



Drugs & Substance Abuse Policy

Policy

2014-2016

Updated: 2014 (*Version 1*)
To be revised: 2016
Approved:

Principal

Board of Governors

Note: All policies are annually updated with minor reviews, but most updated bi-annually for major changes unless extraordinary circumstances dictate.

1. Our Ethos

At Strangford we are committed to excellence in provision and opportunity for students of all traditions and abilities. In partnership with parents, and building on good primary school foundations, we encourage a sense of self-worth and mutual respect, so that each student may develop fully as an individual and as a responsible member of the community

2. Rationale

At Strangford College, we take seriously our role in educating all young people in our care, about drugs and other harmful substances, their uses and abuses, and how to handle situations in which students may be offered legal, or illegal highs. We will also try to help students, parents and staff to be more knowledgeable about, and better prepared to deal with, any drug related issues, or concerns.

3. Aims of the Strangford College Drugs & Substance Abuse Policy

The aims of this policy are as follows:

- To provide a clear statement of the College's view on drugs and substance abuse: ***The use of illicit, illegal and prohibited drugs is totally forbidden at Strangford College. The College must be informed of any prescribed drugs which a student may be taking.***
- To ensure a consistent approach from staff to drug education and in the handling of drug related incidents.
- To promote a drugs education programme in the College Curriculum
- To safeguard good practice in the future.

4. Key Roles & Responsibilities

The Vice Principal, Mr Paul Maxwell, is the Head of Pastoral Care and Student/Staff Welfare at Strangford, and as such is the **Designated Teacher for Drugs/Substance Abuse**. In his absence, a teaching member of the **College Safeguarding Team**, will take responsibility for managing a drugs related incident, reporting directly to the Principal/Vice Principal/SLT. Mr Maxwell is responsible for the management of all drug related incidents at the College. He will ensure that the **Principal** is kept **fully informed** at all stages of the clarification of an incident. He will inform the **Designated Governor for Drugs**, Ms L Calvin, when an incident, has been confirmed as having taken place. His role is to clarify a drugs incident, not to investigate it. He will inform the parents, PSNI, and Mrs K Scott, SEELB, through the SEELB Action Form. 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 to complete /forward a factual report to the Principal, and Designated Governor, listing actions, or recommendations, as appropriate. Any sanctions following an incident will be agreed with the Principal and Designated Governor for Drugs. The action lists for drugs related incidents are outlined below.

At all times, the well-being of the student(s) involved will be paramount.

5. Wider Roles & Responsibilities

Staff:

All staff should:

- **be aware** of the definitions of drugs and substance misuse, as outlined in this policy.
- be aware of what constitutes engagement in substance misuse, as outlined in this policy.

On discovering an incidence of suspected, or actual, drug abuse, a member of staff should:

- **make** the situation **safe**.
- **inform** The **Vice Principal, Mr Maxwell**, or in his absence, a teaching member of the **College Safeguarding Team, (Mr Boal, or Mrs Johnston)**.

Students:

All students should:

- **be aware** of the definitions of drugs and substance misuse as outlined in this policy.
- **be aware** of what constitutes engagement in substance misuse as outlined in this policy.
- **be aware** of their responsibility to other members of the College community and the physical and emotional damage that misuse of drugs can cause to both them and others
- **refrain** from all types of substance misuse as described above.
- **report** to any member of staff any suspected or actual substance misuse.

Parents:

All parents will be expected to:

- **familiarise** themselves with this policy and make every effort to ensure that their son/daughter has done the same.
- **support** the College in any clarification, or disciplinary procedures following a suspected, or actual case of drug abuse.

6. Provision of a Drugs Education Programme

The College believes in and supports the following **educational aims** of the Drugs Education programme:

- to promote positive attitudes towards personal health, by teaching about the benefits of a drug free lifestyle;
- to provide accurate information about substances;
- to increase understanding about the implications and possible consequences of use and misuse;
- to widen understanding about related health and social issues, e.g. alcoholism, crime, long term illness, sex and sexuality, HIV and AIDS;
- to enable young people to identify sources of appropriate personal support;
- to safeguard all our students from those wishing to involve them in drugs and substance abuse.

The **Subject Leader for Personal and Social Education** will ensure that a **co-ordinated programme** for all key stages is implemented, regularly reviewed and updated. This will include:

- the curricular provision at Key Stage 3 & 4; and
- the use of Form Class Time across all year groups.

Extra-curricular activities will provide many opportunities for staff to reinforce the learning of the more formal curriculum.

7. Definitions

(i) Drug:

The term 'drug' is used for any substance which when taken, has the effect of altering the way a person behaves, feels, sees and thinks. In this document the term 'drug' refers to the following:

- **Illegal drugs** - which are those substances listed as controlled drugs, e.g. cannabis, ecstasy, heroin, cocaine and magic mushrooms.
- **Illicit drugs** - which include socially unacceptable legal drugs, including "legal highs," e.g. poppers, solvents, Mephodrome, and Ketamine.
- Consumption of **alcohol and tobacco**, in College, or on College business, e.g. educational trips.
- **Prescription drugs** - which are those issued on prescription by a doctor e.g. tranquilisers, sleeping tablets, strong pain killers.
- **Over the Counter drugs** – which are those medicines that can be obtained without the need for a prescription e.g. paracetamol.

(ii) College Jurisdiction:

This policy applies on all College buildings and grounds, and/or when it involves any member of the College Community during College hours, on visits and trips, at College events and other occasions related to the College and on any occasions when the students are the responsibility of the staff. The effects of previous use are unacceptable in College time and as such students should not, at any time, be under the influence of substances, which contravene this policy. When students are travelling to and from the College, or are at any stage, in uniform, they are considered to be representing the College and therefore the College rules and this policy apply.

(iii) Substance Misuse:

This is the engagement by a student in any drug related activity, whilst under the jurisdiction of the College. Students are forbidden to share, or attempt to share, ingest, or otherwise use, any substance which, when used by the student with the intention to bring about a state of intoxication, causes the behaviour of the student to be a threat to the health and safety of the student concerned, or any other member of the College; or which might otherwise disrupt the orderly operation of any part of the educational process, for which the College is responsible.

(iv) Incidents relating to drug abuse

Students must not engage in substance misuse whilst under the jurisdiction of the College. This will include involvement in the purchase, possession, supply, intent to supply, being concerned in supply, or consumption of drugs as described in (i) above. A student who is found under the College Jurisdiction in possession of a drug, or any illegal substance, for abusive purposes is in breach of the College rules, even if the student was not planning to consume the drug while under the College's jurisdiction.

(v) Involvement of other students (Dealing)

Involvement in the supply of drugs can take many forms. Any of the following, for example, would be seen as involvement in the supply of drugs and therefore a most serious offence:

- Sharing a drug with others
- Helping, or facilitating another student to gain access to drugs, or come into contact with someone willing to provide, or deal drugs.
- Making arrangements for another student to buy drugs, even if the transaction itself, were to take place outside the College and outside College hours.
- Making drugs, or any illegal substance, accessible to other students.

Please note the above list is not exhaustive. The individual case of involvement in the supply of drugs will be assessed independently. Intent to supply, or attempt to supply, is a serious offence, even if no supply actually takes place. A student does not have to make a monetary, or any other gain from passing on a drug, to be guilty of involvement in supply. A student who supplies a drug to another as a drug of abuse, commits a serious offence, even if he/she is passing over a substance which is not an illegal drug and is not harmful. For a student to lead another to unwittingly consume a drug of abuse is a serious offence. Students, who place themselves in such a way as to give support and encouragement to drug related activity, (e.g. by joining students who truant from class to take a drug of abuse), may face serious sanctions for offering that support, or encouragement, even if they bought no drug and consumed no drug themselves. Abuse of drugs which can be bought commercially, or obtained under prescription, is strictly forbidden and a serious offence. The College is not able to legislate for every eventuality. The above examples demonstrate the type of conduct which would be in breach of the College rules and in some cases the Criminal Law.

8. The Role of the College in the Storage and Distribution of Prescribed Medicines

Any prescribed medicines to be taken in College, need to **be left with and taken at the College Office**, except for inhalers and epipens, which should be additionally carried by the student. Prescribed medicines may only be carried by students with the written permission of the parent/guardian of the student, and countersigned by the Vice Principal. Medicines are kept in a **secure cupboard** and a **record** is kept of all medicine administered.

Students who are currently taking prescribed medicines must inform the College, giving **details** of:

- The Medicine
- Dosage
- How often it is to be taken
- Conditions for occasional, or emergency use.

College staff should never give non-prescribed medicine to students, without prior written approval from the parent/guardian.

If a student suffers from acute pain regularly, e.g. migraine, the parents should authorise and supply the appropriate painkillers. **NO STUDENT UNDER 16 SHOULD BE GIVEN MEDICINE WITHOUT THE PARENT/GUARDIAN'S WRITTEN CONSENT.**

It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that all medication is not out of date.

9. Staff Training

The Teaching and Support Staff receive training and guidance on dealing with drug related incidents at the beginning of each academic year. The Vice Principal, who is the designated teacher for Drugs Related Incidents and Education, will deliver the training. He receives guidance from the SEELB each year. The Policy for the Management of Substance Abuse will be amended biannually.

10. Staff Use of Smoking, Electronic Cigarettes and Alcohol.

Strangford College is a smoke-free premises and no employee, or visitor, may smoke, or use electronic cigarettes within College Buildings and Grounds, including the College's Driveway. For further guidance, please refer to 'Drugs and Alcohol in the Workplace Guidance,' available from the Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland.

11. Disciplinary Measures: Sanctions & Support

The College will deal with each case as it arises, following this policy, SEELB guidance and legal requirements. As the police and courts differentiate between cases of possession and intent to supply, so too will the College impose differing sanctions accordingly.

"The fact that certain behaviour could constitute a violation of the criminal law should not, in itself, be taken as leading to the exclusion of a student." (p.35 *Drugs: Guidance for Colleges 2004 in Northern Ireland Order*).

It will be necessary to explore a range of factors to determine the seriousness of the incident and there may be a variety of responses and sanctions used, e.g. counselling, advice and support from external agencies, as well as College-imposed sanctions. Any material breaches of the College's rules as set out in this policy will be treated as a gross breach and may, where appropriate, be expected to lead to a period of exclusion from the College. Where appropriate, the Principal/ Vice Principal has the right to impose a fixed period exclusion, following the implementation of proper procedures, on any student involved in a breach of this policy and any drug related misconduct. The duration of the exclusion, and whether it is fixed term, or permanent, will depend on the circumstances of the case, however it is possible that any breach, relating to involvement in supply of drugs of abuse, may warrant permanent exclusion – as agreed by the Principal and Board of Governors. Immediate fixed term exclusion may also be necessary, whilst further clarification takes place, or if on the balance of the evidence available, the Principal / Vice Principal considers that this is an appropriate course of action. In that event, the normal exclusion procedures will be followed. This may also apply to situations where the substance is not illegal, but considered to pose a danger to the individual, or others.

12. Confidentiality Policy

Where a student discloses to a member of staff that they are taking drugs, the staff member should make it clear to the student that they can offer no guarantee of confidentiality. However the teacher can advise the students of other sources of confidential information, or advice. Students should also be encouraged to talk to their parents.

13. Review of policy and procedures

Our Drugs & Substance Abuse Policy is biannually reviewed, however procedures are regularly reviewed, especially after an incident has occurred. All staff will receive refresher training, in conjunction with child protection and Safeguarding Training, at the commencement of the academic year.

14. Procedures for Dealing with Suspected, or Actual, Drug Abuse

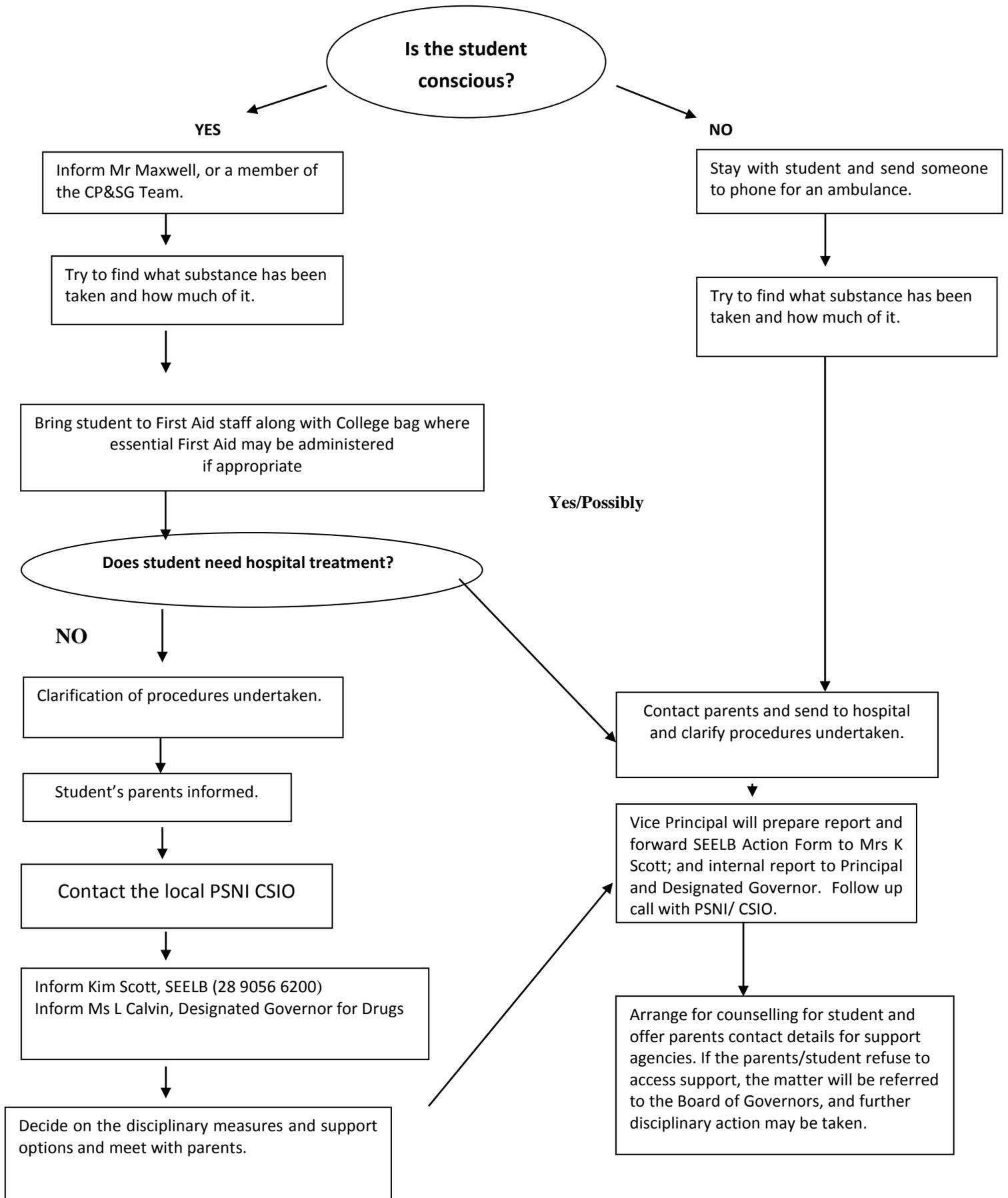
Following a report, the designated teacher, the Vice Principal, (or in his absence a teaching member of the College Safeguarding Team), will make a judgment as to the point where it may be necessary to contact a parent, to report a suspicion of possible drug involvement by a student. The Principal will immediately be informed. As soon as a drug incident is confirmed, the Designated Governor for Drugs will also be informed.

During any clarification, the College reserves the right to request that a student empties their pockets, or other belongings, (e.g. school bags, locker, etc), if that student is suspected of possessing drugs. This will only be done in the presence of at least 2 members of staff, one of which must be a member of the Teaching Staff.

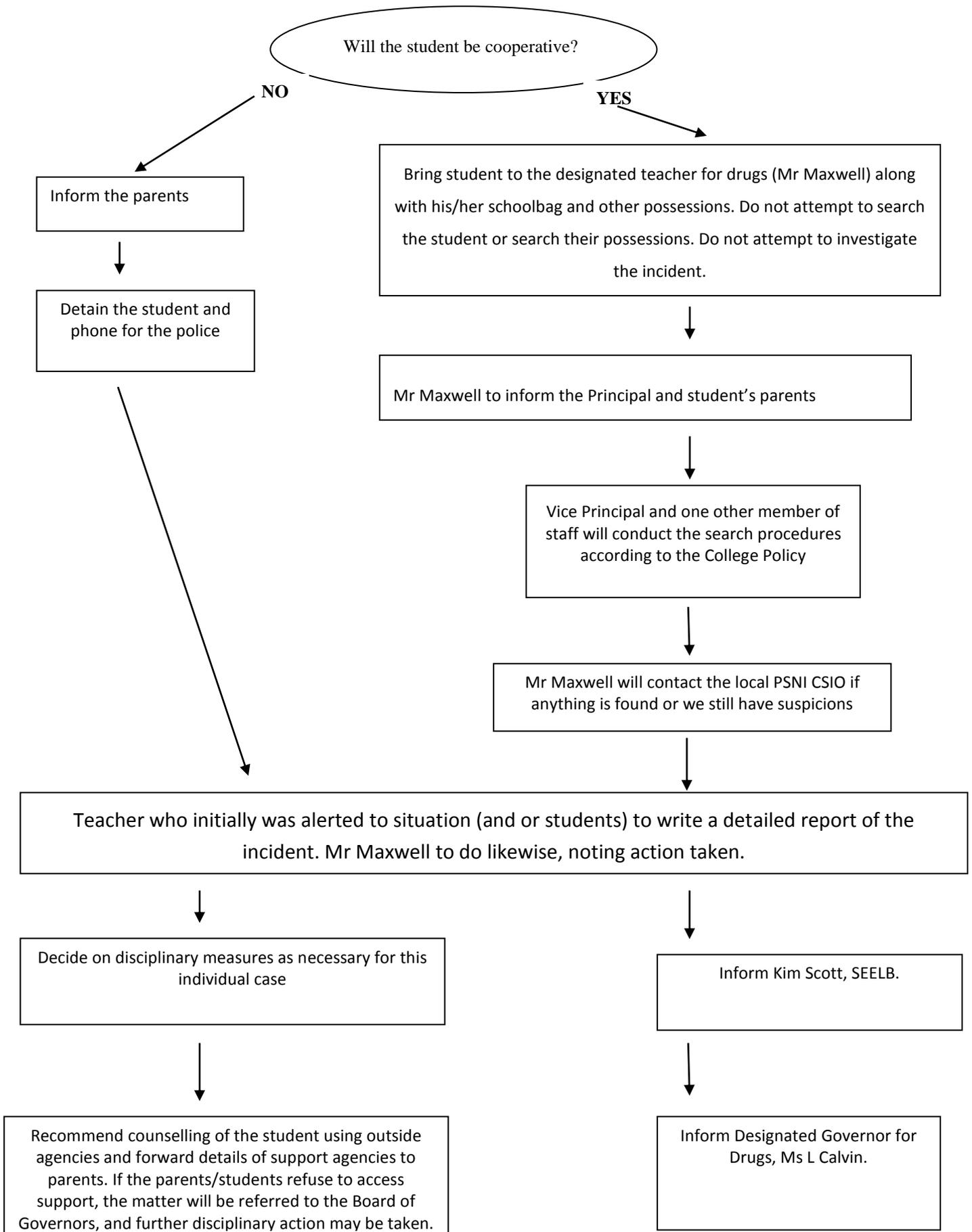
Whilst the spirit of confidentiality is of primary importance to those who work professionally with young people in a trusting and secure environment, the legal requirements of drug legislation will mean that, in certain circumstances, there will be a change in the convention of confidentiality. The Children's (Northern Ireland) Order (1995) makes it clear that the welfare of the young person is paramount and therefore confidentiality must be included.

Once a drug related incident has been confirmed, the matter will immediately be reported to the PSNI. In such instances the College reserves the right to restrict the movements of the student, until the PSNI have had an opportunity to speak with the student. In such an instance, the College will make every effort to inform the parent/guardian of this action.

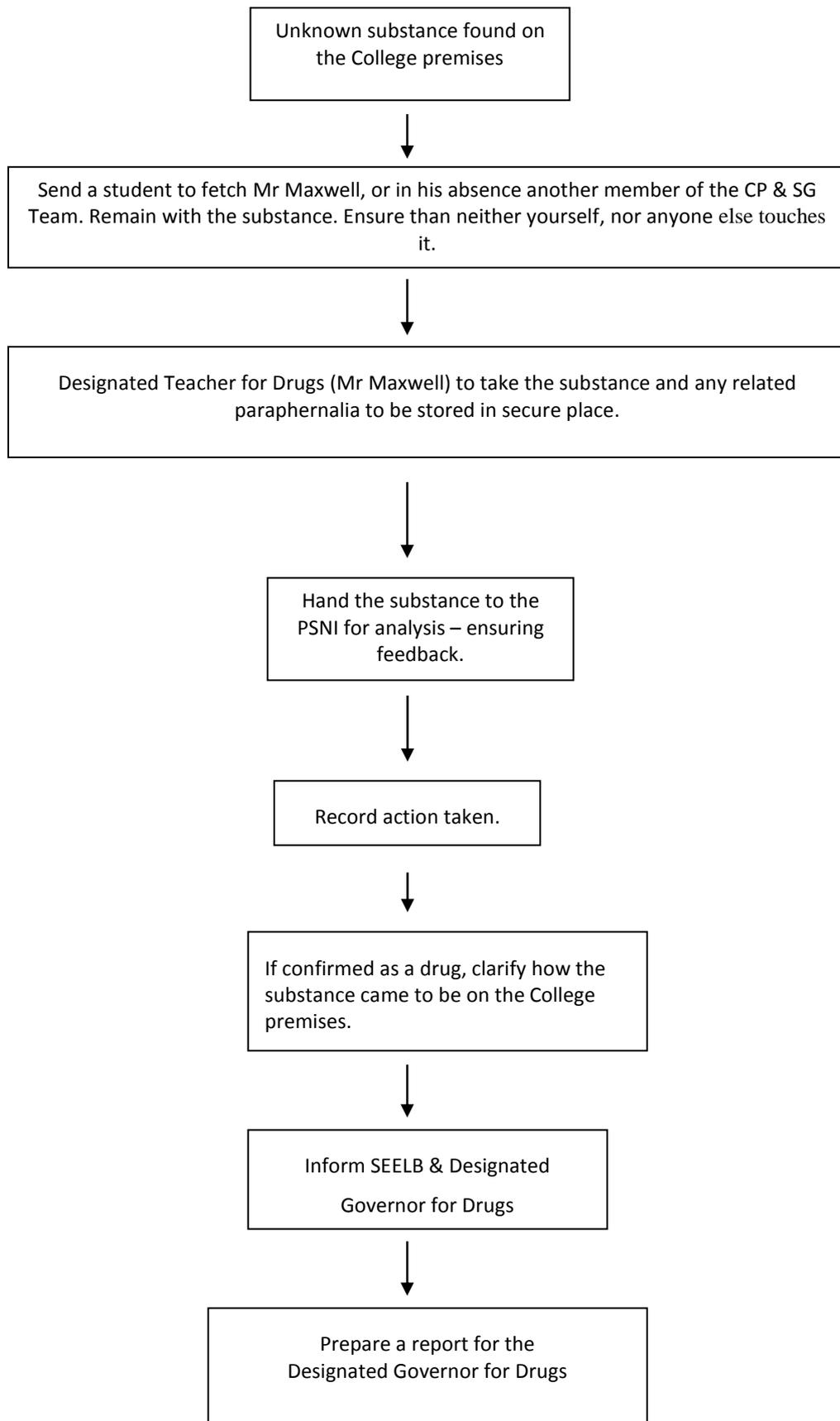
Student suspected of having taken drugs in College



Student suspected of possessing/distributing an illegal substance



Finding a substance on the College premises



15. Procedures in place to deter students from taking drugs:

If any student is suspected of possessing/distributing or taking drugs within the college:-

1. The parents will be informed and brought into the College.
2. The Juvenile Liaison Officer will be contacted and brought in to the College.
3. The SEELB will be informed, through Kim Scott, and the Designated Governor for Drugs.
4. In the event of proof, the student will be immediately suspended for a minimum of 5 days while further clarification is carried out, during which time the student will have the opportunity to put across their version of events. All circumstances will be explored and previous experiences will be considered before making a decision.

When the outcome of any clarification proves that the student is guilty of distribution, the College may recommend his/her expulsion. In the event of possession, or use, the College may also recommend his/her expulsion.

16. The Management of Solvents in the College

The teaching and support staff are responsible for the safe keeping of solvents held within their areas. These should be locked away and only used under strict supervision.

17. Contact with Parents

- Parents will be informed and consulted at every stage of a suspected incident.
- There will be opportunities for parents to raise their own awareness of drugs.
- Parents are expected to support the College as it seeks to fulfil its aim.

18. Dealing with the Media

- Only the Principal, or Chair of Governors deals with the press, and no comment will be made, if he, or she, is unavailable.
- A prepared written statement will be sent out reinforcing the fact that the College procedures were carried out effectively to minimise the risk of harm to any other students, or members of staff.
- No further questions will be answered.
- The privacy of the student and his/her family will be respected.
- The statement will finish with a positive statement as to how the College is satisfied with how the incident was handled.

19. Use of Visitors

It is important that before bringing a visitor into the College that the following checklist is applied:

- Is the Visitor the best choice to make for the particular input being sought?
- Is the SLT agreeable with the choice of speaker and topic?
- Is it in line with College Ethos?
- Does the visitor share the College's values and approach to Drugs Education?
- Has the visitor seen the College's Drugs education policy? Have they read the College Mission Statement?
- What prior experience of teaching/Drugs Education does the visitor have?
- Can the visitor communicate at a level appropriate to the emotional and intellectual development of the students?
- Do we have first-hand knowledge of the type of presentation which the visitor gives?
- Is the visitor agreeable to work with a whole class, or will they only work with a smaller group?
- Is the visitor and agency vetted to meet the requirements of Child Protection?