February 2017

Dear Parent/Carer

Joint Statement and Action Plan on Preventing Drugs in Schools and Our Community

We, the Headteachers and Principals of our schools, in cooperation with Devon and Cornwall Police, are writing to you regarding the issue of substance misuse, particularly drugs, in our community.

The purpose of this letter is to share with you our concerns and describe an approach which we have all agreed to take to support the health, wellbeing and safety of all young people in our community regardless of the school they attend. We hope that you will support us as we make these efforts to ensure the ongoing safety of students.

We recognise that the issue of recreational use of illegal substances is becoming more prevalent in our community and that there are those who would argue that infrequent and controlled use of drugs is acceptable.

However, we would like to make our position very clear; the use of drugs by and in the presence of children and young people causes significant harm to both physical and mental health, impacts on education and introduces crime and social disorder. It is our view that we must do all that we can to ensure that schools are havens of safety and security, where young people of all backgrounds can come together to learn in an environment which supports high aspirations and life-long success.

The possession, use and distribution of drugs in schools is totally unacceptable. Each of our schools considers these offences to be of the highest magnitude. The consequences will always include exclusion. We offer all our students who are struggling with addiction and substance misuse the opportunity to access support and help.

Devon and Cornwall Police Drugs Dog

We have invited Devon and Cornwall Police to work with us in sending a clear message to our students about the dangers of drugs and that they must never be brought in to school. We have invited the police dog to visit each of our schools during the remainder of this term. We have done this for the following reasons:

- To identify students who may be in need of additional help and support as a result of being in contact with drugs.
- To educate our students about the dangers of substance misuse.
- To raise the profile of ensuring that harmful drugs must not damage the safe environment our schools should be.

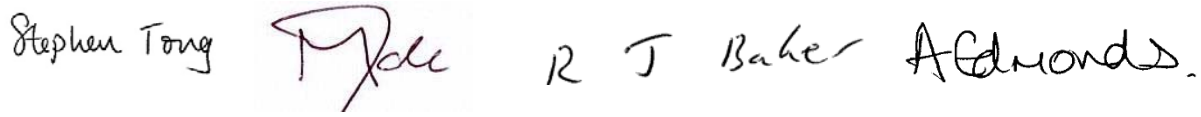
Students in all of our schools will be informed in the next few days about how having the drugs dog in school will work and what they will be able to expect on the day. However, we will not be informing them of the exact day that the visit will take place.

For your information, the following process will be followed for students who are identified as having been in contact with drugs during the visit. We appreciate that, in many cases, this contact will likely to have been entirely accidental and that no misuse will have taken place.

- When a student is identified, they will be discretely taken to one side by senior members of school staff and police officers.
- The student will be questioned about why they think they have been identified.
- They will be searched using the powers given to Headteachers/Principals under Section 89 of the Education Act 2006.
- A letter will be sent home informing parents and carers of the events which have taken place during the day and that the student may be subject to random searches during the following three months.
- Each student, and their parents, will be offered additional support both within the school and beyond.

We hope that this approach will both support those who are struggling with this issue and send a clear message to those who may be tempted to become involved. Your support in our efforts is critical to creating a healthy and safe culture in our community.

If you would like to discuss these plans or have any questions about your child's wellbeing, please do not hesitate to contact the relevant staff in each school.



Mr S Tong	Mr M Dale	Mr R Baker	Mr A Edmonds
Headteacher	Principal	Principal	Headteacher
Poltair School	Fowey River Academy	Penrice Academy	Brannel School