

# MISUSE OF SUBSTANCES/ CONTROLLED DRUGS EDUCATION POLICY

## ***RATIONALE***

The Misuse of Drugs is a growing problem in Northern Ireland and is a major threat to individuals, families and to the wider community. Banbridge Academy is committed to the safety and well-being of its pupils and therefore does not condone the misuse of drugs, the illegal possession or supply of such substances.

Within this policy statement the terms Drugs and substances include any product which, when taken, has the effect of altering the way the body works or the way a person feels, sees or thinks.

As well as everyday products such as tea and coffee, substances include:

- Alcohol, tobacco and tobacco related products, including nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) and electronic cigarettes
- Over-the-counter medicines such as paracetamol and cough medicine
- Prescribed drugs such as antibiotics, painkillers, antidepressants, antipsychotics, inhalers and stimulants such as Ritalin
- Volatile substances such as correcting fluid or thinners, gas lighter fuel, aerosols, glues and petrol
- Controlled drugs such as cannabis, LSD, ecstasy, amphetamine sulphate (speed), magic mushrooms, heroin and cocaine
- New psychoactive substances (NPS), formerly known as 'legal highs'
- Other substances such as amyl or butyl nitrite (known as poppers)

*Drug use* refers to taking a drug: there is no value judgement, although all drug use has an element of risk.

*Drug Misuse* refers to legal, illegal or illicit drug taking or alcohol consumption which leads a person to experience social, psychological, physical or legal problems related to intoxication or regular excessive consumption and/or dependence. Drug misuse is therefore taking drugs, including prescribed drugs and NPS, that cause harm to the individual, their significant others and the wider community.

Tobacco and electronic cigarettes, although not Controlled Drugs, are not allowed in school or on school activities in line with DENI circular 2014/15. Procedures are in place within the Positive Behaviour Policy to address these issues.

We want our pupils to make informed and responsible decisions about drugs by increasing their knowledge and by developing in them appropriate values, attitudes and skills. However, we recognise that drug misuse is a whole-community issue and that schools alone cannot solve the drugs problem. The school is only one of a number of groups and agencies which must play a part in the education of young people and we draw on the expertise of external agencies where possible.

## ***AIMS AND OBJECTIVES***

1. To develop a consistent approach to drug-related issues in line with the school's pastoral care provision.
2. To promote among pupils' positive attitudes to their own personal health.
3. To develop, implement and review a drugs education programme within the curriculum which will provide pupils with opportunities to acquire an understanding of the use and misuse of drugs.
4. To help pupils to understand the risks and effects of drugs misuse on themselves and

others.

5. To help pupils to make informed and responsible decisions about the use of drugs.
6. To help pupils to develop skills to withstand pressure from their peers and others.
7. To enable pupils to identify sources of guidance and support as appropriate.
8. To establish an environment free from the misuse of all substances.
9. To develop procedures and protocols that address drug-related issues across all areas of school life.
10. To establish procedures for managing specific incidents of suspected drug misuse.
11. To empower teaching staff through appropriate training and support to develop and deliver an effective drugs education programme.

### ***LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE***

It is the policy of this school to comply with the legal requirements laid down in the Misuse of Drugs Act (1971) and other relevant legislation and guidance including the DENI circular 2015/23 and 'Drugs Guidance for Schools in NI- Revised Edition 2015'.

In keeping with requirements, we will publish relevant sections of our Misuse of Substances/Drugs Education Policy in our school prospectus. A copy of the policy may also be obtained from school.

### ***THE ORGANISATION & MANAGEMENT of the DRUGS EDUCATION PROGRAMME***

Banbridge Academy's Drugs Education Programme is set in the context of abstinence.

The Drugs Education programme is co-ordinated by a Vice Principal and the Personal Development co-ordinator. It is the view of this school that education surrounding drugs/substance misuse should not be taught in isolation, but rather as an integral part of our curriculum. It is currently delivered at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 as part of the programme of study in a range of subjects and by the involvement of appropriate outside agencies eg visiting drama groups and speakers. The Year 13 lecture period includes a talk by PSNI. Drugs Education modules are delivered by our own staff to all pupils in Years 8, 9 and 11 as part of our Personal Development and LLW programmes, supported by PSNI and Future-proof. External agencies who deliver drugs education in school, are asked to complete Appendix A, a service level agreement.

The Health Education Programme also makes a valuable contribution to Drugs Education.

### ***ROLES and RESPONSIBILITIES***

#### **Pupils**

Pupils should:

- be aware of and adhere to the school rules in relation to drug use/misuse, including tobacco, alcohol, over the counter and prescribed medication, volatile substances and controlled drugs

#### **All staff (teaching and non-teaching)**

- Staff should be alert to the possibility of drug use/misuse
- Staff should be familiar with the school's procedures in the handling of suspected drug-related incidents
- It is not the responsibility of the individual staff member to investigate the circumstances surrounding an incident; however, he/she should deal with any emergency procedures if necessary

- Forward any information, substance and paraphernalia received to the Designated Teacher for Drugs who may need to take immediate action
- Use the School's Drugs Incident Report Form to compile a brief factual report on any suspected incident and forward this 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 other substance
- Invoke safeguarding procedures, if a parent or carer's behaviour may place a pupil at risk.

### **The Designated Teacher for Drugs**

A Vice principal, Mrs H Evans, is the Designated teacher with responsibility for Drugs issues. She will:

- i) liaise with outside agencies in relation to Drugs
- ii) liaise with other staff on drugs matters
- iii) co-ordinate the school's procedures for handling suspected drug-related incidents
- iv) take temporary possession of any substance suspected of being a controlled drug and any associated paraphernalia until they can be handed over to the police.
- v) liaise with the Principal and provide a factual report on any drug-related incident at school
- vi) oversee the planning and co-ordination of curricular provision in relation to Drugs Education
- vii) review and if required, update the policy, and after a drug-related incident, where learning from the experience could improve practice.

The Personal Development co-ordinator will assist the Designated teacher for drugs.

### **The Principal**

It is the Principal's responsibility to determine the circumstances of any incident, but it is the responsibility of the PSNI to investigate any criminal or suspected criminal offence. In any suspected drug-related incident, the Principal should 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.

After contacting the PSNI, the Principal will

- Oversee the welfare of the pupil(s) involved in the incident and the other pupils in the school
- Oversee health and safety procedures during the handling, storage and safe disposal of any drug or drug-related paraphernalia, using protective gloves at all times
- Inform the Chairman of the Board of Governors who is the designated Governor for Drugs
- Agree any appropriate pastoral or disciplinary response
- Report the incident to the Education Authority if the incident
  - Is serious enough to require PSNI involvement
  - Requires that child protection procedure is invoked; or
  - Leads to the suspension or expulsion of a pupil
- Complete a written report and forward a copy to the Board of Governors and the designated office in the Education Authority

### **The Board of Governors**

The Board of Governors should:

- foster and support the development and review of the Drugs Policy
- examine and approve the completed policy and procedures
- ensure the policy is published in the school prospectus and that it is reviewed at regular intervals
- be fully aware and adequately trained to deal with suspected drugs-related incidents
- The Designated Governor for Drugs will have received specific training in drug-related issues

## **Parents/Guardians**

Parents/Guardians should:

- Support their son/daughter if they have become involved with drugs
- Support the school in the development and implementation of this policy, including the school's procedures for handling incidents of suspected drug misuse and the drugs education programme

## ***SUPPORT***

1. In all areas of school life, and through the pastoral system in particular, this school aims to establish and maintain good communication between all members of the school community. Pupils with a concern about any issue are encouraged to speak to a member of staff with whom they feel they can communicate easily. Staff will always try to help and support pupils, but cannot guarantee confidentiality in every situation, in the interest of the pupil.
2. In relation to drugs issues, the school will liaise with and seek advice from various external agencies eg Education Authority, SHSSB Health Promotion Department, the Educational Welfare officer, the School Medical Officer and School Nurse, the PSNI and other voluntary organisations, as appropriate.
3. The Pupil Welfare Auxillary is willing to talk to individual pupils who have a concern about any health-related issues.
4. The Independent Counselling Service for Schools (ICSS), funded by DE, offers a free school-based counselling service. Counselling is only appropriate when a pupil wishes to take advantage of what it offers. Pupils can refer themselves or a parent or member of school staff can refer them.
5. Staff or pupils who wish to invite visiting speakers or groups to give a presentation on drugs issues should consult in advance with the Principal and/or Designated Teacher for Drugs. A member of the school staff should always be present during any presentation by a visitor to ensure that key messages delivered are consistent with those of the school. The visiting speaker will have been made aware of the school policy on Drugs Education.
6. This school accepts its legal responsibility to inform the PSNI where it believes or suspects a pupil to be in possession of a controlled drug, either on their person or in their belongings or if there is any doubt about the nature of the substance, or if controlled drugs are found on school premises.

## ***RESPONDING TO A SUSPECTED CONTROLLED DRUG-RELATED INCIDENT***

A drug-related incident may include:

- A pupil displaying unusual or uncharacteristic behaviour
- An allegation
- Suspicion of possession, possession with intent to supply and/or supply of any substance mentioned at the beginning of the policy
- Finding substance-related paraphernalia

A response to a substance-related issue is not just the responsibility of teaching staff within this school. We use a multi-disciplinary approach to deal with all issues relating to drug/substance misuse. Included are:

- Board of Governors
- Designated Drugs Officer
- Personal Development Curriculum Co-ordinator
- Child Protection Designated and Deputy Designated Teachers
- Pupil Welfare Auxillary
- All members of staff
- External Agencies

In the event of an incident occurring, we will follow the practices and procedures stated in Appendices B-G. In addition, the parents/guardians will be immediately notified as will the Chairman of the Board of Governors and the PSNI in order that investigations into the source of, and possible trafficking in, illegal substances can be expedited.

Our policy in these matters is to proceed with the utmost discretion and sensitivity bearing in mind the need to protect the rights of the pupil concerned, their families and our school. However, it will be made clear to our pupils that no guarantee of confidentiality can be offered if he/she discloses to a member of staff that he/she is taking drugs. Due to the seriousness of substance misuse, any incidences/knowledge must be reported to the Designated Teacher for drugs who will ensure that proper action is taken to protect that pupil.

If the designated teacher for drugs receives an allegation of possession, she or the Principal may need to search a pupil's bag or locker, if they have cause to believe it contains unlawful items, including controlled drugs, only with the consent of the pupil. She or the Principal will carry out this search in the presence of the pupil and another adult witness. If the pupils refuse, the school will contact the parents/carers and the PSNI to deal with the situation.

A member of staff should never carry out a physical search of a pupil.

## ***ACTION FOLLOWING A CONTROLLED DRUG-RELATED INCIDENT***

1. The Principal/Designated Teacher for drugs will investigate and write a report on the incident. A written record will be kept of each stage in the reporting procedure. The incident will be reported to the police, the parents of the pupil(s) involved, the Board of Governors and the EA (southern Region)/EWO.

### **DRUG MISUSE - REPORTING PROCEDURES**

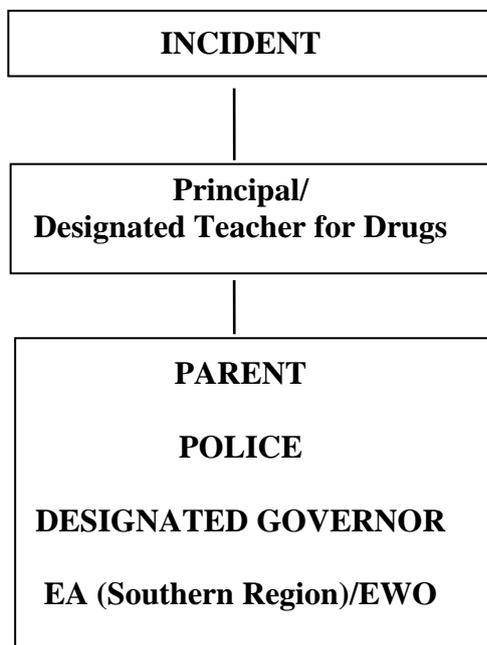


Figure 2

2. It is illegal for pupils to be in possession of a controlled drug. If a pupil is suspected/known to be in possession of a controlled drug the pupil will be asked to surrender the substance (see Appendix C) whereupon it will be placed under lock and key until collected by the PSNI. Upon refusal to comply, the pupil will be escorted to the Designated Teacher for Drugs/Principal who will make a further request before informing parents and the PSNI. Upon refusal by the pupil to accompany a responsible adult to the Designated Teacher for Drugs/Principal, the Principal will be sent for while the adult remains in close proximity to the pupil.
3. 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 dangerous- see Appendix C
3. Only the Principal or a person nominated by the Principal has the authority to deal with enquiries from the media.
4. Any instances of possession, use or supply of drugs on school premises will be regarded with the utmost seriousness. The Principal will consider each incident individually and decide on the appropriate disciplinary action which may include suspension or expulsion, in line with the school's policy on discipline.
5. Appropriate support and guidance will be offered to any pupil who has been involved in a drug-related incident and, where necessary, help will be sought from relevant outside agencies.

6. Procedures are in place to communicate with parents regarding the safe storage and administration of prescribed and over-the-counter medication during school hours.

### ***RELATED SCHOOL POLICIES***

This policy is set within the broader context of Pastoral Care and as such it should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Pastoral Care Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Health and Safety Policy

### ***REVIEW OF POLICY***

Periodic review of our Drugs/Substance Misuse Policy will take place to reflect changing circumstances and trends. Evaluation will cover two areas:

- The effectiveness of the policy to assist pupils in resisting the lure of substance misuse.
- The effectiveness of the procedures and practices in place to deal with substance related incidents.

*Ratified by Board of Governors Feb 2026*

**APPENDIX A: SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT FOR USE WITH EXTERNAL AGENCIES WORKING IN SCHOOL**

I/We have read the school ethos and policies of Banbridge Academy and agree to formally adhere to them:

- in working with young people and
- in the delivery of the programmes outlined below:

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I am/ we are willing to provide *full* details of material content to:

Senior Management, Teachers, Parents, Governors and other Appropriate Bodies

and agree to fully implement any changes deemed necessary by the above representatives.

I/we accept the right of the school to withdraw the invitation issued to support the school in the education of our Young people.

I/we formally accept the above terms of reference and in so doing I/we will acknowledge the agreement made.

**Signed** \_\_\_\_\_ **(External Agency)**

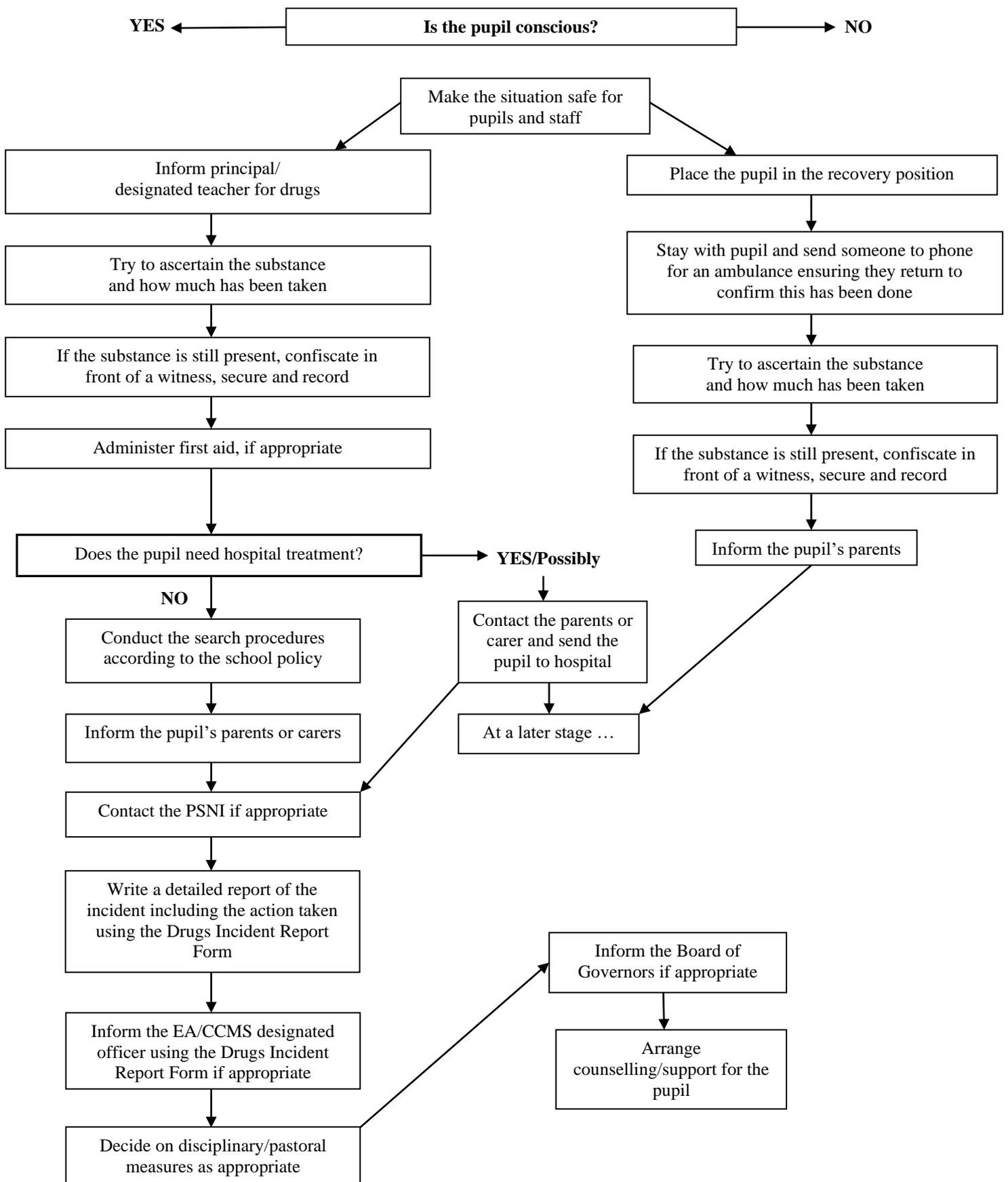
**Dated** \_\_\_\_\_

**Countersigned** \_\_\_\_\_ **(Principal/Board of Governors)**

**Dated** \_\_\_\_\_

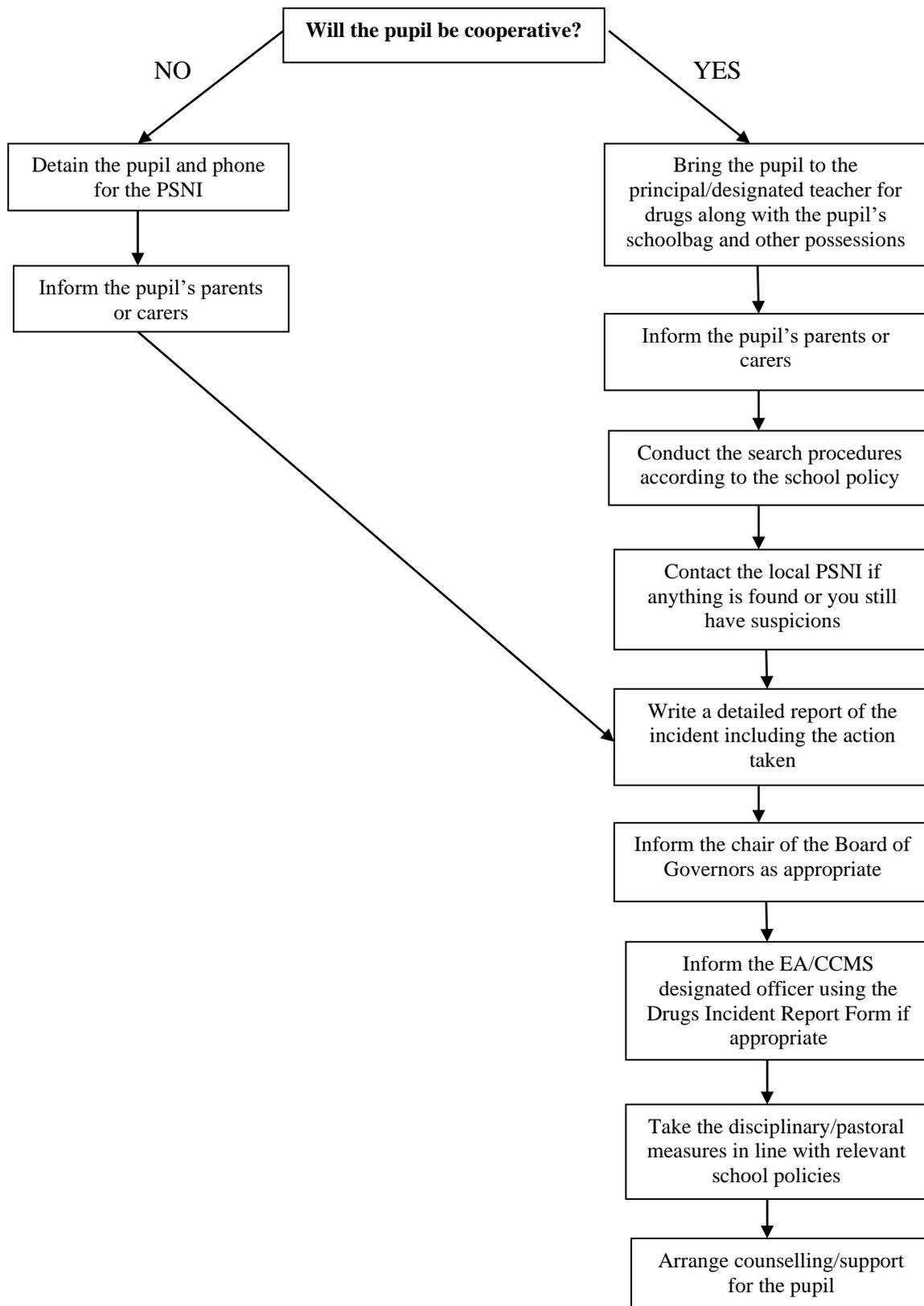
# Appendix B

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



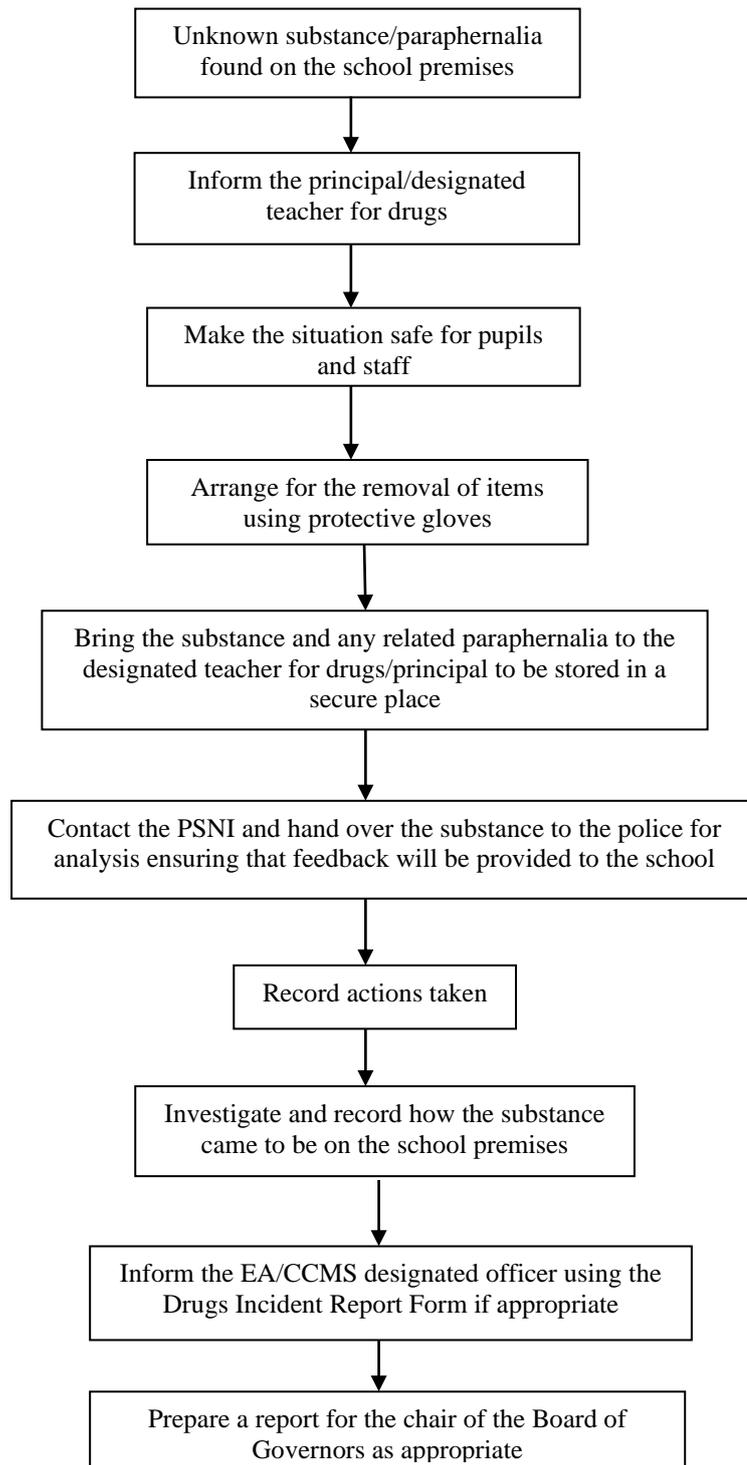
# Appendix C

## Pupil suspected of possessing/distributing an illegal substance



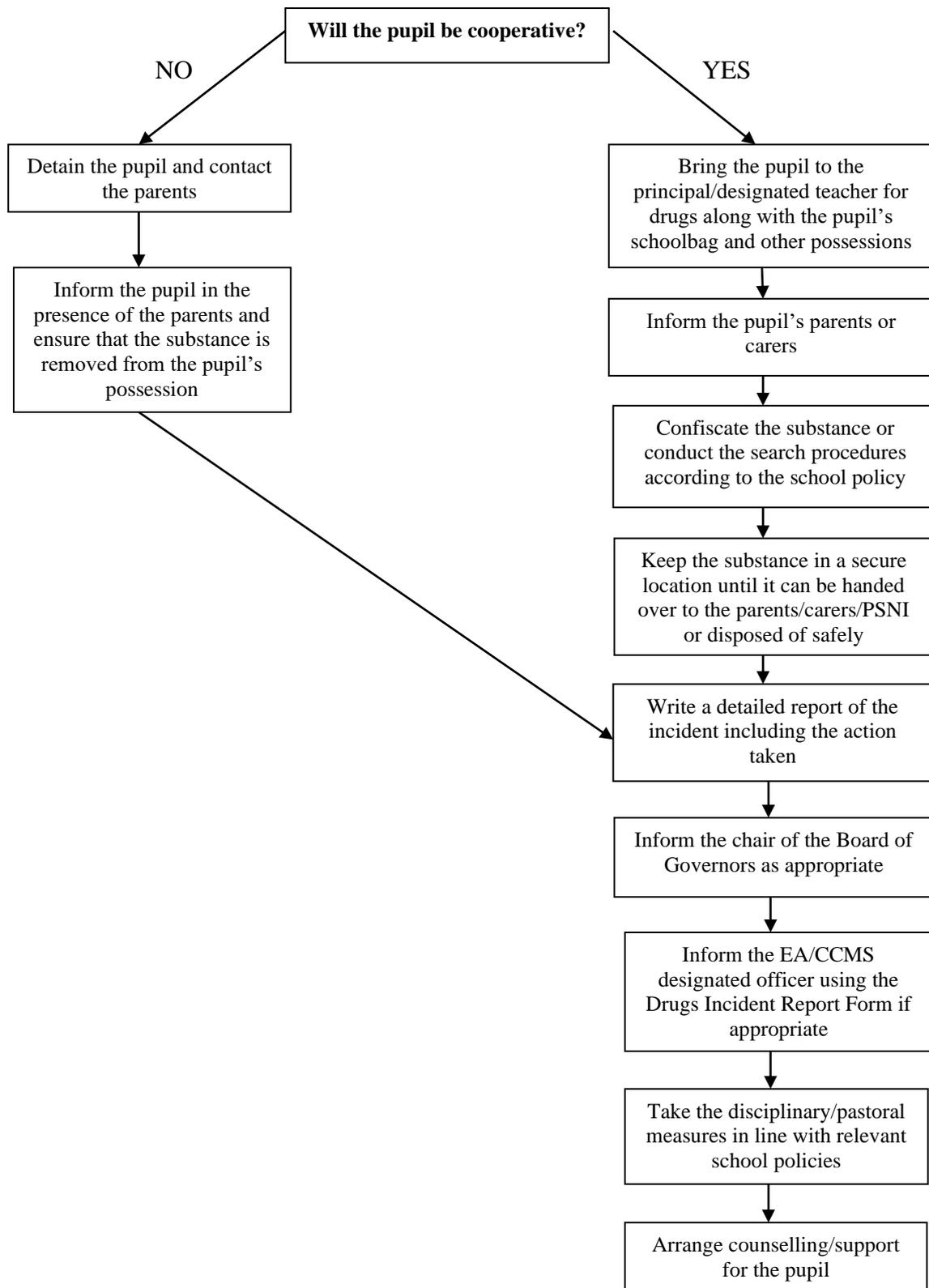
## Appendix D

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



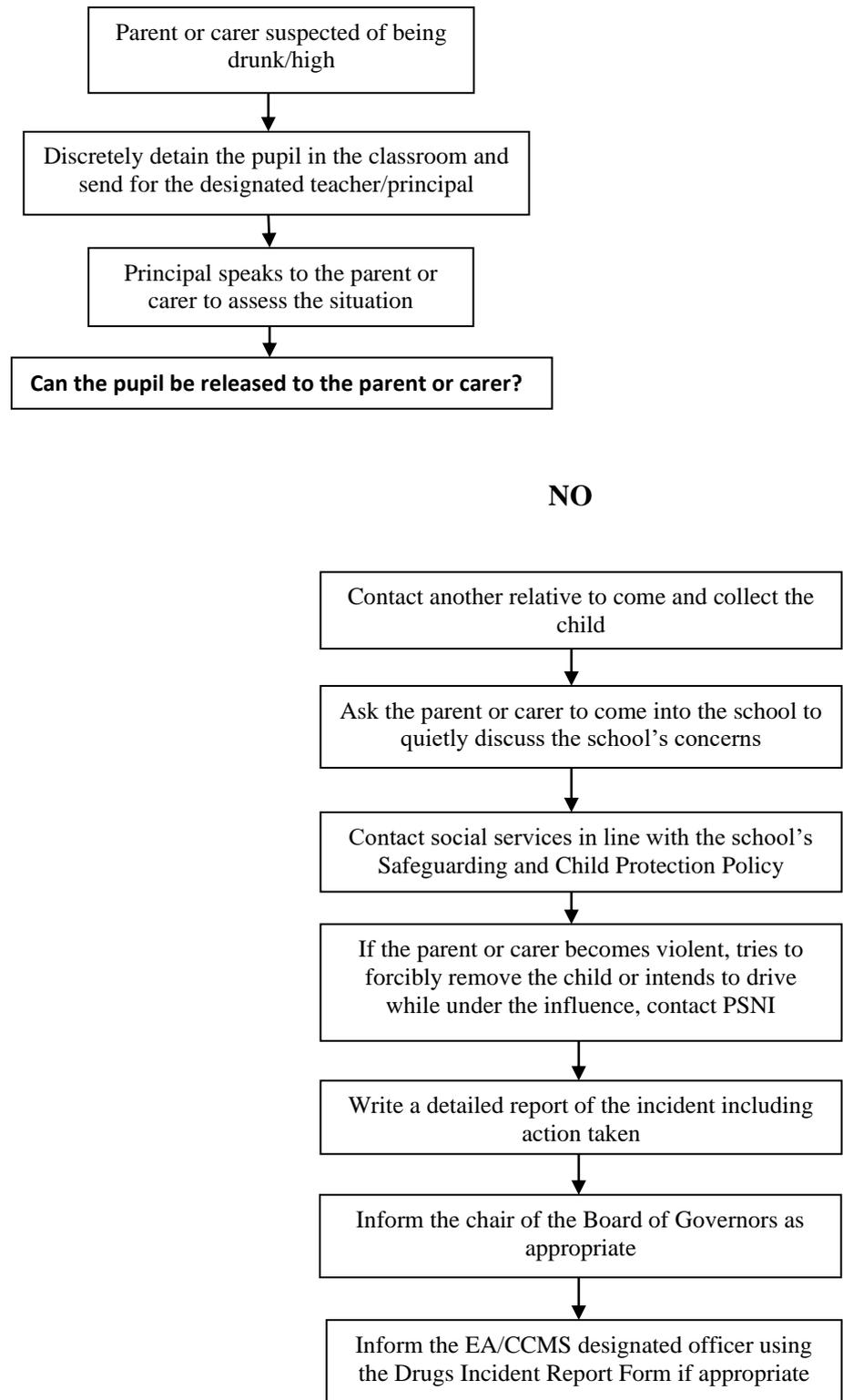
## Appendix F

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



## Appendix G

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



# Appendix H

## Drugs Incident Report Form

1	Name of pupil _____ DOB _____ Address _____ _____
2	Date of incident _____ Reported by _____ Time of incident _____ Location of Incident _____
3	First Aid given YES / NO Administered by _____ Ambulance / Doctor Called YES / NO Time of call _____
4	Parent or carer informed YES / NO Date _____ Time _____
5	Where substance is retained _____ or Date substance destroyed or passed to PSNI _____ Time _____
6	PSNI informed YES / NO Date _____ Time _____
7	Education Authority informed YES / NO Date _____ Time _____
8	Form Completed by _____ Date _____ Position _____

