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Anti-Substance (Ab)use Procedure

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1. Introduction

In the course of their development, young people face many challenges that may affect their health and well-being, including exposure to harmful substances (hereinafter, substances), such as alcohol, tobacco, and drugs (medicines, volatile substances, illegal drugs, new psychoactive substances and other unauthorised substances).

Moreover, adolescence and young adulthood are periods of risk-taking and experimentation that often includes substances use.⁹ In this context, the Schools play an important role in promoting pupils' well-being, including the prevention of substances misuse/abuse.

In line with the principles established by the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA), the European Schools system aims at ensuring the schools to provide evidence-based prevention programmes and have appropriate anti-substance abuse policies in place. These should aim not only to reduce substance use, but also to reduce violence, improve learning, produce better academic achievements and create a better school climate, outcomes that are of intrinsic interest to education in the European Schools. The European Schools system aims at reflecting upon how it might provide for the needs of their pupils and respond appropriately to the issue of substance (ab)use, that also involves sensitive and emotive aspects.

The distinctive feature of the European Schools system, whose schools are hosted by and in different Member States, with their own regulations at national/regional level, entails the development of a framework that should be applied at system level and complemented by the national/regional regulations. This circumstance requires that each school develops its own anti-substance abuse policy to build the bridge between the global/system-wide concepts and the national/local contexts.

The framework presented below is based on the best practices pointed out by European Institutions, and on the existing school regulations regarding substance abuse that have already been developed in different European Schools that were used as inspiration. This document aims at establishing guiding principles regarding prevention and management of situations of substance abuse, including the provision of specific training to enable different school actors to prevent and manage the situations of substance abuse.

The anti-substance abuse system-wide framework and the schools' specific policies must be articulated with existing regulations and policies, namely the Child Protection policy, the General Rules in the European Schools, Schools specific rules and policies related to well-being, health and safety, behaviour,...

The main objectives of this framework and the related school-level policy are the following:

- To reinforce prevention activities and to increase awareness about substances misuse.
- To reinforce and safeguard the health and safety of pupils and the whole school community;
- To ensure that the environment of schools is kept safe and substance abuse free.
- To prevent any risk and harm to pupils and other individuals that may result from substance abuse.
- To inform pupils, their parents/legal representatives, staff and others, about the measures to be taken by the school in the situations of when substances are found or used in schools.
- To provide school staff with a practical tool that enables them to intervene in an appropriate manner when a substance is found or used in schools.
- To clarify the legal requirements and responsibilities of the school and other services and authorities.

- To clarify the procedures for responding to and managing any substance-related incidents that may occur so that they are managed with confidence and consistency and in the best interests of those involved.
- To provide a basis for evaluating the effectiveness of the school and the management of incidents involving use of substances.
- Clarify the necessity to provide training in this area for the staff and other partners working with/in the school; and to provide ongoing information session for pupils and parents/legal representatives

This framework and schools' policy:

- apply to all school staff, pupils, parents/legal representatives, and other partners working with/in the school;
- apply to the school premises, the school day, while travelling to and from school, journeys in school time, work experience, day and residential trips.
- must be communicated to all pupils and parents, who must clearly attest the acknowledgment of this policy.

2. Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this policy is to create a safe, healthy, and supportive environment that promotes the well-being of all students at the European School Bergen, North Holland. This policy applies to all members of the school community – students, staff, and visitors – and covers all school premises, events, and activities. It aims to prevent substance abuse, intervene early when risk is detected, and manage incidents in a supportive, proportionate, and legally compliant manner.

3. Role of the School Psychologist

The School Psychologist plays a role in the implementation of this policy by:

- Leading and supporting prevention efforts through evidence-based educational programmes.
- Advising the Care Team and management on early identification strategies and interventions.
- Providing psychological assessments and referrals when substance abuse concerns arise.
- Supporting affected students through individual and group interventions.
- Promoting a whole-school approach to mental health, resilience, and risk reduction.
- Contributing to staff training in substance abuse awareness and response.

4. Collaboration with Care Team, School Nurse, Security, and Management

- **Care Team:**
The Care Team (including the School Psychologist, school nurse, Deputy Director, and Educational coordinators) oversees the well-being strategy, including substance abuse prevention and intervention. It ensures a coordinated and confidential approach to

individual cases.

- **School Nurse:**

The School Nurse monitors health-related risks, provides first-line medical assistance, and assists in substance abuse education. The nurse also participates in the risk assessment of incidents and advises on appropriate health responses.

- **Security Personnel:**

Security staff ensure that the school premises remain safe and substance-free. They assist in monitoring suspicious behaviour, safely managing incidents on campus, and supporting the enforcement of school rules while respecting students' dignity and privacy.

- **School Management:**

The management team ensures that the policy is enforced consistently and fairly. They are responsible for discipline, communication with parents and external agencies, and safeguarding legal compliance. Management oversees professional development for staff on substance abuse issues.

5. Prevention Strategy

- **Education and Awareness:**

- Age-appropriate, evidence-based education on substance use and its risks integrated into the curriculum (gym, science, health classes).
- Workshops, campaigns, and peer-led initiatives to promote healthy choices.
- Information sessions for parents to support home-school cooperation.

- **Staff Training:**

All staff receive training on identifying early signs of substance use, how to intervene sensitively, and referral pathways.

- **School Climate:**

A culture of trust, respect, and belonging is promoted, with attention to mental health support and student voice to decrease the likelihood of risky behaviours.

6. Response and Intervention Protocol

Step 1: Immediate Safety and Health Response

If a student is suspected of being under the influence or in possession of a substance:

- Ensure immediate safety. The student is escorted discreetly to the School Nurse for evaluation.
- If there is a medical emergency, call emergency services.
- The School Psychologist is informed immediately if mental health risks are suspected.

Step 2: Investigation and Confidential Documentation

- Management initiates a discreet fact-finding process, involving relevant staff (Care Team, Security).
- A written incident report is compiled confidentially.
- The student is given the opportunity to explain, and parents/guardians are contacted promptly.

Step 3: Assessment and Care Plan

- The Care Team conducts a risk and needs assessment.
- Where appropriate, the School Psychologist provides a preliminary mental health evaluation.
- A personalised care plan is developed, which may include:
 - Counselling sessions
 - Behavioural contracts
 - Referral to external specialised services

Step 4: Disciplinary Action

- Consequences are determined by school management in line with the school's Code of Conduct, considering proportionality and educational principles.
- Disciplinary action may include suspension, restrictions from school activities, or – in severe cases – expulsion, in line with legal guidelines.

Step 5: Follow-up and Monitoring

- Regular follow-up meetings with the student and family are scheduled.
- The Care Team monitors progress and adjusts the intervention plan as needed.

Step 6: Re-integration Support

- If a student has been temporarily removed from the school, a re-integration plan led by the School Psychologist supports their return.
- Academic support and a peer mentor may be assigned if necessary.

7. Confidentiality and Child Protection

- All information concerning suspected or confirmed substance abuse is treated confidentially and shared strictly on a need-to-know basis.
- In all cases, the school's Child Protection Policy takes precedence: safeguarding the child's welfare is paramount.

8. Review and Evaluation

- This policy is reviewed annually by the Care Team in consultation with the Student Council and Parent Association.
- Adjustments are made based on new research, school community feedback, and developments in local/national regulations.

9. Communication

- The policy is communicated clearly to students, staff, and parents via the school website, handbooks, and induction programmes.
- Posters summarising the school's anti-substance policy are displayed prominently.

Annex: Clear **Incident Flowchart** and a **Staff Quick-Reference Guide** complementing the Anti-Substance (Ab)use Policy.

Incident Action chart: Suspected Substance (Ab)use at School

1. Observation



Any staff member observes suspected substance possession, use, or influence.

2. Immediate Safety Check



Escort the student discreetly to the School Nurse.

If urgent medical need → Call emergency services immediately.

3. Inform Key Staff



Notify:

- Care Team (Psychologist, Nurse, Deputy Director, Educational Advisors)
- School Management
- Security if needed for safety

4. Initial Assessment



School Nurse evaluates health risks.

Care team / School Psychologist assesses mental/emotional state if necessary.

5. Secure Evidence



If a substance is found, security and management secure and document it following legal guidelines.

6. Parental Contact



Management/ Care team contacts parents/guardians promptly.

7. Investigation



Management (with Care Team) discreetly investigates circumstances.

Confidential written report is made.

8. Risk Assessment & Care Plan



Care Team creates an action plan:

- Counselling support
- Disciplinary response
- External referrals (if needed)

9. Disciplinary Decision



Management applies proportionate disciplinary measures according to school regulations.

10. Follow-up Support



Care Team monitors student well-being and progress.

Offer re-integration support if needed.

Staff Quick-Reference Guide: Handling Substance (Ab)use Incidents

DO:

- Stay calm and non-judgmental.
- Prioritize the student's immediate health and safety.
- Escort discreetly – avoid public confrontation.
- Notify the School Nurse and Management immediately.
- Record only factual observations (e.g., smell of alcohol, slurred speech).
- Respect confidentiality (only inform those who must know).
- Follow up by referring any concerns to the Care Team.

DO NOT:

- Accuse or interrogate the student.
- Search the student's body or possessions yourself (only security/management if required, following protocol).
- Share information with other students or unauthorised staff.
- Ignore or downplay suspected use.

Key Contacts:

- **School Nurse:** [Insert Name & Internal Number]
- **School Psychologist:** [Insert Name & Internal Number]
- **Care Team Lead:** [Insert Name & Internal Number]
- **School Security:** [Insert Name & Internal Number]
- **Deputy Director/Management:** [Insert Name & Internal Number]