

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

NORTHERN AREA LOCAL COMMITTEE

DRUG EDUCATION IN THE STEWARTON ACADEMY LEARNING PARTNERSHIP

Report by Director of Educational and Social Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise local committee members of the Drug education strategies being implemented in the schools of East Ayrshire with particular reference to the Stewarton Learning Partnership.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Scottish Schools Adolescent Lifestyle and Substance Use Survey (SALSUS) 2002 interviewed 1834 S2 and S4 pupils from 124 classes within 29 schools in Ayrshire and Arran. The SALSUS Survey indicated 9% of 13 year olds and 21% of 15 year olds were regular smokers. SALSUS also pointed out that 26% of 13 year olds and 46% of 15 year olds had drunk alcohol in the week prior to the survey whereas 8% of 13 year olds and 24% of 15 year olds had used drugs in the month prior to the survey. The statistics quoted on smoking, drinking and drug use are not significantly different from the reported national prevalence for either age group.
- 2.2 The importance of drug education is fully recognised in Scotland's Drug Strategy set out in "Tackling Drugs in Scotland: Action in Partnership" a document published by Scottish Executive 2000. This report places a strong emphasis on the need for effective drug education for all young people. Education authorities have been encouraged to provide health education including drug education, within a comprehensive programme of personal and social development aimed at providing young people with the necessary knowledge and skills to enable them to choose a healthy lifestyle.
- 2.3 The "Final Report of the School Drug Safety Team" 2000 acknowledges that drug education is considered to be an integral part of health education and personal and social education. The report goes on to suggest that Scotland like other countries around the world faces a serious drug problem, and that the Scottish Executive are resolved to producing a response to the problem. **Although the document also highlights that the majority of young people will go through their lives without misusing drugs or actively becoming involved in the drug culture,** we must acknowledge that drug use/misuse is a part of many young people.

2.4 Within the National Priorities for Education the department's local improvement objectives are to increase respect for self and others by:

- 'Extending the range of active community involvement for young people in our schools through for example, local committees, youth forums, support for elderly and other vulnerable groups.'
- 'Reviewing and improving delivery of programmes of Personal and Social Education with particular regard to drugs and sexual health in all sectors.'

The department within the National priorities pledge to extend the involvement of young people in the decision-making processes of the establishment. Also the department will work within schools to develop establishment based initiatives to encourage greater involvement of parents in their child's learning.

3. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

3.1 The strategic objectives of the drugs education strategy in East Ayrshire are as follows:

- To implement best practice in drug education within all schools (P1-S6) in line with National Priorities
- To enable pupils in primary and secondary schools to develop knowledge and understanding about drugs, their effects and the implications of misuse
- To provide opportunities for pupils to explore beliefs, attitudes and their values about drugs
- To develop skills that will enable pupils to make healthy choices and decisions in relation to drugs and their use.
- To link with other components of personal, social and health education to develop life skills and promote health.

4. CURRENT PRACTICE IN RELATION TO DRUG EDUCATION IN EAST AYRSHIRE SCHOOLS

4.1 A Drugs Education Policy and Action Plan was approved by Council in November 1999. The document endorsed East Ayrshire's commitment towards effective drug education.

4.2 A copy of Standard Circular 7.1(a) Drug Abuse was circulated to all schools. This document is a local response to Scottish Executives' Guidelines for the Management of Incidents of Drug Misuse in Schools. This document provides comprehensive, practical and up-to-date guidelines for all members of staff. This will ensure a consistent and measured approach which takes into account the responsibilities of staff and the rights of the child.

4.3 The department provided all primary and secondary schools with 'What's the Score' drug education Package. This package meets the recommendations made in the 'School drug Safety Team' Report 2000. The report recommends that drug education should be co-ordinated, continuous, interactive and include involvement of outside agencies (Police, School Nurse, local Addiction Project). 'What's the Score' averages 5 lessons per year in both primary and secondary. These lessons include Tobacco, Alcohol, Solvents, legal and illegal drugs that include medicines to crack cocaine.

Each topic focuses on:

- Identification of drugs
- Short term effects
- Long term dangers
- Alternatives to drug use
- Problem solving
- Peer pressure and drug use
- Resistance to drugs

4.4 A School Drug Education Adviser was appointed in June 2002 to:

- co-ordinate approaches towards drug education within schools in East Ayrshire.
- ensure that drug education is underpinned by appropriate prevention/education methods.
- develop, implement and monitor procedures for managing drug related incidents within schools.
- encourage and support schools in identifying the number of pupils at risk.
- support teachers and other appropriate staff through a planned programme of training to deliver teacher led drug education.

4.5 Stewarton Academy in addition to the recommended drug education also offer their senior pupils (S5/S6) a programme that deals with alcohol and drugs in real life scenarios that may occur in clubs and at parties focusing particularly on personal safety. This includes the involvement of Prevention Officers from Ayrshire and Arran Addiction Services.

4.6 An audit by Scottish Executive/Convention of Scottish Local Authorities/Health Education Board Scotland on drug education 2001/2002 reported that all secondary schools within East Ayrshire provided relevant drug education. The programme was progressive and in line with current national advice. The audit also reported that the Authority had appropriate policies and procedures when dealing with drug related incidents.

4.7 The Authority also works in partnership with Strathclyde Police 'S Division' who hold the 'Big World Conference' at the Grand Hall, Kilmarnock and has a focus on drug education. This targets all S4 pupils in Ayrshire and involves scenarios around alcohol and drug use in relation to personal safety.

5. FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

- 5.1** In conjunction with various partners (Police, NHS, Kilmarnock College) the Council has been the lead in the publication of "Trippin" a drugs education magazine produced by young people for young people. The eight young people involved were S4 pupils from several Academies in East Ayrshire. The magazine will be distributed to all secondary pupils in June 2003.
- 5.2** The Council is committed to ongoing training of staff with a particular focus on Primary Schools 2003/2004.
- 5.3** In partnership with Strathclyde Police, all P7 pupils will have the opportunity to attend the 'Choices for Life' event at the Scottish exhibition and Conference centre. This two hour show will consist of an educational programme involving a blend of music, drama, video clips and comedy designed to promote lifestyle choices and to demonstrate the dangers of substance misuse.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1** It is recommended that Members of the Local Committee:
- (i) note the contents of this report.

John Mulgrew
Director of Educational and Social Services

TW/MR
08.05.03

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

- i) Nil

Members wishing further information should contact Graham Short, Head of Schools, Tel: (01563) 576192

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