will be made aware of the policy to ensure that what they offer is part of the ongoing drugs programme and is always appropriate.

Disciplinary Measures

It is not appropriate to prescribe specific sanctions for drug-related incidents. The principal will decide how to respond to any such incident after taking into account a range of factors such as:

- Age of pupil
- What was the motivation?
- Was there peer pressure?
- Does the pupil know and understand the school policy and rules?
- Is it a first or subsequent offence?
- Quantity of drug
- Is the drug legal/illegal?
- Is it possession or supply

At all times we will consider the needs of individual pupils and support mechanisms will be put into place, such as appropriate counselling from NEELB or other appropriate agency. The matter will be handled discretely and sensitively and parents are expected to support the aims of the school throughout the implementation of any aspect of the school's policy in deciding disciplinary matters. It is emphasised that all measures taken will be for the long term benefit of the pupil as well as the protection of other pupils.

Searching:

School staff may not search children's clothing or possessions without parental consent. However, it is acceptable to ask the pupil to empty pockets or schoolbag or, in an emergency situation, the bag may be searched for the purpose of diagnosis in order to provide reliable information for any medical treatment.

This will always be done in the presence of another adult. However, if a pupil has or is suspected of having a controlled drug, the police will be called to the school to conduct the investigation.

Detaining:

If consent is refused and there are reasonable grounds to suspect that the pupil has in their possession or has taken a controlled drug, pupils can be prevented, using reasonable force, from leaving school premises pending the arrival of the police. Parents will be informed as soon as possible and the incident documented in the Incident Report Form.

Confidentiality:

In the child's interest, the school can never guarantee confidentiality in the event of a drug-related incident, or if the child revealed that they had taken illegal drugs. This information must be given to the principal. This applies to all staff and any member of outside agencies visiting the school.

Procedures for using out-side agencies

Visitor/Agency will:

- Have Child Protection policy
- Be given copy of policy to ensure school's views on confidentiality
- Have appropriate resources
- Have a clear set of aims and objectives and the impact it had on the children.
- Ensure their programme is part of the school's drugs programme

The teacher will:

- Always be present in the room
- Ensure the content is appropriate
- Evaluate the programme and the impact it made on the children.
- Provide introductory/follow-up activities before and after the visit

Guidance for confiscation and storage of harmful substances

The law allows staff to take temporary possession of any substance found for the purpose of protecting a pupil from harm and committing the offence of possession. The teacher should take any substance/paraphernalia found to the Designated Teacher who will arrange for its safe storage with the principal until it can be handed over to the police. Another adult should always be present when the substance is confiscated and a record will be kept of the details.

Guidance on storage, handling and disposal of harmful substances

We understand solvents to be volatile substances like adhesives, aerosols, cleaning materials, fuels etc. Strong glues will not be available for pupils' use in our school, e.g. evostick, cow gum, turpentine, white spirits etc. Care will be taken in the purchasing and storing of solvent materials which are used throughout the school.

Teachers

- There will be close supervision throughout the school of materials such as glue, felt-tips, etc when used by pupils
- In classrooms, teachers/classroom assistants will be expected to monitor closely the distribution, use and collection of all potentially hazardous substances.
- Such materials will be kept in a locked cupboard, with access only for the teacher/classroom assistant.
- Pupils will not be allowed to bring aerosols to school or the swimming pool.

Cleaning Staff

- All cleaning materials and substances used in the maintenance and cleaning of the school will be labelled and stored in the original containers and kept locked away when not in use. These are the responsibility of the caretaker.
- The caretaker will ensure no aerosols will be left in toilet areas, within reach of pupils.

Monitoring and Evaluating

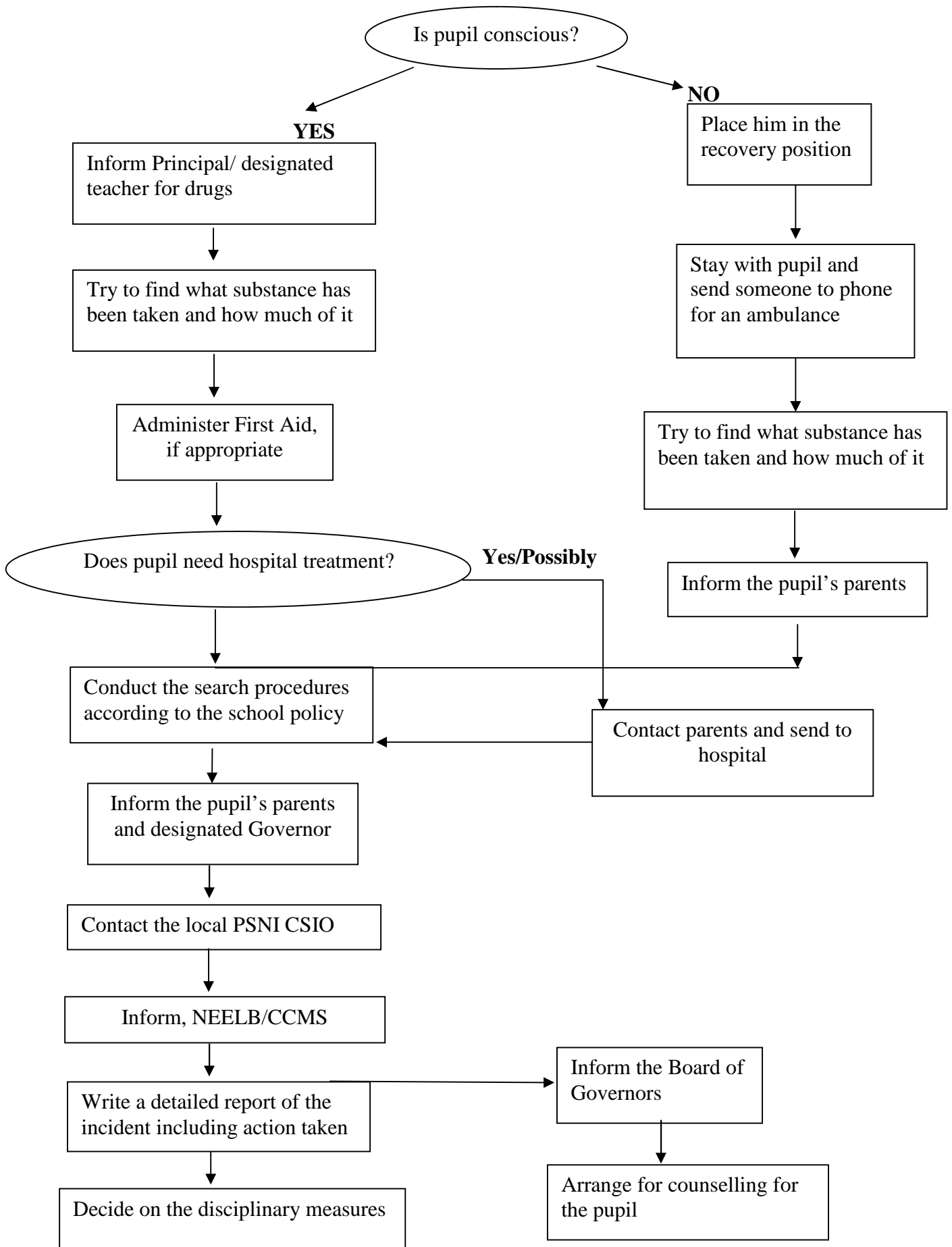
This policy and the procedures contained within it will be monitored and amended, after consultation, when appropriate. It will be reviewed and amended, if necessary, following any incident, actual or suspected.

APPENDICES

- Appendix 1 Pupil suspected of having taken drugs in school
- Appendix 2 Pupil suspected of possessing/distributing an illegal
- Appendix 3 Drugs and Substance Misuse Incident Report Form
- Appendix 4 School Record and Checklist
- Appendix 5 Proforma to inform NEELB/Employing Authority

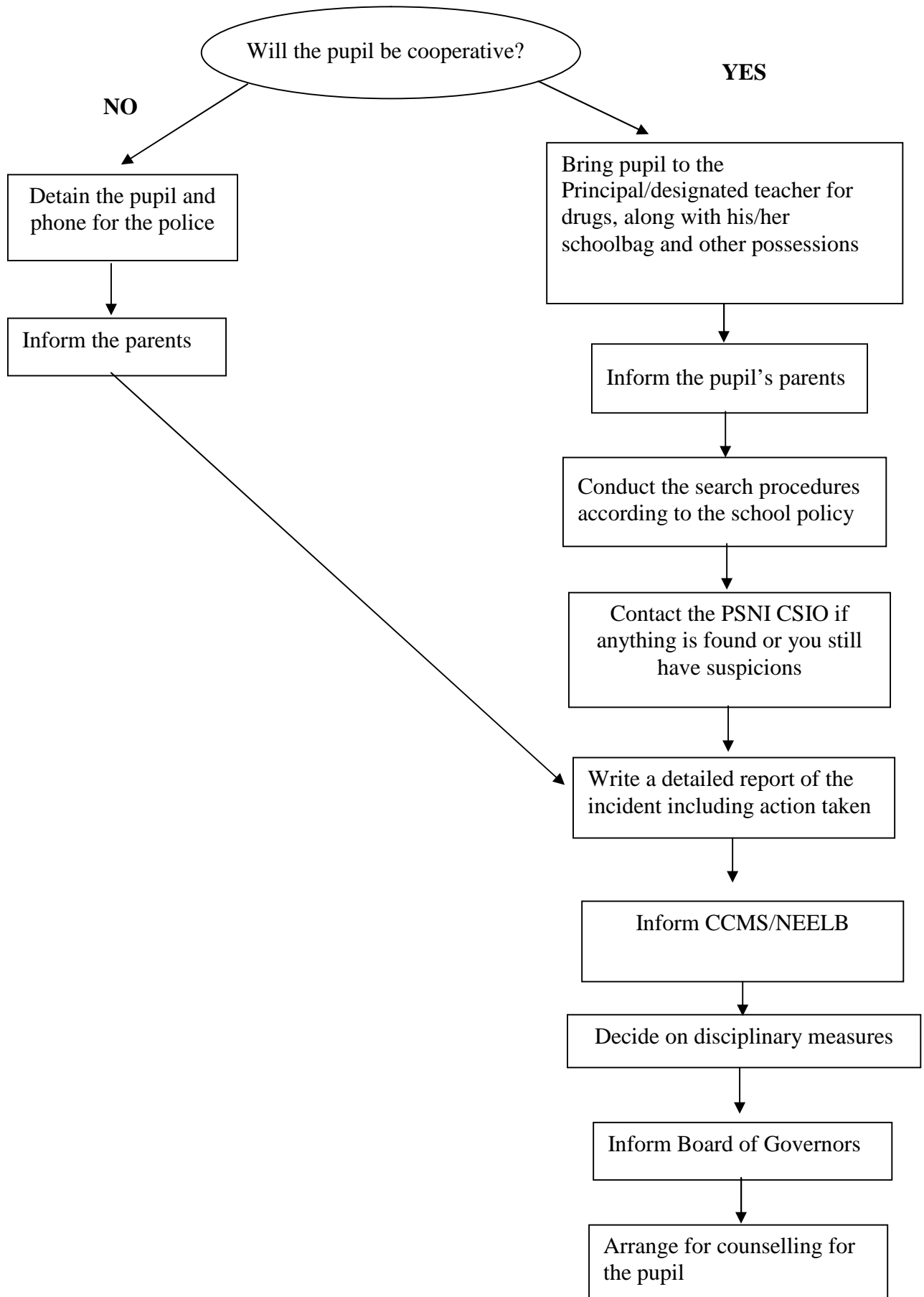
APPENDIX 1

Pupil suspected of having taken drugs in school



APPENDIX 2

Pupil suspected of possessing/distributing an illegal substance



APPENDIX 3

Drugs and Substance Misuse Incident Report Form
(Form to be completed by Teacher involved in Incident)

Nature of Incident:

Date: _____ Time: _____ Venue: _____

Pupil(s) involved:

Teacher Response:

Substance given to Principal/Designated Teacher: Yes NO

Report to Designated Teacher: Yes NO

Report to Principal: Yes NO

APPENDIX 4

School Record and Checklist

(To be completed and held as record by Principal / Designated Teacher)

Date: _____

Nature of Incident:

Substance in secure storage: _____ (please tick)

Staff involved:

Report from staff attached: _____ (please tick)

Name of Pupil(s) involved: _____ Year: _____

Informed (Circle as appropriate):

- Parent(s)/Guardian(s) :
- Local CSIO :
- Board of Governors :
- NEELB :
- Employing Authority if not NEELB :
- Other relevant bodies :

Signed: _____

Principal/Designated Teacher

APPENDIX 5

PRO FORMA TO INFORM NEELB/EMPLOYING AUTHORITY

Name of School: _____

Address: _____

Telephone No: _____

Date: _____

Principal: _____

Contact Teacher: _____

Details of Incident:

Substance (if identified): _____

I have completed the checklist outlined:

Signed: _____

Date: _____