St Patrick's Academy, Dungannon

DRUGS EDUCATION POLICY

'Achieving Excellence Together'

June 2026

2026-28

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

Rationale

St. Patrick's Academy recognises that it has a vital role to play in educating our young people to deal with the pressures they face in our society. As a school we are committed to the development of the whole child and we recognise the need to maintain an ethos within the school which promotes individual empowerment, and values such as tolerance, honesty and respect. Drug abuse is a whole community issue and, as such, we recognise that the school alone will not single-handedly solve the problem. We will work in partnership with parents and outside agencies to seek to prevent the onset of drug misuse.

Definitions

The word 'drug' is defined as any substance which when taken, has the effect of altering the way a person behaves, feels, sees or thinks. Such substances include:

- Illegal Drugs: those substances listed as controlled drugs. This also includes **New Psychoactive substances** (formally known as 'legal highs');
- Illicit Drugs: include socially unacceptable legal drugs e.g. poppers, solvents, magic mushrooms and underage consumption of alcohol, smoking;
- Prescription Drugs: those which are issued on prescription by a doctor.

Aims of the Drugs Education Policy

- To develop a consistent approach to drugs-related issues;
- To develop and implement a drugs education programme within the curriculum;
- To establish procedures for dealing with drug-related issues and incidents, including issues of suspected drug misuse.

SECTION 2: DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

Roles and Responsibilities

The Role of the Board of Governors is to:

- foster and support the development and on-going review of the drugs policy and education programme;
- facilitate the consultative process, whereby the school community can respond and contribute to the effectiveness and quality of the policy and programme which the governors should examine and approve prior to their implementation in the school;
- ensure that an outline of the policy is published in the school prospectus and that it is reviewed at regular intervals;
- be fully aware of, and adequately trained to deal with, suspected drugs-related incidents;
- have a designated governor for drugs who has received specific training in drugs-related issues;

The Role of the Principal is to:

- determine the circumstances surrounding any incident;
- ensure that the following people are informed where relevant:
    - Parents/guardians;
    - Community Policing Team (PSNI);
    - Board of Governors;
    - Designated Officer in DE/EA.
- agree pastoral and disciplinary responses, including counselling services/support, for the pupils involved and, if relevant, other pupils in the school;
- ensure that drugs/drugs related paraphernalia are handled, stored and disposed of safely;
- forward a copy of the incident report form to the chairperson of the Board of Governors and the designated officer within DE/EA;
- review procedures and amend, if necessary.

The Role of the Designated Teacher for Drugs is to:

- co-ordinate curricular provision for drugs education in line with statutory provisions and in liaison with other staff responsible for pastoral care;
- co-ordinate procedures for dealing with suspected drugs-related incidents;
- co-ordinate the training and induction of new staff in relation to these procedures;
- liase with outside agencies;
- take possession of any substance(s) and associated paraphernalia found.

In relation to a specific incident:

- respond to first aiders (**see appendix 2** for a list of names) recommendations regarding the incident;
- in the case of an emergency, inform parents/guardians immediately;
- take possession of any substance(s) and associated paraphernalia found;
- inform the principal immediately;
- take initial responsibility for pupil(s) involved;
- complete an incident report form, and forward to the principal.

The Role of the Individual Staff Member (both teaching and non-teaching) is to:

- assess situation and decide action (prioritising well-being of those involved);
- secure First Aid and send for additional staff support if necessary;
- make situation safe for all pupils and other members of staff;
- carefully gather up any drugs and/or associated paraphernalia/ evidence. Pass on information/evidence to the designated teacher for drugs;
- write a brief, factual report of the incident and forward it to the designated teacher for drugs.

See appendix 3 for flowchart outlining management of incidents.

Training for staff

It is recommended that all staff have access to training every two years to help keep them informed and up-to-date in the recognition of drugs, their symptoms and other related issues. The training will be provided by the Education Authority and/or other relevant Support Staff.

Overview of the Drugs Education Programme

A drugs education programme is just one part of a whole school response to drug misuse. Our drugs education programme is an integral part of the Personal Development programme and aims to:

- provide accurate and up to date information on drugs and their effects on health;
- introduce opportunities for pupils to enhance their self-respect, personal competence and self-esteem;
- ensure continuity and progression in the knowledge, understanding, skills, attitudes and values being addressed;
- ensure that the content and teaching methods used are appropriate to the age, maturity and experiences of the pupils.

The Senior leader for Preventative Education/Drugs Education along with the VP with responsibility for pastoral care, will review the content of the programme and teaching methods used on a yearly basis and make amendments where relevant.

Procedures for using outside agencies in school

Outside speakers can fulfil a valuable expert role in the drugs education programme. They do not provide a substitute for effective lessons, but rather a potential resource which can be deployed within the overall programme. Where outside speakers are involved, their contribution must be properly planned as part of an overall teaching programme.

To be most effective, their visit should be prepared for in class, their contribution should complement the rest of the programme, the tone and substance should match the age, maturity, and state of readiness of the pupil involved, and teachers should always be present so that they are able to deal with any likely follow-up questions or concerns.

See appendix 1

Misuse of solvents, alcohol, tobacco and vaping devices

(i) In the interests of health and safety pupils must not use, be under the influence of, receive, distribute, have in their possession or bring to the school: solvents, alcohol, vaping devices or any other dangerous substance. It is the policy of the school to keep the premises free from such substances. Students who do no comply will suffer sanctions deemed appropriate by the school principal and in line with the Behaviour for Learning Policy. Where appropriate, pastoral and educative support will be provided.

(ii) St. Patrick's Academy operates a No Smoking & Vaping Policy. Smoking and vaping are <u>STRICTLY</u> forbidden and applies at all times while in uniform or on any school outings.

Pupils are forbidden to have in their possession cigarettes, e-cigarettes, vaping liquid, matches, lighters etc. Breach of these regulations will warrant a severe sanction, as per the Behaviour for Learning Policy. Pupils who are found smoking or vaping should be brought to the Principal or Vice Principal.

Staff use of alcohol, tobacco and vaping devices

St. Patrick's Academy is a Health-Promoting School. Smoking and vaping are strictly forbidden within the school buildings and on school grounds at all times.

Communicating the policy

The policy on Drugs is to be relayed to parents and any other relevant personnel or agency working in the school. An outline of the policy will be accessible to parents in the School Prospectus. A full copy of the policy is accessible on the school website. On request, by a parent, the full policy will be attainable at any time. Parents are encouraged to comment on any aspect of the policy at any time. Any important information communicated to the school (from PSNI, PHA, EA etc.) will be posted on the school app, as and when necessary.

Monitoring, reviewing and evaluating

This policy will be reviewed in consultation with staff, pupils and parents using the guidelines outlined in the DE document 'Together Towards Improvement'. Evaluation will cover:

- The drugs education programme
- The effectiveness of procedures for dealing with suspected incidents of drug misuse

See appendix 6 for evaluation forms.

SECTION 3: MANAGING SUSPECTED DRUGS-RELATED INCIDENTS

Procedures for dealing with illegal drug-related incidents

The guidance outlined on the flowchart (**Appendix 3**) is to be followed in the event of any potential illegal drug-related incident in the school. All staff should make be aware of their responsibilities. The Community Policing Team (PSNI) must be notified in every case where a pupil is found to have, or is suspected of having, controlled drugs in his/her possession, either on his/her person or in his/her belongings, or where controlled drugs are found on the school premises.

- **Illness/inappropriate Behaviour**
  Any illness/inappropriate behaviour as a result of suspected drug misuse should be brought to the attention of the Designated Teacher for Drugs or the Designated Teacher for Child Protection within the school. <u>No judgement should be made until the circumstances surrounding the incident have been determined.</u>

- **Taking Possession of a Suspected Controlled Drug and/or Associated Paraphernalia**

  The law permits school staff to take temporary possession of a substance suspected of being a controlled drug for the purpose of protecting a pupil from harm and from committing the offence of possession. As soon as possible, the teacher should take the suspected substance and any associated equipment and/or paraphernalia to the

designated teacher for drugs, who should arrange for its safe storage until it can be handed over to the local police to identify whether or not it is a controlled drug. School staff should not attempt to analyse or taste an unidentified substance. An adult witness should be present when confiscations occur and a record be kept of the details.

- **An Allegation of a Suspected Controlled Drugs-related incident**

  If the designated teacher for drugs is informed of alleged possession, it may be appropriate to search a pupil's desk or locker if there is cause to believe it contains unlawful items, including controlled drugs. However, personal belongings within the desk or locker cannot be searched without consent. A search of the pupil's personal belongings, including schoolbag, coat or other items should only be made with the pupil's consent. Such a search should be made in the presence of the pupil and another adult witness. ***A member of staff should never carry out a physical search of a pupil.***

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

  Pupil involvement in drug-related incidents may take a number of forms, including: possession, possession with intent to supply and supply of controlled drugs. It is illegal for pupils to be in possession of controlled drugs. If a member of staff discovers a pupil in possession of what he/she believe to be a controlled drug, he/she should attempt to take possession of the drug and escort the pupil(s) to the designated teacher for drugs (Mrs K Mullin) who will deal with the incident.

- **Detaining a Pupil**
  When managing a suspected drugs-related incident the pupil(s) concerned should be invited to remain in school under the supervision of appropriate members of staff until parents/guardians and police arrive.
  If the pupil refuses to remain the school cannot, as a rule, detain a pupil against his/her will. It is important for members of school management to recognise:
  a. the point at which a pupil becomes a danger to him/herself or to others;
  b. their duty of protection as a result of being in *loco parentis*.

- **Finding Drugs-related Paraphernalia**
  Any member of the school community who encounters drugs paraphernalia should use extreme care as such items can be hazardous. A list of items is included in **appendix 4**. The presence of such materials should be reported to the Designated Teacher for Drugs.

- **Communication following the incident**
  Information about incidents should only be disclosed to members of staff with the pastoral needs of the individual pupil. Only the parents/guardians of the pupil(s) directly involved should be informed of the incident and subsequent outcomes.

- **Approaches from the media regarding substance abuse will be dealt with by the Principal only or by his representative.**

SECTION 4: SCHOOL RESPONSE

- It would not be appropriate to prescribe specific sanctions which should be applied to suspected drugs-related incidents as this will be a matter for the Principal and Board Of Governors. The Principal retains responsibility 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 e.g. using or supplying.

- A range of factors may be relevant and need exploration to determine the seriousness and needs of those involved and an appropriate response: For example:

    - Does the pupil admit or deny the allegations?
    - Is this a first or subsequent offence?
    - Is the drug legal or illegal?
    - What quantity of the drug was involved?
    - What was the pupil's motivation?
    - Is the pupil knowledgeable and careful or reckless as to his/her own or others' safety?
    - Does the pupil have a parent/guardian 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 illegal supply is suspected, 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?

- At all times, the needs of individual pupils must be considered and appropriate interventions and support mechanisms put in place.

- **The fact that certain behaviour could constitute a violation of the criminal law should not, in itself, be taken as automatically leading to the exclusion of a pupil.** However, particularly in cases of supplying, the need to protect the majority of pupils from unhealthy exposure to potentially dangerous substances must be borne in mind when decisions are made in response to individual incidents.

- The school will consider a range of options for responding to the identified needs of those involved in a drugs-related incident. Whatever response is put in place, it should always aim to provide pupils with the opportunity to learn from his/her mistakes and to develop as individuals. Any sanction imposed should be justifiable in terms of:

    - The seriousness of the incident;
    - The identified needs of the pupil, other pupils, the school and the community;
    - Consistency with published school policies, rules and expectations;
    - Consistency with disciplinary action for breaches of other school rules (such as theft, violence, bullying-type behaviour).

- In the case of serious breaches of discipline or while a suspected drugs-related incident is being investigated, a Behaviour Contract may be drawn up and agreed by the pupil and the parent/guardians. The contract should clearly set out the terms on which the pupil can remain at school and include monitoring of his/her progress. This may require the pupil to be *'internally excluded'* from normal contact with peers during the school day for a fixed period, in the first instance, until his/her behaviour has improved. Such an approach may incorporate intensive drugs education input to boost the pupil's understanding. This may be supported by outside agencies such as Education Welfare Officers, Counselling Services, etc.

- Any suspension or exclusion must be considered and carried out within the terms of schemes prepared by the Board of Governors of the school. Guidance may be taken from EA procedures.

- Parents/guardians will be informed by the Principal or Vice-Principal when a case of possible substance misuse is being investigated. Parents will be kept informed of the disciplinary procedures.

Pastoral Care

- During and after any incident it is imperative that the individual needs of any pupil(s) involved are addressed. This should involve the pupil(s), principal, parents/guardians, designated teacher for drugs and appropriate pastoral care staff. This may also involve the PSNI and the Education Welfare Officer (EWO).

  Communication between staff and the early involvement of parents/guardians may set the scene for early, supportive, pastoral intervention.

- In some instances, either before or following a drugs incident, counselling may be identified as potentially valuable to the pupil. It may be provided either on school premises or elsewhere. Counselling rarely focuses on drug misuse alone, and can consider more holistic needs, which may underlie or herald drugs-related problems.

  Appendix 5 outlines some of the support services available locally to help pupils.

Confidentiality

- The School can never guarantee confidentiality to pupils; any disclosures relating to the misuse of substances must be passed on to the designated teacher, and where appropriate then on to the PSNI, and the EA. This applies to all teaching staff, counsellors working on behalf of the school and any visiting speakers to the school. Members of staff should consider their response very carefully if asked for advice on drug use or misuse. Members of staff can direct pupils to sources of confidential information and advice.

Policy Reviewed: **June 2026**

To be reviewed: **June 2028**

Appendix 1

Service Level Agreement

1. I can confirm that I have read and fully agree to adhere to the school's ethos when working with pupils in St Patrick's Academy.

   Yes ❑ **No** ❑

2. I can confirm that I have read the following policies and fully agree to adhere to these when working with pupils in St Patrick's Academy:

   Yes ❑ **No** ❑

   - Pastoral Care;
   - Safeguarding and Child Protection;
   - Relationships and Sexuality (RSE);
   - Visitors' Policy

   (Available on school's website and/or from the Principal's PA)

3. I am willing to provide full details of material to be covered in the programme to our school's Governors, Senior Leadership Team, Parents and other relevant bodies in advance.

   Yes ❑ **No** ❑

4. I am willing to make all adjustments recommended by the school before delivering the programme.

   Yes ❑ **No** ❑

5. I understand that the school reserves the right to withdraw the invitation of supporting pupils at any time.

   Yes ❑ **No** ❑

6. I can confirm that I have the authority to sign this agreement on behalf of

   _____ (insert name of agency).

   Yes ❑ **No** ❑

I formally accept the terms as set out above and acknowledge in doing so that an agreement has been made.

Signed: _____ (on behalf of agency) Date _____

Signed: _____ (Principal) Date _____

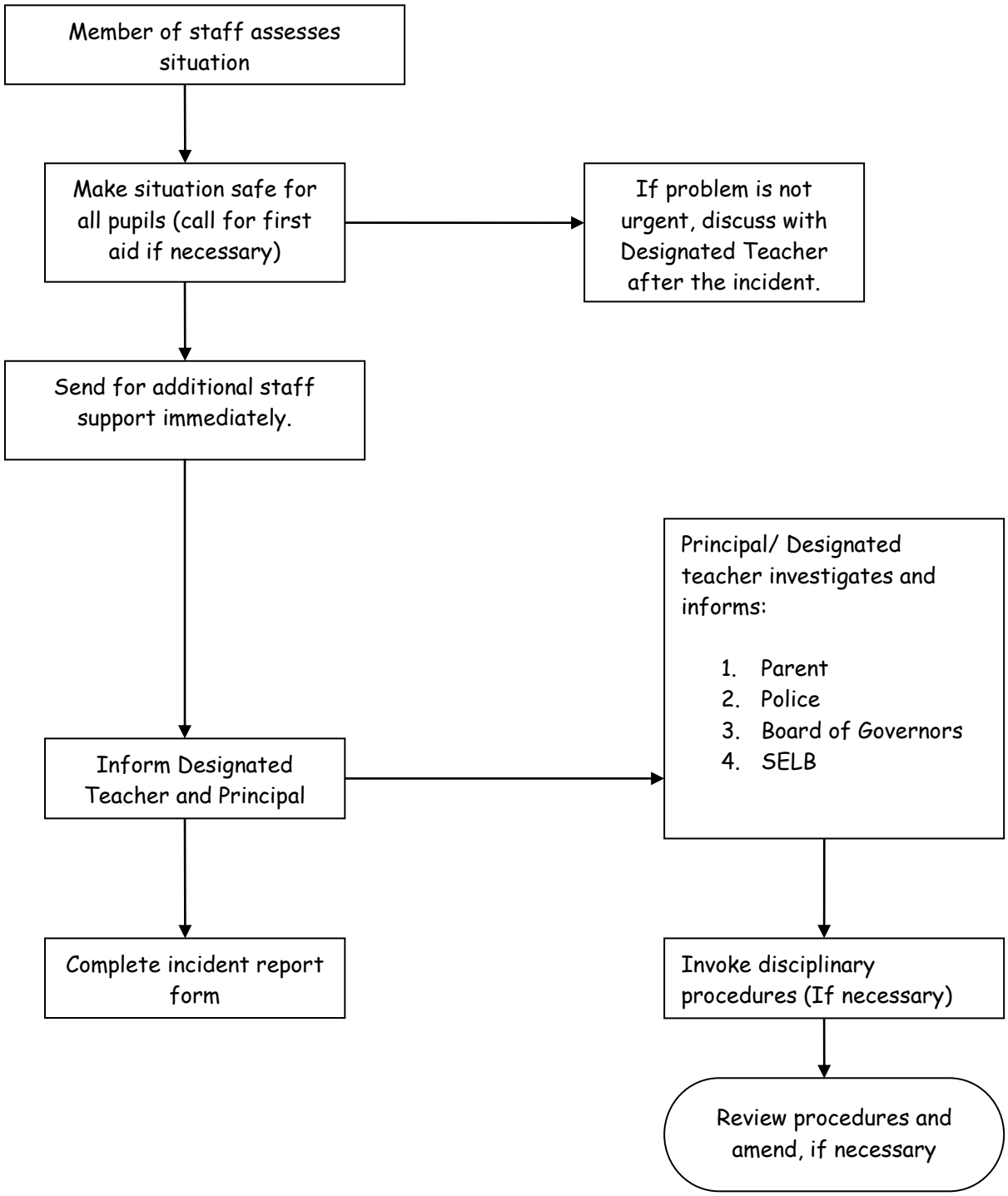
Appendix 2

First Aid Personnel

Name	Area	Renewal Date
Mr S Boyle	Maths	June 2029
Miss L McCaffery	Maths	June 2029
Mrs L Kane	Science/Basketball	June 2029
Mrs T Ferran	Technology	June 2029
Mrs Y McArdle	Science (downstairs)	June 2029
Miss D Nugent	English	June 2029
Mr C Sharkey	PE/GAA	June 2029
Miss A McPeake	PE/GAA	June 2029
Mrs A Rafferty	SEN	June 2029
Mr L Devlin	PE/GAA	June 2029
Mrs S Moertl	School Health Officer	June 2029
Mrs S McCarthy	Art	June 2029
Mrs M McGeary	Canteen	June 2029
Ms K Moore	Canteen	June 2029
Mr C Bogue	Maths/GAA	June 2028
Mr T O'Connor	Caretaker/Supervision	June 2028
Mr T Kelly	Technology	June 2028
Mrs N Hall	English/Athletics	June 2028
Mr L Dornan	Science (downstairs)	June 2028
Mrs M McLaughlin	Science (downstairs)	June 2028
Mr S Grew	RE/Health & Safety Co-Ordinator	June 2028
Mrs L McFall	General Office	June 2028
Mr R Pickering	PE/GAA/Soccer	March 2028
Mr J Cumiskey	Science/Maths	June 2027
Mrs E Hughes	Canteen	June 2027
Mrs J McKendry	PE/GAA/Camogie	June 2027
Mrs C Bell	PE/GAA/Soccer	June 2027
Mrs J McArdle	SEN	June 2027
Ms L Burgess	Science (downstairs)	June 2027
Mrs J Corey	Science (downstairs)	June 2027
Ms Carrie Donaghy	SEN	June 2027
Mr Paddy Ferran	Irish	June 2027
Mrs Orla Devlin	SEN	June 2027
Mr Ciaran Gourley	Technology/GAA	June 2027

Appendix 3

Misuse of Substance Flowchart



Appendix 4: Drugs-related paraphernalia

- small bottles, pill boxes;

- hypodermic needles;
- twists of paper;
- cigarette papers, lighters and spent matches;
- e-cigarettes
- vaping/e-liquids
- e-liquid refillable bottles
- roaches (ends of rolled-up cigarettes);
- punctured cans/plastic bottles/containers;
- aerosols, butane gas refills; and
- drugs themselves.

Appendix 5: Sources of Advice and Support

Addiction Service, Armagh & Dungannon Health and Social Services Trust
02837522381

Childline Northern Ireland
Freephone: 08001111

Contact Youth Counselling Services
02890457848

Family Support and Counselling services, Armagh & Dungannon Health and Social Services Trust
02887789679

Health Promotion Agency Smokers' Helpline
0800 776600

Parents Advice Centre
02825650099

Samaritans
08457909090

Smokebusters
02890663281

Appendix 6: Monitoring and Evaluation of the School Drugs Policy

Questionnaire for Parents and Carers

1. I know where to find the school's Drugs Education Policy

Strongly agree	
Agree	
Disagree	
Strongly disagree	

2. I am familiar with the school's Drugs Education Policy

Strongly agree	
Agree	
Disagree	
Strongly disagree	

3. I feel that pupils are provided with appropriate information on Drugs Education

Strongly agree	
Agree	
Unsure	
Disagree	
Strongly disagree	

4. Would you be interested in any of the following? (Please tick √)

- ☐ Receiving a copy of the school's full Drugs Education Policy
- ☐ Becoming involved in reviewing the school's Drugs Education Policy
- ☐ Attending an information session on the school's drugs education programme
- ☐ Receiving drugs information leaflets from the school

Please feel free to make any suggestions about the Drugs Education Policy or Programme in the space below.

Drugs Education Policy: Questionnaire for Staff

1. I am familiar with the school's Drugs Education Policy

Strongly agree	
Agree	
Disagree	
Strongly disagree	

2. I am aware of who the person responsible for Drugs Education in the school is

Strongly agree	
Agree	
Disagree	
Strongly disagree	

3. I know the procedure for reporting suspected drug related incidents

Strongly agree	
Agree	
Disagree	
Strongly disagree	

4. I know where to find the school's Drugs Education Policy

Strongly agree	
Agree	
Disagree	
Strongly disagree	

5. I know how to respond to a suspected drugs related incident

Strongly agree	
Agree	
Disagree	
Strongly disagree	

6. I feel that I have a good understanding of legal issues relating to drug use

Strongly agree	
Agree	
Disagree	
Strongly disagree	

7. I feel that I have a good understanding of current trends in drug misuse

Strongly agree	

Agree	
Disagree	
Strongly disagree	

8. I feel that pupils are provided with appropriate information on Drugs Education at KS3

Strongly agree	
Agree	
Disagree	
Strongly disagree	

9. I feel that pupils are provided with appropriate information on Drugs Education at KS4

Strongly agree	
Agree	
Disagree	
Strongly disagree	

10. I feel that pupils are provided with appropriate information on Drugs Education during Years 13 and 14

Strongly agree	
Agree	
Disagree	
Strongly disagree	

Please feel free to make any suggestions about the Drugs Education Policy or Programme in the space below.