

Principles for Supporting School Drug Education

Principles for partnership working

Recent research carried out by researchers at Hallam Sheffield University found that over half of secondary schools and a third of primary schools work in partnership with at least one external provider to deliver drug educationⁱ.

Children and young people often find visitors to school a useful and informative part of their learning, but equally we know that for visits to be successful there need to be shared understanding about the nature and content of the session/s.

Government guidance has been that schools should exercise caution with the use of visitors as there is some evidence that particular messages can have a detrimental impact on young people's intentions to resist using drugs including alcoholⁱⁱ. Particular caution should be used when visitors have had firsthand experience of problematic drug use.

This short briefing is intended to set out principles that visitors and schools should consider applying in ensuring a good experience and outcome from using external support in a school's delivery of drug education.

Our Principles

Visitors:

- should be aware of the key principles of effective drug education (<http://bit.ly/gUGTFI>).
- should be aware of national and local approaches to drug education and PSHE and be able to show that they use evidence based strategies.
- should avoid shocking images and inappropriate descriptions of drug use and be sensitive to any distress shown by pupils during the session.
- should reflect on the learning from the session with the teacher and other staff and where possible with students.

- should ensure that they are using up to date resources and data.
- where the visitor is from the police service they should ensure that they are working to ACPO's Joining Forces guidance (<http://bit.ly/lpkTee>).

Schools:

- should negotiate content with the visitor, to take account of class needs and ensure relevance.
- should ensure that visitors have a clear understanding about the aims and objectives of the session and they have seen and understood the school's drug education policy.
- should ensure that visitors have been briefed on any particular sensitivities that there may be in the student group – these may include identified drug issues by particular students or their families – as well as any broader needs within the group.
- should ensure that where visitors are used that the content of the session is linked back to the broader drug education and PSHE delivered by the school.

Teachers

- should be present at all times when a visitor is in the class, and be ready to be an active participant in these sessions.
- should ensure that they reflect on the learning from particular sessions with pupils and visitors, assessing the learning, and building skills and pro-health attitudes.
- should follow-up any unresolved issues and, whenever needed, extend the learning begun by the visitor, in a subsequent lesson.
- should be alert to any distress caused or concerns raised in the session and ensure that appropriate support is given.

ⁱ Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) Education: A mapping study of the prevalent models of delivery and their effectiveness, DfE (2011)

ⁱⁱ Drugs: Guidance for Schools, DfES (2004)