

# ST. BENEDICT'S COLLEGE



# DRUGS POLICY

## INTRODUCTION

### RATIONALE

St. Benedict's College is committed to providing a safe and stimulating environment where the individual child is encouraged to reach their full potential in academic and personal development.

The issues of drugs misuse is a growing problem in society and in St. Benedict's College we deliver drugs education within the context of the wider PSHE programme.

We believe that it is essential to promote positive attitudes towards a healthy lifestyle through developing relevant knowledge, understanding and skills. We will take strong positive measures to discourage misuse of drugs and will protect all pupils within a caring environment.

### DRUGS DEFINITIONS

- A drug is any substance which when taken, alters the way a person behaves, feels, sees or thinks.
- "Illegal drugs" are those substances listed as controlled drugs e.g. cannabis, ecstasy, heroin, cocaine and magic mushrooms.
- "Illicit drugs" include socially unacceptable legal drugs e.g. poppers, solvents and underage consumption of alcohol and tobacco.
- "Prescription drugs" are those which are issued on prescription by a doctor (also known as 'over the counter drugs') e.g. tranquilisers, sleeping tablets, strong pain killers.

### ETHOS

The Curriculum of St. Benedict's College is built upon the foundation of the Catholic ethos, which values the worth of each individual pupil. Staff will therefore seek to develop in their pupils self-confidence, self-discipline and respect for others.

Staff will endeavour to promote the essential elements and practices of the Catholic faith in an atmosphere consistent with Catholic beliefs. These ideals are enshrined in our school aims.

In St. Benedict's College the person and message of Christ finds expression in:

- Communities of Faith, Service, Prayer and Worship;
- The development of each person's full potential in a climate of joy, freedom, respect, challenge, co-operation and celebration;
- The enrichment of pupil life - intellectual, physical, spiritual, moral, social and emotional;
- The promotion of a spirit of charity, social justice, global awareness and concern for others leading to practical outreach and partnerships;

- A culture of tolerance where people of diverse identities are recognised, welcomed, respected and cherished;
- Listening, mutual understanding, trust, reconciliation, healing and peace;
- The preparation of pupils to lead fulfilling and purposeful lives which will contribute to the Common Good.

## **AIMS OF DRUG POLICY**

1. To provide a coherent drugs education programme appropriate to the needs of pupils at each stage of their development
2. To provide clear guidelines for dealing with drug-related incidents
3. To identify the roles and responsibilities of staff members in relation to drug-related incidents
4. To outline the factors involved in determining the school's response to drug-related incidents
5. To identify clearly the range of behaviours which will result in disciplinary sanctions being imposed
6. To equip all staff with the knowledge and skills required, enabling them to fully implement the policy and to ensure a consistent response.

## **DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION**

### **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

#### **Board of Governors**

The Board of Governors have a responsibility for the school and should foster and support the development and on-going review of the drugs policy.

They should ensure the policy is summarised in the school prospectus and that it is reviewed at regular intervals.

#### **Principal**

It is the principal's responsibility to determine the circumstances of all incidents (NOT INVESTIGATE). It is the responsibility of the P.S.N.I. to investigate any criminal offence. In an suspected drugs-related incident the principal should make every effort to contact the parent(s)/ guardian(s) of those pupils involved. In an incident involving a controlled drug the principal should ensure there is close liaison with the police. After contacting the police the principal's responsibility is confined to the welfare of the pupils involved, the other pupils and the handling, storage and safe disposal of any drugs/ drugs-related paraphernalia. This will also include informing the Board of Governors agreeing any appropriate pastoral/ disciplinary response and reporting the incident to the designated officer within E.L.B./ CCMS.

## **Designated Teacher**

The designated teacher with the Pastoral Care Co-ordinator will oversee and co-ordinate the planning of curricular provision. He/ she is also responsible for the co-ordination of the school's procedures for handling suspected drugs-related incidents and for the training and induction of these procedures with staff. The designated teacher should act as the contact point as necessary for outside agencies that may have to work with the pupil/ pupils concerned.

It is the responsibility of the designated teacher to take possession of any substance(s) and associated paraphernalia found in the event of a suspected incident and complete a factual report which is forwarded to the principal.

## **All Other Staff - (Teaching and Non-Teaching)**

Individual staff members are likely to be the first to encounter a suspected drugs related incident. It is not their responsibility to determine the circumstances surrounding the incident, however they should deal with any emergency procedures if necessary. Any information, substance or paraphernalia received should be forwarded to the designated teacher for drugs who may have to take immediate action. A brief factual report of the suspected incident should be completed and forwarded to the designated teacher.

## **SCHOOL RESPONSE TO DRUG-RELATED INCIDENTS**

The school regards with the utmost seriousness any drug-related incident involving its pupils and has a range of responses on which to draw. In determining an appropriate response, full consideration will be taken of all the relevant factors including the following:

- The seriousness of the incident
- The age of the pupil(s) concerned
- The number of pupils involved
- Evidence of peer pressure
- The level of involvement e.g. using, supplying etc.
- Whether this is a 'one-off' or repeated offence
- The pupil(s)' personal circumstances
- The disciplinary record of the student
- The needs of other students and of the whole school community.

At all times the needs of the individual pupil(s) concerned will be taken into account and appropriate support mechanisms put in place.

The following types of behaviour will result in disciplinary procedures being involved.

**The disciplinary actions for these misdemeanours relating to tobacco, alcohol and medication misuse in school are described in the Discipline Policy.**

- Tobacco - Possession of items related to tobacco consumption

- Smoking (i) on the school premises  
(ii) while wearing school uniform  
(iii) while engaged in any school-related activity
- Alcohol - Purchase, possession or consumption of alcohol  
(i) on the school premises  
(ii) while wearing school uniform  
(iii) while engaged in any school-related activity
- Where there is a reasonable belief that the pupil is under the influence of alcohol while at school.
- Substance misuse and use of controlled drugs is regarded as a serious breach of school rules and will be dealt with severely. This includes
  - Possession or use of any illegal drug or volatile substance
  - Possession, with intent to supply, of an illegal drug/volatile substance.
  - Supplying an illegal drug/volatile substance

#### **Detaining a pupil:**

When managing a suspected drugs-related incident the pupil(s) concerned should be invited to remain in school until parents/guardians and police arrive.

However the pupil will not be detained against their will and if they leave the school premises and the school believes they are a danger to themselves or others the police will be informed immediately.

### **DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE**

#### **Checklist for handling drug-related incidents**

1. **Ensure safety of individual pupil concerned, of other pupils, yourself and other staff.**

**Upon coming across a student who has controlled drugs in their possession or is under the influence of drugs**

- Get help immediately from another adult
- Assess situation to see if it is life threatening

#### **In an emergency:-**

- If necessary, send for medical help and ambulance
- If trained, put person in recovery position
- If trained, ensure airways are cleared
- Do not induce vomiting
- Keep the pupil under observation warm and quiet
- Do not leave the pupil unattended or in the charge of another pupil
- Secure any drugs or related paraphernalia and give to Designated Teacher for Drugs/ Principal
- Write a brief report on the incident and give to Designated Teacher/ Principal

#### **Then in all cases:-**

- **Send for Designated Teacher for Drugs/ Principal**

**who will**

- Ascertain which substances/ drugs have been taken and how much

- Collect any drug sample and any vomit for medical analysis
  - Secure all drugs and paraphernalia and give to the Principal immediately to be locked away
  - Contact parents/ guardians as soon as possible (Designated teacher for Drugs if principal is absent)
  - If pupil is going to hospital, drugs and paraphernalia should be sent to hospital to enable identification of substance involved
  - Fill in report form.
2. **Ensure all incidents are properly described and recorded: -**
- Never accuse a pupil of drug dealing/ possession; these are *alleged* illegal substances until substantiated by PSNI
  - Staff may detain a pupil using reasonable means to await arrival of appropriate help.
  - Physical searches must not be carried out. Students may be asked to turn out their pockets/ school bag (always in the presence of another adult). They may refuse, but must do so when asked by the PSNI. Ensure all drugs are safely stored until handed over to the PSNI for identification (**Staff should not attempt to analyse or taste an unidentified substance**)
  - Ensure that storage is witnessed by another adult and recorded
  - All information should be recorded on official incident form
  - Ensure that NEELB incident form is filled in and returned to Advisor for Pastoral Care (P. Baird).
3. **Ensure appropriate individuals and agencies are informed and contacted as needed: -**
- Principal and Designated Teacher
  - Parents/ Guardians
  - PSNI
  - The Education Welfare Officer
  - NEELB Pastoral Care Advisor
  - Chairperson of Board of Governors and subsequently the Board of Governors
  - Other pupils, parents and staff on a need to know basis

## MANAGEMENT OF SOLVENTS IN SCHOOL

Within many classrooms, materials are required and used which are toxic and emit intoxicating fumes e.g. solvent-based glues, aerosol sprays, paint thinners, felt-tipped pens. Staff who make use of potentially harmful substances such as solvents and volatile substances in the delivery of the curriculum are responsible for ensuring safe handling and storage of these substances and these procedures are outlined in their department's policies.

Materials of a similar nature which are used by caretakers and cleaning staff will be kept in locked storerooms and used with care.

## Drug Incident Form

To be completed by the teacher/ adult who was the first person on the scene of the incident.

**Name of pupil(s):**

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**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Time:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Location:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Sample of drug found:**

**YES**

**NO**

**Handed over to:** \_\_\_\_\_

**First Aid given:**

**YES**

**NO**

**Brief report on incident:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Behavioural Signs**

The presence of the following signs alone is not conclusive proof of drug misuse: many of them are a normal part of adolescence but the presence of several signs together may point to a need for greater vigilance.

Signs can include:

- Unsatisfactory reasons for unexpected absences or broken promises
- Changes in friendships: friends in older age groups
- Changes in priorities, including less concern with schoolwork, less care of personal appearance, non attendance at extra-curricular activities
- Outbreaks of temper
- Efforts to hide drug use through lying, evasiveness and secretive behaviour
- Efforts to get money for drug use
- Being very knowledgeable about drugs and the local drug scene
- A defensive attitude towards drugs and drug taking
- Absence from or poor performance at school on days following attendance at social venues (night clubs etc)
- A pattern of absences on certain days, for example, Monday

**Physical Signs**

These can differ depending on the type of drug taken. Listed below are some of the signs related to those drugs used illicitly in Northern Ireland.

**Solvents**

Solvents include glues, butane gas refills, aerosols, typewriting correcting fluids and thinners.

- Usual signs of intoxication – uncoordinated movement, slurred speech
- Possible odour on clothes and breath
- If using glue, redness around the mouth and nose
- A cough
- Possible stains on clothing etc. depending on the type of solvent involved

**Cannabis**

Cannabis can have the effect of a depressant or mild hallucinogen, depending on the amount taken and situational factors. Effects can include:

- Tendency to laugh easily
- Becoming talkative
- More relaxed behaviour
- Reddening of the eyes
- Hunger



## Ecstasy

Ecstasy is sometimes referred to as a hallucinogenic stimulant. Its effects will therefore include those listed for stimulants and in addition:

- Increased temperature
- Perhaps excessive sweating
- Very dry mouth and throat
- Jerky, uncoordinated movements
- Clenched jaws
- Occasional nausea when first used
- Possible some anxiety, depression and muscle pain

## Stimulant drugs(amphetamines (speed), butyl nitrite(poppers),cocaine

Effects can be

- Increased pulse rate
- Increased blood pressure
- Agitation
- Lack of coherent speech or talkativeness
- Dilated pupils
- Loss of appetite
- Damage to nasal passages
- Increased tendency to go to the toilet
- Mouth ulcers
- Fatigue after use

## Hallucinogens(LSD,Magic Mushrooms)

Effects can vary depending on nature of experience. They include:

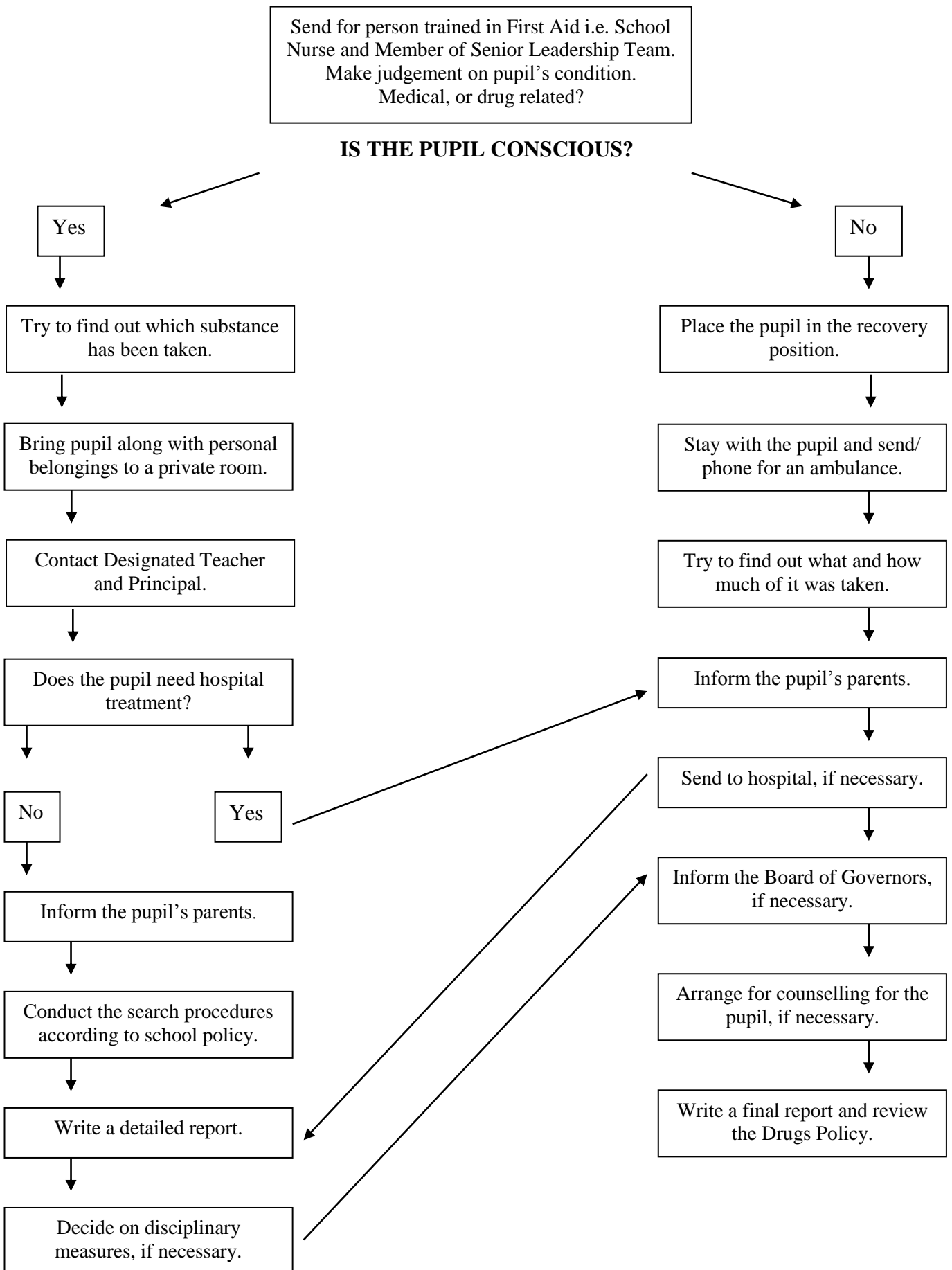
- Relaxed behaviour
- Agitated behaviour
- Dilation of pupils
- Uncoordinated movements

## Heroin

Heroin acts as a depressant. Its effects include:

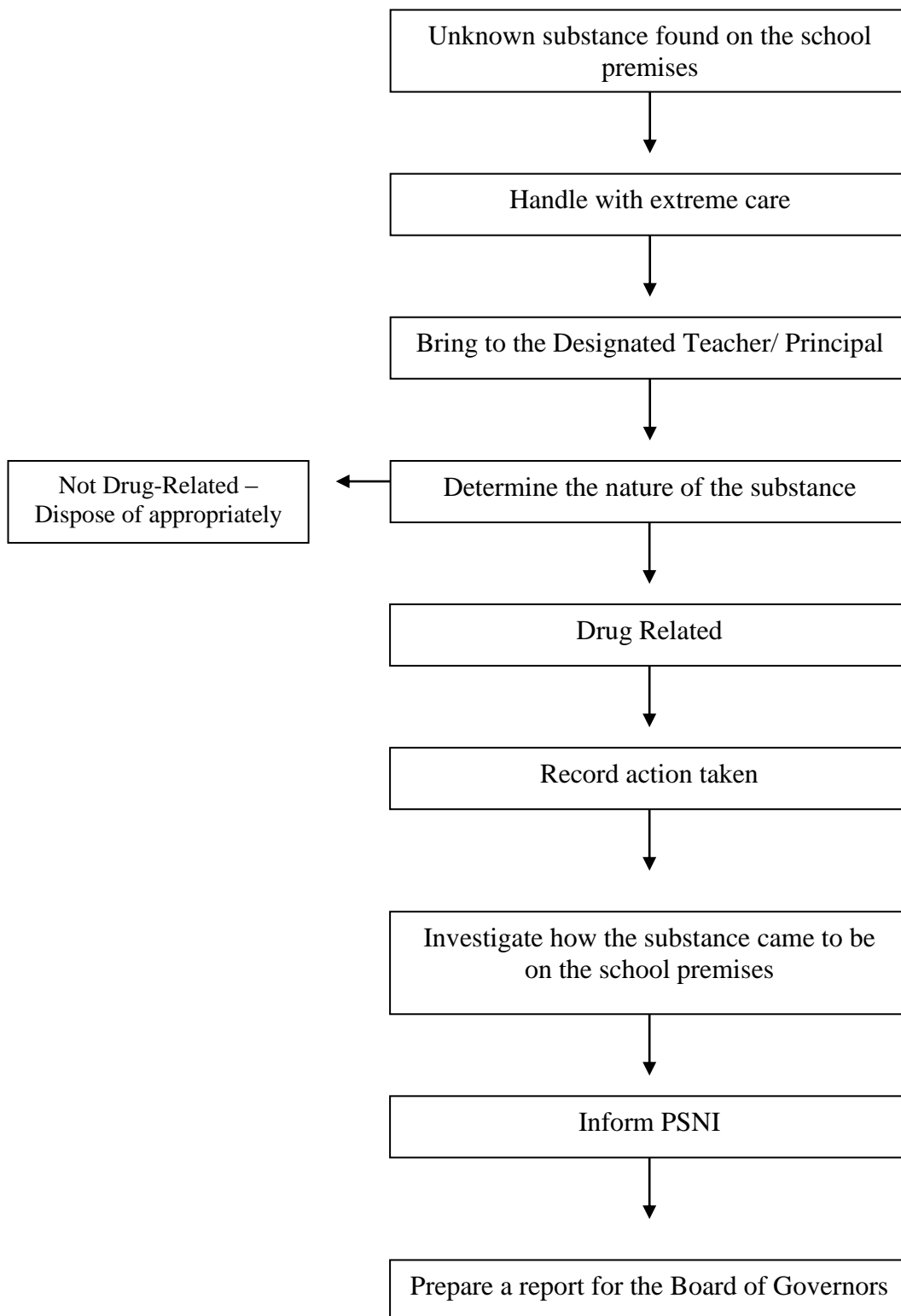
- Slowing down of breathing and heart-rate
- Suppression of cough reflex
- Increase in size of certain blood vessels
- Itchy skin
- Runny nose
- Lowering of body temperature
- Sweating

### PUPIL SUSPECTED OF HAVING TAKEN DRUGS IN SCHOOL



APPENDIX

**FINDING A SUBSTANCE ON THE SCHOOL PREMISES**



**STUDENT SUSPECTED OF POSSESSING/ DISTRIBUTING/  
USING AN ILLEGAL SUBSTANCE**

