

St Dallan's Primary School



Drug Education Policy

Our School Vision

Our vision in St Dallan's Primary School is one where each child and staff member feels valued, respected and loved; where talents and abilities are nurtured to enable all to reach their potential, in an inclusive environment committed to our shared Christian values.

Rationale

The Board of Governors of each school is required by the Department of Education to establish and maintain a Drugs Policy. The school drugs policy is based on guidelines from DENI (Circular 2004/9) and Drugs Guidance for Schools in Northern Ireland – Revised Edition 2015. The updated guidance has been developed as a response to the growing concerns about the use and misuse of drugs in Northern Ireland.

It is also a statutory requirement for all schools to inform the PSNI if they believe or suspect a pupil to be in possession of a controlled substance (Criminal Law Act N.I. 1967).

This policy endeavours to make a clear statement of our views on drugs and drug education. It ensures a consistent approach among staff on drugs education and in the handling of drug related incidents. Good practice for the future is also safeguarded.

'In today's society, most people will be exposed to some sort of drug at some time in their lives. Substance misuse affects all communities in Northern Ireland, crossing gender, cultural and social boundaries. No school parent or carer can afford to be complacent or think that children and young people are not at risk.' (*Drugs Guidance for Schools in Northern Ireland – Revised Edition 2015*)

We at St Dallan's Primary School feel this policy is important as we promote the development of the whole child and our pupils therefore must become equipped with the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values to handle their lives effectively in the present climate as well as preparing for adulthood.

Aims of Drug Education Policy

- To provide a clear statement of the school's view on drugs education.
- To ensure a consistent approach from staff to drugs education and in the handling of drug related incidents.
- To ensure every member of staff is aware of the correct procedure to deal with a drug related incident
- To safeguard good practice in the future

Drugs education must be seen as part of the Health Education aspect of PDMU within the Northern Ireland Curriculum. Within this programme pupils are taught about raising self-esteem, self-confidence and assertiveness to prepare them for making informed decisions about drug use. The focus here is on knowledge, social skills, attitudes and values as well as knowing the harmful effects of drugs to themselves and others.

Aims of Drug Education Programme

- To promote positive attitude towards personal health
- To inform pupils of the effects of drug use and abuse
- To help pupils acquire skills to manage the pressures of the youth culture they live in
- To develop skills of decision making, problem solving and analysing and disseminating information
- To help pupils build up self-esteem
- To create a climate where pupils feel comfortable to discuss their fears/concerns regarding drugs
- To encourage a participative approach in which pupils are actively involved
- To encourage a healthy and critical respect for all substances taken into the body
- To develop skills to empower pupils to take responsibility for their own health and safety

Drug Definitions

A drug is any substance which when taken has the effect of altering the way the body works or how a person behaves, feels, sees or thinks.

Drugs include:

- a) **Illegal drugs** - those substances listed as controlled drugs e.g. heroin, cocaine, Ecstasy, cannabis etc
- b) **Illicit drugs** - include those socially unacceptable legal drugs. e.g. poppers, solvents etc
- c) **Prescribed drugs** - those given by a doctor on prescription (also known as 'over the counter drugs') e.g. painkillers, paracetamol and cough medicine etc

Substances may also include:

- Alcohol, tobacco, tobacco related products and electronic cigarettes

Electronic Cigarettes on School Premises

Electronic cigarettes are battery-powered vapour inhaler devices that generally contain nicotine along with propylene glycol and glycerine. There are concerns about their safe use particularly when children use them as the product is unregulated. We in St Dallen's prohibit electronic cigarettes on the premises as there is insufficient evidence to determine whether or not they cause damage to a child's health.

Development and Implementation

Roles and Responsibilities

The Board of Governors and Principal will have overall responsibility for ensuring the effective implementation of the Drugs Policy in St Dallen's Primary School.

The Role of the Principal

The Principal will:

- Determine the circumstances of all incidents (it is the responsibility of the PSNI to investigate any criminal offence).
- Make every effort to contact the pupil's parents/carers
- Ensure that in any incident involving a controlled drug, there is close liaison with the PSNI. **Failure to notify the PSNI is a criminal offence.**

After contacting the PSNI, the Principal should confine her responsibilities to:

- the welfare of the pupil(s) involved in the incident and the other pupils in the school and
- Health and safety during the handling, storage and safe disposal of any drugs/drugs related paraphernalia
- Inform the BOG, agreeing any pastoral and/or disciplinary response
- Report the incident to the Education authority and CCMS and if appropriate, complete a written report and forward a copy to the BOG and the designated officer within the Education Authority and CCMS.

The Role of all staff

All other teaching staff will be responsible for putting into practice the policy and ensuring that appropriate lessons are taught to ensure that children are developing positive attitudes towards a healthy way of life. Teaching and non-teaching staff will report all drug related incidents to a member of the Safeguarding Team.

All staff are aware of their legal responsibilities i.e. that the school must notify the PSNI in all instances where there is an allegation or suspicion that a crime has been committed – failure to do so is a criminal offence.

The Role of the Board of Governors

St Dallen's Primary School governors are responsible for our school. They should collaborate with appropriate staff, pupils, parents and carers to foster and support developing and reviewing the school's Drugs policy. They should also:

- Facilitate the consultative process where the whole school community can respond and contribute to the policies effectiveness
- Ensure that details of the policy are published in the school prospectus and that these are reviewed annually and after an incident.

Overview of Drugs Education Programme

Drugs education will be an integral part of our Personal Development and Mutual Understanding programme, incorporating the personal and social development of pupils in their environment. Aspects covered will be relevant to their age and will take account of their present knowledge of drugs.

Adequate and suitable resources will be used in lessons taken from Living and Learning Together Packs. The approach adopted will be mainly preventative and teaching methods will include pupil centred activities e.g. circle time, role play, drama and group work. Where appropriate links will be made with other relevant areas of learning e.g. Grow in Love, Physical Education and World Around Us. On occasion outside agencies may be asked for specialist help. e.g. PSNI, NSCPP, school nurse, etc. if this is the case the class teacher will remain with the children at all times.

Staff Use of Smoking and Alcohol

St Dallan's Primary School is a smoke-free zone. This means there will be no smoking on the premises or outside any of the school doors. Consumption of alcohol is also not permitted during the school day.

Parent/carer under the influence of alcohol or other substance.

If a parent/carer arrives at the school to collect a child and is suspected of being drunk/high, then the child will be kept off side while the principal/designated teacher speaks to the parent/carer and assess the situation. If they are satisfied that the child is at no risk, then the child will be released to the parent/carer.

If it is deemed that the child might be at risk, then the school will carry out the agreed procedures – (see Appendix 4).

Communicating the Policy to Parents and Other Relevant Agencies

The Drugs Education Policy will be made available to all new parents and will be available to download from the school website – www.stdallans.com. In the event of the policy being updated new copies will be issued to parents. A draft copy of the policy will be sent to parents at a consultation stage and responses will be taken into consideration before the policy is finalised.

Management Issues

Procedures for Managing Drug-Related Incidents

For all those involved in dealing with incidents of drug misuse, the experience is likely to be traumatic. This will be true not only for the Principal, teachers, other members of staff and Governors of the school but also for the pupil involved in the incident, their parents and other pupils in the school. Dealing with suspected incidents of drug misuse will require extreme sensitivity on the part of those involved.

During instances where a pupil or pupils are suspected of, or found in possession of drugs, their names and identities will be passed on to the PSNI. Any suspicious substance found in school or in the possession of a pupil will also be given to the police for analysis. If a pupil is suspected of being under the influence of drugs parents/carers will be notified immediately and appropriate medical action will be taken. Parents will be encouraged to make the school a drug free zone. **Confidentiality in drug related incidents cannot be guaranteed.**

In cases where an incident has occurred and the school is approached by the press, a prepared written statement will be made, only by the Principal with the support of the Board of Governors. This statement will include the fact that the school is dealing with the incident. Pupils involved in the taking of drugs will be encouraged to attend counselling sessions.

A Range of Disciplinary Measures

The Board of Governors, Principal and staff have a duty to protect every pupil from the drug culture and will follow EA procedures to protect all pupils from the danger of drugs. Pupils suspected of possessing, supplying or using drugs on the school premises will be dealt with in a serious manner. Incidents involving drugs may lead to suspension, however after investigation of the incident and in extreme cases expulsion may be recommended. The school in these cases will act in accordance with St Dallan's Behaviour Policy.

The school expects parents to support these measures and to cooperate with the school in encouraging the child to lead a healthier lifestyle. Parents/carers need to be aware of the school's discipline policy on drugs as:

- It reassures parents that the school treats drug related matters very seriously, thus providing protection for pupils.
- It informs parents on what to expect if their child becomes involved in a drug related incident.

At all times the needs of each individual child involved in such incidents will be considered and appropriate intervention and support mechanisms will be put in place.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality can never be guaranteed to any pupil. Any criminal activity disclosed must be passed on to the designated teacher, PSNI and EA.

If there is a suspected or confirmed incident information will only be shared with the members of staff concerned. Teachers will not discuss individual cases with pupils. Only the parent/carers of the pupils involved will be informed. The school may, in some cases, need to make a general statement informing the school community as rumours may create a negative atmosphere. If the school receives an enquiry from the media, only the Principal or Chair of the Board of Governors will respond to the call. The Principal will liaise with the PSNI before issuing a statement. Any statement will be positive, short and factual without elaboration.

Emergency First Aid

Ref. Appendix 3

Guidance for Confiscation and Storage of Harmful Substances

If a harmful substance is found it will be stored in a secure place and the relevant authorities notified as outlined in Appendices 1-3.

Guidance on Storage, Handling and Disposal of Hazardous Substances

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. These materials will be kept to a minimum and need to be carefully monitored and stored in locked cupboards to which only staff have access. Classrooms where such materials are used will be kept in locked cupboards when not in use. Materials of a similar nature which are used by caretakers and cleaning staff will be kept in locked storerooms and used with care.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

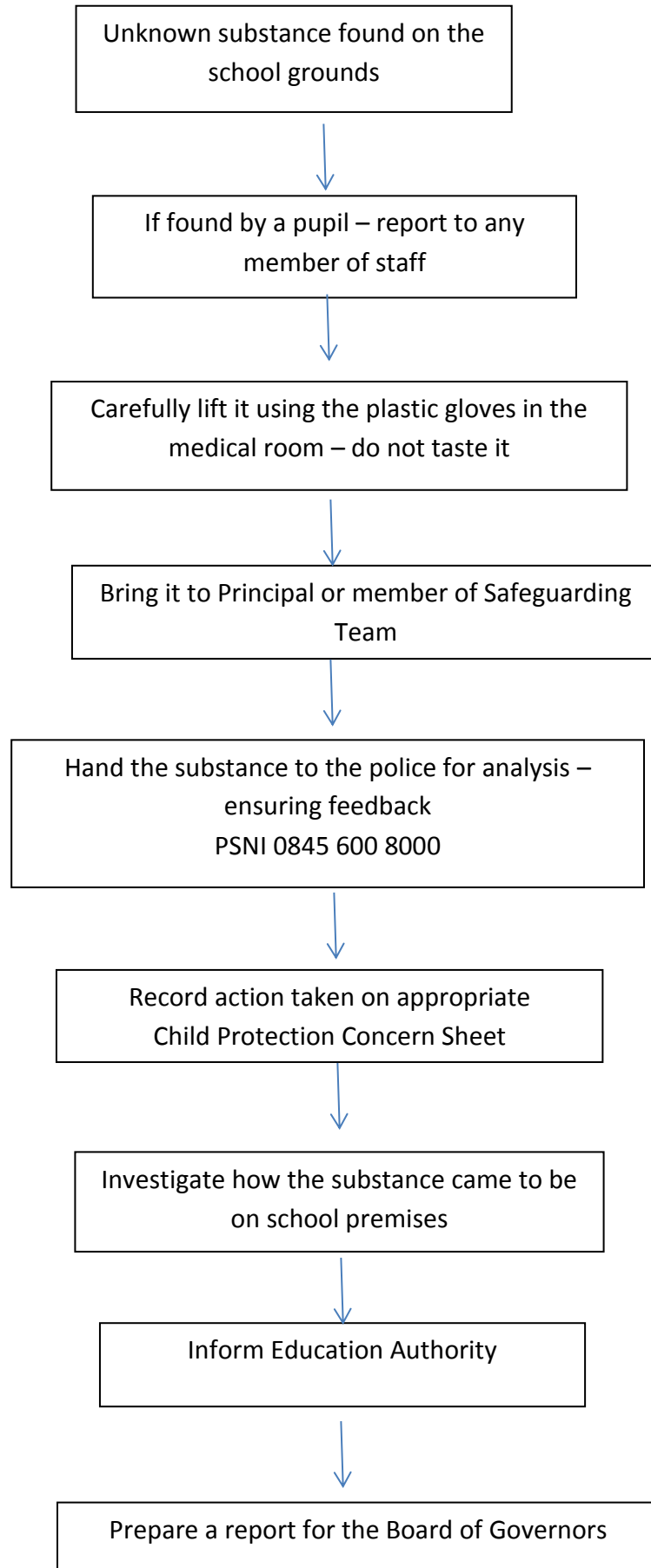
The Drugs Education Policy and programme will be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis as part of the School Development Plan to take account of the needs of staff and pupils. It will also be reviewed in light of particular incidents or local circumstances.

Appendices

- Appendix 1: Finding an illegal substance on school premises.
- Appendix 2: Pupil suspected of possessing or distributing an illegal substance.
- Appendix 3: Pupil suspected of taking drugs on school premises.
- Appendix 4: Parent/carer arrives at school to collect a child and appears to be under the influence of alcohol or another substance

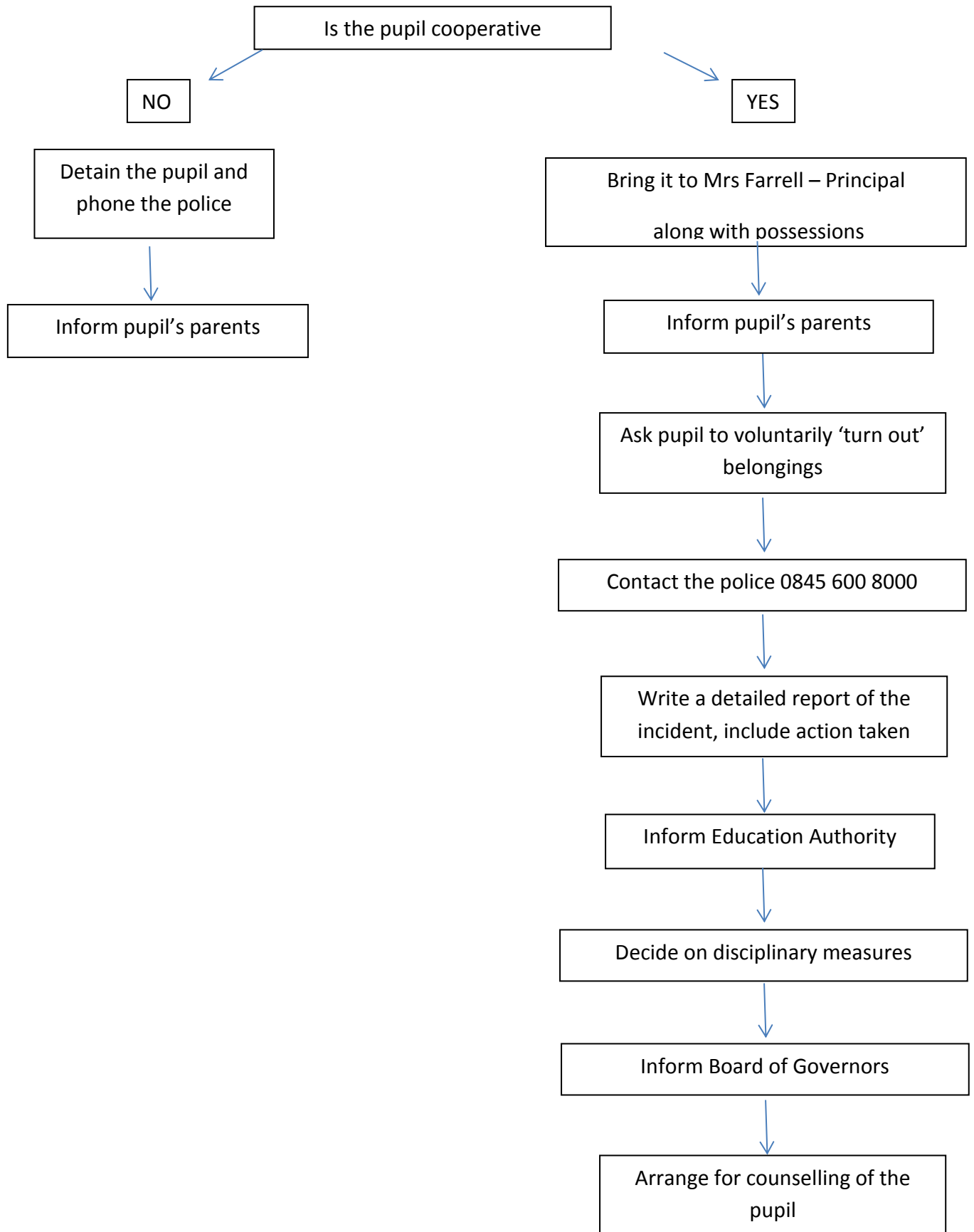
Finding an illegal substance on St Dallan's Primary Premises

(Appendix 1)

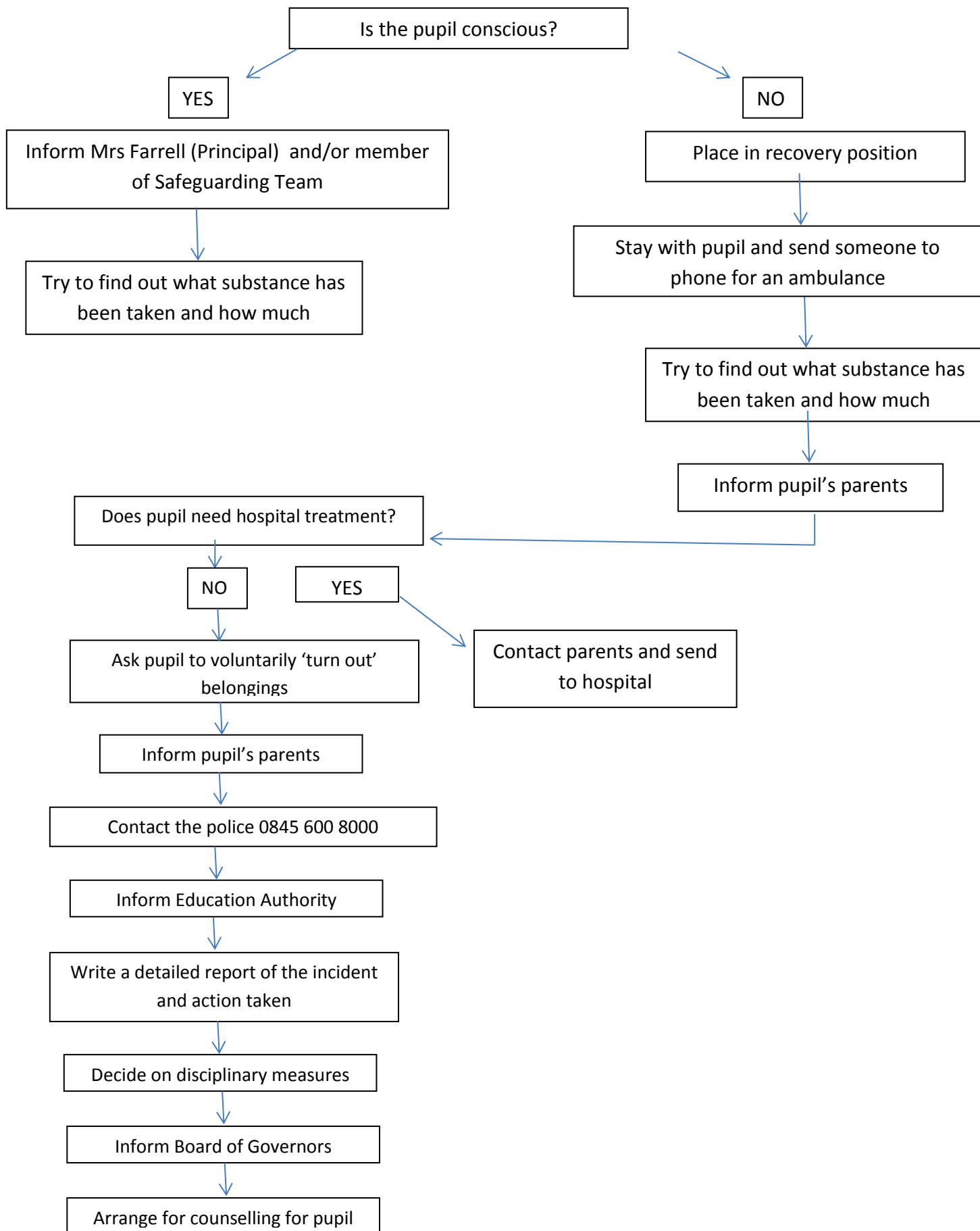


Pupil suspected of possessing or distributing an illegal substance

(Appendix 2)



Pupil suspected of taking drugs in St Dallan's Primary School (Appendix 3)



Appendix 4

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

