



Portrush Primary School

Drugs Policy

Reviewed December 2022

Review Date December 2025

Portrush PS: Drugs Education Policy

Section 1: Introduction

a) Ethos Statement

In Portrush Primary School the welfare of every child is of paramount consideration and so we endeavour to create a caring, happy, secure, supportive and stimulating environment where children can develop socially, emotionally and physically at their own rate. The principal, senior leadership team and staff endeavour to provide an atmosphere of care and respect within the curricular and extra-curricular life of the school community.

b) 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 Department of Education (Circular 2015/23) and has been developed as a response to the growing concerns about the use and misuse of drugs in Northern Ireland.

The 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.

We at Portrush Primary School take a very serious view of drug related incidents. We recognise that there are those who are required to take prescribed drugs because of a health problem. We wish to develop a programme to ensure that pupils live in a drug free lifestyle.

Drug abuse is a whole community issue and we believe that the school has a role to play in conjunction with the other statutory and voluntary agencies within the community. The support of parents is vital, as the school needs the support of parents to extend the messages taught in the classroom into the home. Drugs education alone will not solve the problem of drugs abuse but the problems will not be solved in the absence of effective drugs education.

Drugs education is a cross-curricular issue whereby we seek to ensure that key messages are reinforced in all aspects of school life, which reflect the caring ethos of the school. We believe that drugs education needs to be part of a holistic learning approach aimed at the overall development of our pupils.

c) Drug and Substance Definitions

For the purpose of this policy a **drug** or **substance** includes any product which when taken has the effect of altering the way a person behaves, feels, sees or thinks.

As well as everyday products such as tea and coffee, substances include:

- alcohol, tobacco and tobacco-related products, including nicotine replacement therapy (NRT), and electronic cigarettes;
- over-the-counter medicines such as paracetamol and cough medicine;
- prescribed drugs, such as antibiotics, painkillers, antidepressants, antipsychotics, inhaler and stimulants such as Ritalin;
- volatile substances such as correcting fluids or thinners, gas lighter fuel, aerosols, glues and petrol;
- controlled drugs such as cannabis, lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD), ecstasy, amphetamine sulphate (speed), magic mushrooms, heroin and cocaine;
- new psychoactive substances (NPS), formerly known as legal highs*, which contain one or more chemical substances that produce similar effects to illegal drugs and are sold as incense, salts or plant food and marked 'not for human consumption' to avoid prosecution; and
- other substances such as amyl or butyl nitrite (known as poppers) and unprocessed magic mushrooms.
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*The term legal high is no longer used because it is misleading. The public perceived that 'legal' meant safe. This is not the case, as these substances are not regulated and there is no way of knowing what chemicals they contain.

Controlled substances:

are legally classified according to their benefit when used in medical treatment or harm if misused. The Misuse of Drugs Act sets out a range of substances that are controlled under the act. It is an offense to possess, possess with intent to supply, supply, or allow premises you occupy or manage to be used unlawfully for the purpose of producing or supplying controlled drugs. The Act has four separate categories: Class A, Class B, Class C and temporary class drugs. Substances may be reclassified. The Misuse of Drugs regulations, created under the Misuse of Drugs Act, license production, possession and supply of substances classified under the act.

These include five schedules that classify all controlled medicines and drugs.

- Schedule 1 has the highest level of control, but drugs in this group are very rarely used in medicines.
- Schedule 5 has a much lower level of control.

Drug Use:

refers to taking a drug; there is no value judgement, although all drug use has an element of risk.

Drug Misuse:

refers to legal, illegal or illicit drug taking or alcohol consumption, which leads a person to experience social, psychological, physical or legal problems related to intoxication or regular excessive consumption and/or dependence. Drug misuse is therefore taking drugs, including prescribed drugs and NPS, that cause harm to the individual, their others or the wider community.

d) Aims of Drugs Education Policy

- a) To provide a clear statement of the school's view on drugs education.
- b) To ensure a consistent approach from staff to drugs education and in the handling of drug related incidents.
- c) To safeguard good practice in the future.

Section 2: Development and Implementation

a) Roles and Responsibilities

The Board of Governors and principal will have overall responsibility for ensuring the effective implementation of the Drugs Policy in Portrush Primary School.

The Drugs Education Co-Ordinator will ensure an appropriate programme of study is being delivered for all pupils within the school. Duties will include:

- a) Liaising with the principal on the implementation of the policy;
- b) Contacting and liaising with outside agencies;
- c) Offering support and training where necessary for the Board of Governors, staff and parents on drug education matters and
- d) Helping to promote an awareness of drug education within the school.

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. Non-teaching staff will support teachers where necessary and will report all drug related incidents to the Drugs Education Co-ordinator.

b) Staff Training

Periodically drug education programmes may be organised for staff to meet training needs, in order to implement the drugs education policy. This will take the form of 'in-house' training although specialist drug education staff may also attend in-service training to inform staff of new developments.

Parents will be informed about certain drug issues if appropriate by receiving information leaflets from the school produced by statutory agencies. Parents will also be encouraged to contact the school if they have concerns about drug issues.

c) 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 and experience of drugs. Adequate and suitable resources will be used in lessons of Living and Learning Together. The approach adopted will be mainly preventative and teaching methods will include pupil centred activities e.g. role play, drama and group work. Where appropriate links will be made with other relevant areas of learning e.g. Religious Education and Physical Education. On occasion outside agencies may be asked for specialist help e.g. Police Service Northern Ireland, nurse, etc. If this is the case the class teacher will remain with the children at all times.

Aims of your Drug Education Programme:

- a) To promote positive attitudes towards personal health.
- b) To inform pupils of the effects of drug use and abuse.
- c) To help pupils build up the self-esteem of the pupils.
- d) To help pupils acquire skills in managing the pressures of the youth culture in which they live.
- e) To help pupils acquire decision-making skills.
- f) To create a climate where a young person feels comfortable to discuss problems around substance misuse.

- g) To encourage a participate approach in which each pupil is actively involved.
- h) To encourage a healthy and critical respect for all substances taken into the body.
- i) To equip pupils with skills that will empower them to take responsibility for their own health and safety.

d) Staff Use of Smoking and Alcohol

Portrush 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.

e) Staff use of Electronic Cigarettes

Electronic cigarettes are battery-powered vapour inhaler devices that generally contain nicotine, along with propylene glycol and glycerine. They were developed as an alternative to tobacco products and have become increasingly popular. Although we perceive electronic cigarettes to be less harmful than tobacco, there are concerns about their safe use, particularly when children and young people use them, because the electronic cigarette market is unregulated. The Chief Medical Officer (CMO) for Northern Ireland has advised that schools prohibit electronic cigarettes on their premises, in line with tobacco products, because:

- nicotine is very addictive and there is a risk that using electronic cigarettes could act as a gateway into smoking for many young people;
- evidence suggests that adolescent exposure to nicotine may also have long term consequences for brain development;
- the availability and promotion of electronic cigarettes is reversing progress made by smoke-free legislation to de-normalise smoking; and
- there is insufficient evidence to determine whether the vapour produced by electronic cigarettes causes damage to users' health in the long term.

The same applies to the impact of second-hand vapour the user exhales. There is also a potential risk that users might fill the refillable cartridges used in some electronic cigarettes with substances other than nicotine. This has the potential to serve as a new and potentially dangerous way to deliver other drugs.

Electronic cigarettes therefore will not be permitted on either the internal or external premises in Portrush Primary School.

e) Communicating the Policy to Parents and Other Relevant Agencies

The Drugs Education Policy will be made available to parents via the website and in the event of the policy being updated new copies will be issued to all parents on request.

Section 3: Management Issues

a) 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 drug, their names and identities will be passed on to the Police Service Northern Ireland. 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 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 or vice principal. This statement will state that the school is dealing with the incident. Pupils involved in the taking of drugs will be encouraged to attend counselling sessions.

All teachers and staff will refer to the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment 'Drugs Guidance for Schools in Northern Ireland' (Revised Edition 2015) on legal issues for procedures to follow in any drug related incident. Detailed procedures for dealing with the different types of drug related incidents are included in the appendices.

b) 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 Department of Education and Education Authority 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, after investigation of the incident and in extreme cases expulsion may be recommended. The school in these cases will act in accordance with Department of Education and Education Authority guidelines.

The school expects parents to support these measures and to cooperate with the school in encouraging the child to lead a healthier lifestyle. Parents 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; and
- 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.

c) Confidentiality

Confidentiality can never be guaranteed to any pupil. Any criminal activity disclosed must be passed on to the designated teacher, Police Service Northern Ireland and Education Authority.

d) Procedures for Using Outside Agencies

If an outside agency is to be used the following checklist will be consulted:

- Does the individual/agency have a specified Child Protection Policy?
- How will the issue of confidentiality be dealt with?
- Are the teaching resources being used appropriately?
- Has the individual/agency worked with any other schools?
- Does the individual/agency have a clear set of aims and objectives as well as lesson plans?

- Has the individual/agency read the school's Drugs Policy and are they prepared to adhere to it?
- Do parents/guardians know that an individual/agency is being used by the school?
- Will the input by the individual/agency be monitored?
- Will the pupils be asked how the session/class with the individual/agency went?
- Can the school terminate the work of the individual/agency if the classes or sessions are deemed inappropriate?
- Are evaluations carried out by the individual/agency and if so will the school have access to them?

e) Emergency First Aid

Ref. Appendix 2: Pupil suspected of having taken drugs/alcohol on school premises

f) 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 1-4.

g) 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.

Section 4: Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

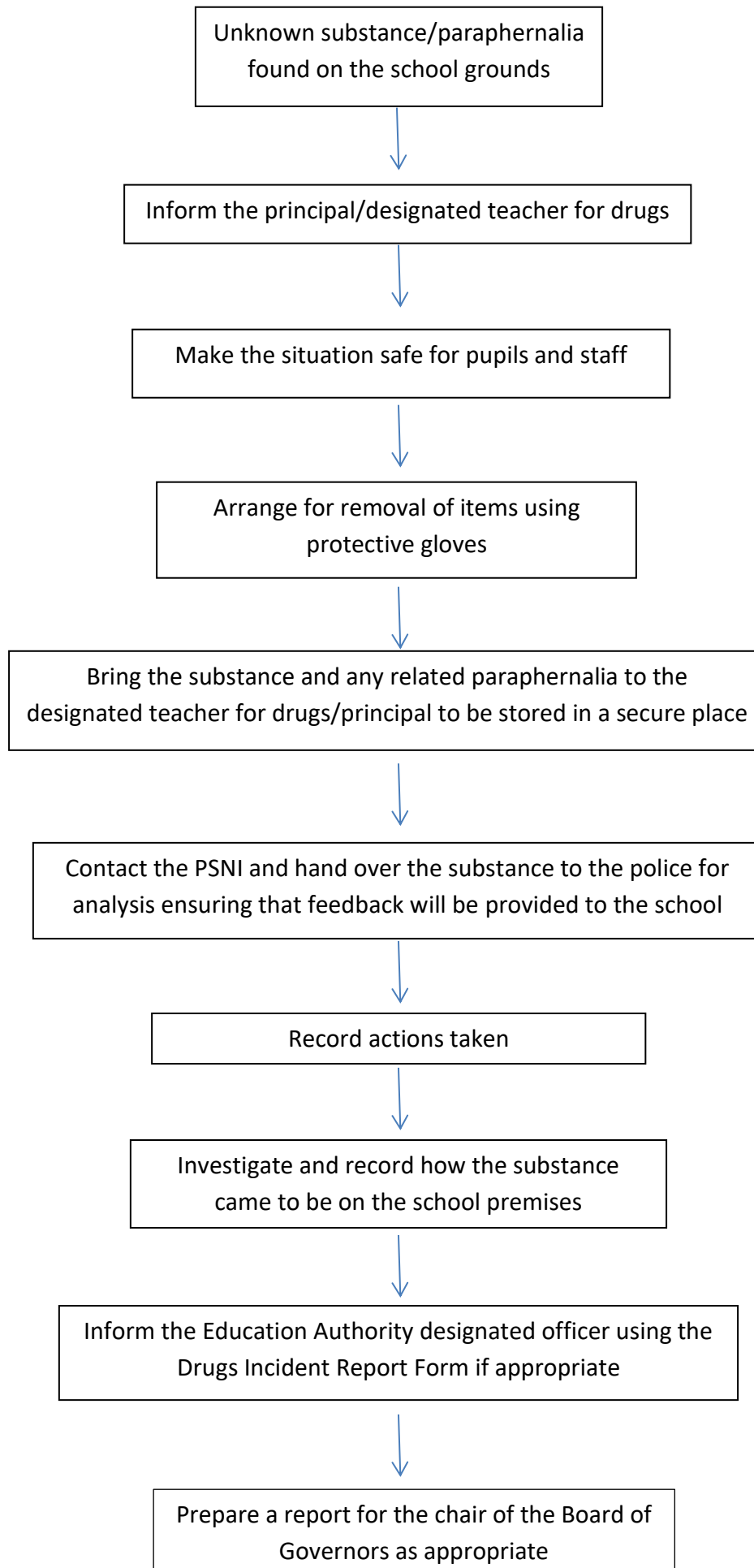
The drugs education policy and programme will be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis as part of the School Development Plan to take account of the needs of staff and pupils. It will also be reviewed in light of particular incidents or local circumstances. Account will be taken of the views of the Board of Governors, staff, parents and pupils and any necessary changes will be made.

Section 5: Appendices

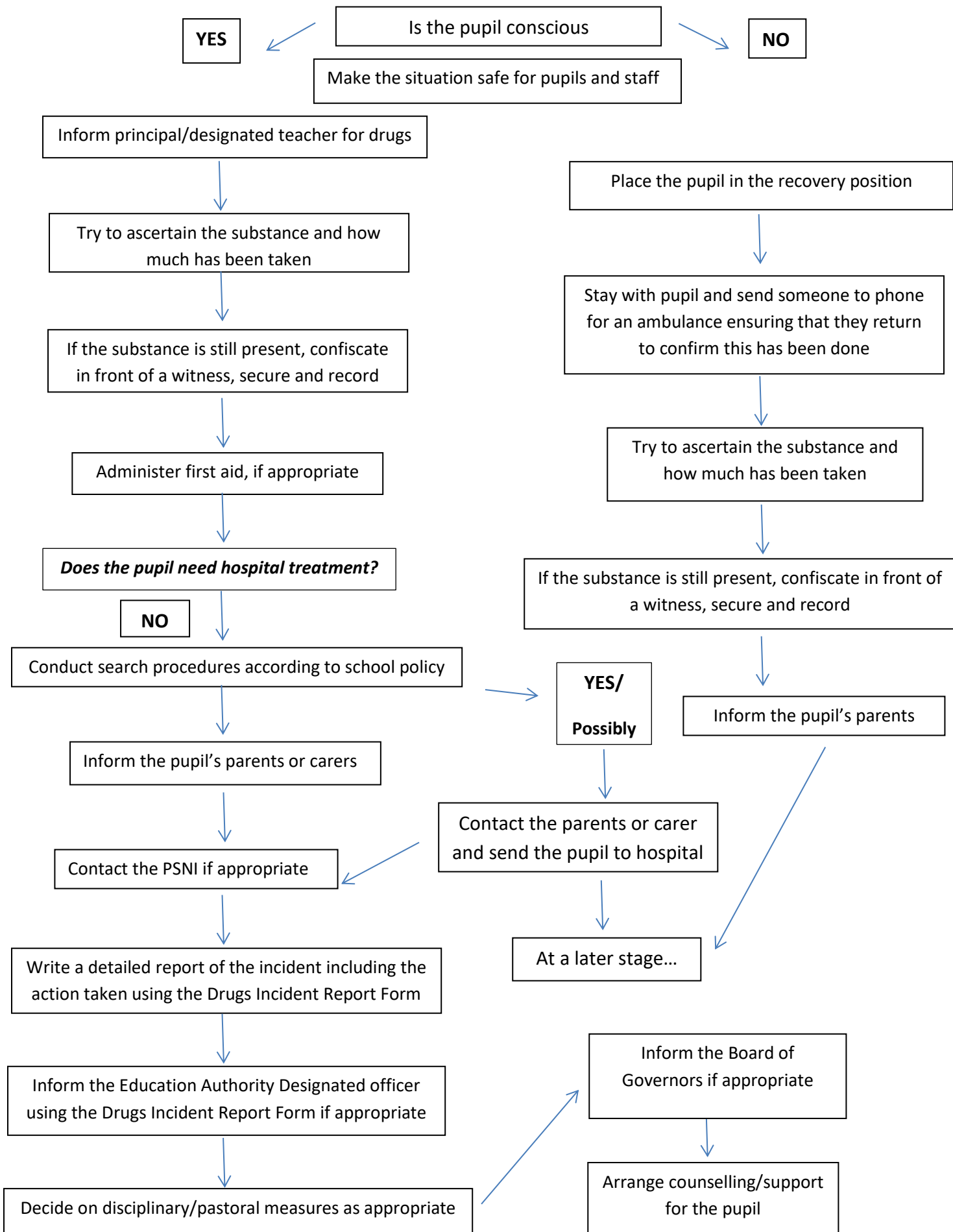
- Appendix 1: Finding a suspected substance or drug-related paraphernalia on or close to the school premises
- Appendix 2: Pupil suspected of having taken drugs/alcohol on school premises
- Appendix 3: Pupil suspected of possessing/distributing an illegal substance
- Appendix 4: Pupil in possession of alcohol or unauthorised prescribed medication on the school premises
- Appendix 5: A parent or carer arrives at school to collect a child and appears to be under the influence of alcohol or another substance
- Appendix 6: Drugs Incident Form

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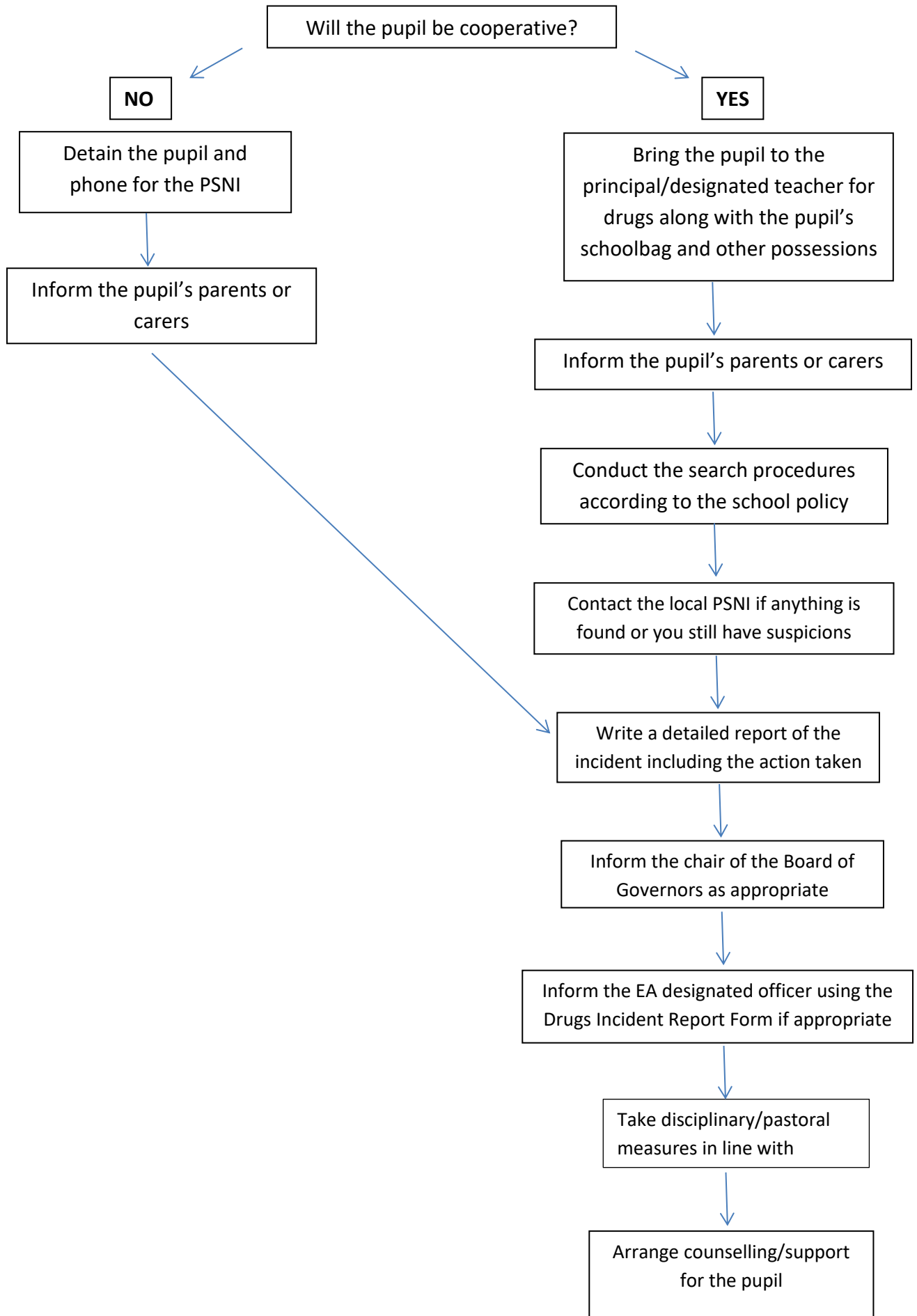
Finding a suspected substance or drug-related paraphernalia on or close to the school premises (Appendix 1)



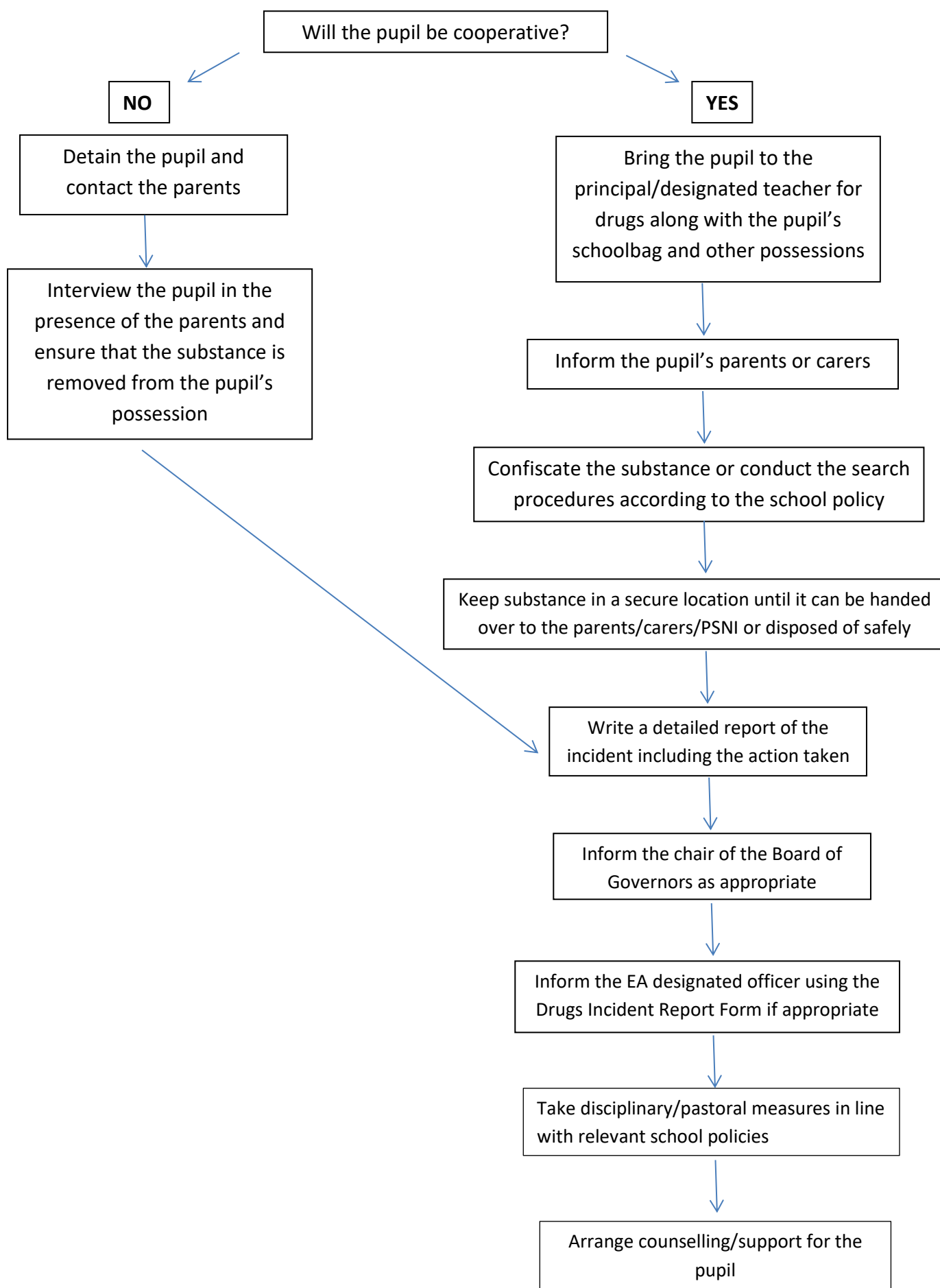
Pupil suspected of having taken drugs/alcohol on school premises (Appendix 2)



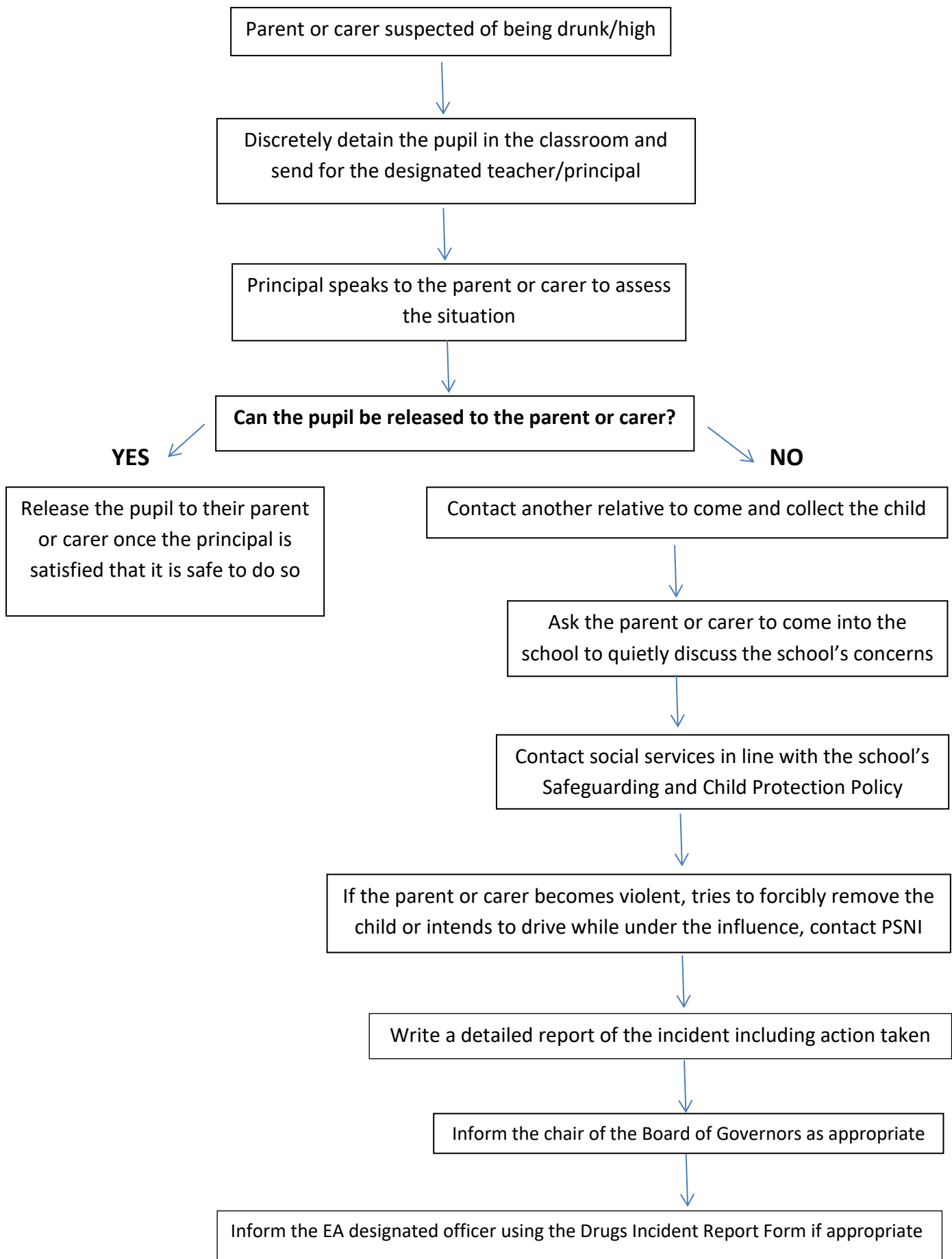
Pupil suspected of possessing/distributing an illegal substance (Appendix 3)



Pupil in possession of alcohol or unauthorised prescribed medication on the school premises (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 (Appendix 5)



Drugs Incident Report Form (Appendix 6)

1. Name of Pupil _____ DOB _____

Address _____

2. Date of Incident _____ Reported by _____

Time of Incident _____ Location of Incident _____

3. First Aid given YES/NO Administered by _____

Ambulance/Doctor called YES/NO Time of call _____

4. Parent or Carer informed YES/NO

Date _____ Time _____

5. Where substance is retained _____ or

Date substance destroyed or passed to PSNI _____ Time _____

6. PSNI informed YES/NO
Date _____ Time _____

7. Education Authority Designated Officer informed, as appropriate YES/NO
Date _____ Time _____

8. Form completed by _____ Date _____
Position _____

Description of the Incident

Actions taken

Incident Form completed by

Date
