

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE: **Education and Children's Services**

DATE: **02 June 2015**

DIRECTOR: **Gayle Gorman**

TITLE OF REPORT: **Policy and Procedure for Managing Substance Misuse Incidents Involving Children and Young People**

REPORT NUMBER: **ECS/15/023**

CHECKLIST COMPLETED: **Yes**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report seeks Education and Children's Services Committee approval for the revised Policy and Procedure for Managing Substance Misuse Incidents Involving Children and Young People

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

Committee (with any specific observations on content) accept the proposal to replace the 2003 policy with the 2015 revision

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct cost implications. However this policy could be more resource 'intensive' in as much as we are asking for more defined recording etc. It is worth noting that in the case of FOI type enquiries or other more routine data gathering – it could in fact balance itself out in terms of resource/staff time.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Members should be aware that the Policy and Procedure for Managing Substance Misuse Incidents Involving Children and Young People in Schools may result in a spike of reported substance misuse incidents. This does not mean that more of Aberdeen's young people are using substances but that we are reflecting a more accurate picture through implementing improved recording and reporting mechanisms.

5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

With funding from the Aberdeen Alcohol Drug Partnership a Substance Misuse Development Officer post was created (for a six month period between 2013/14) with a focus on engaging parents in the education of Substances; illegal or otherwise.

By the nature of the post title there were several enquiries from schools attempting to source a policy that would act as a support in dealing with incidents of pupils using substances.

Through investigations it became apparent that the most recent policy was over ten years old and clearly not suitable for purpose. Further to this there was no evidence within current recording mechanisms of any incidents of substance use in schools; this was in contrast to anecdotal evidence from schools and local service providers.

It was with this information that the post holder began the process of creating a policy fit for purpose. A working group of relevant staff and agencies worked up a draft that has subsequently been presented to and commented on by the GIRFEC team, Curriculum manager, social work representatives, the DLT, volunteered Head Teachers and subsequently the remaining Head Teachers as well as opportunity for direct conversation being possible with officers at the Aberdeen Learning Festival.

The main aims of the policy is that schools have guidance on how to approach incidents of substance use by pupils or deal with parents who arrive under the influence of a substance. There is also an emphasis on supporting young people through seeking appropriate support for them via referring onto and working in partnership with external agencies.

There is also instruction for schools to record using the mechanisms in place. In a climate where services and agencies are under pressure due to reduced capacity to respond it is vital that current trends are captured through recording incidents accurately. This data will then enable the Education and Children's Services to seek support with current, up to the date information being utilised to inform agencies who can then have a planned and focused response.

6. IMPACT

The information generated by the collation of the data gathered through recording will support existing planned projects and inform opportunity for creating new ones. This is only possible by gathering data and feeding into local services and agencies who will work in partnership with schools and educational establishments.

This policy will impact on the public in terms of potentially increased visible numbers of substance use being recorded and reported on. Members need to

be aware that as recorded incidents increase public interest and debate as to why this is happening may ensue.

Parents of children and young people who have had an incident or incidents of substance use should feel supported and engaged in partnership working with the school and agencies in addressing their sibling's substance use.

An Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment has been completed in relation to this report, appendix 1

7. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

Positive aspects of approval will be that schools have a current policy and procedures to refer to when dealing with substance use issues. Although substance use continues to evolve the policy covers all known aspects of substance use; New Psychoactive Drugs (NPS or more commonly Legal Highs), illegal drugs, alcohol, volatile substances and cigarettes.

Children, young people and parents will feel that there are support mechanisms available through support from schools and agencies in addressing sibling's substance use. This in turn has the potential to maximise life chances and opportunities for young people, their families and communities.

Potentially the recording mechanism being utilised could demonstrate a spike in substance use and generate community and media commentary. Arguably this spike could be demonstrated as merely reflecting local trends. The Aberdeen Alcohol and Drugs Partnership will be supportive partner should this scenario play out.

It should be noted that the Scottish Schools Lifestyle and Substance Use Survey (SALSUS) continues to show that less and less young people are using any form of substance.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Learning and Leisure Policy and Procedures for Drug Related Incidents Involving School Students and Pupils (2003) - Appendix 2

Link to Aberdeenshire Council – Management of Incidents of Substance Misuse (2010)

<http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/about/departments/SubstanceMisuseIncidentPolicy2011.pdf>

Link to the Scottish Schools Lifestyle and Substance Use Survey (SALSUS) publication

http://www.isdscotland.org/Health-Topics/Public-Health/Publications/2014-11-25/SALSUS_2013_Aberdeen_City.pdf

9. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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