

**APEEE Statement on the  
Drug and Addiction Programme  
(15 September 2020)**

The APEEE Well-Being Working Group has worked closely with the school during the last years to ensure that a drug programme is in place; this, in the context of our broader Well-Being programme. After several years the programme STOP A LA DROGUE was discontinued in 2019-2020, as it was outdated and the feedback received from students was not satisfactory.

Since then, the deputy coordinator of the Well-Being Group has worked intensively with the school management to replace the programme. After months of work, several options were proposed by the APEEE representative based on consultations with Belgian expert agency CGG; however, unexpectedly the school management did not agree with any of them, despite the fact that they were European Commission validated programmes. In consequence, as from the previous school year no comprehensive drug programme has been offered to EEBI secondary students.

At the same time, a task force was set up to continue the work begun in 2019 to update the *EEBI Guidelines for the Care and Prevention of Addictions* under the guidance of CGG in order to more closely align the policy with Belgian legal requirements and current expertise. With the arrival of COVID-19 work on this came to a halt, and a final draft is still pending.

**APEEE Statement on the Drug and Addiction Prevention and Support Programme and Policy**

**The APEEE draws attention to the fact that as of September 2019 the school has had no comprehensive drug programme in place. We believe that the situation as it stands leaves our students vulnerable and without adequate support. The APEEE stresses that the document Child Protection (ref. 2007-D-441-en-5), approved by the Board of Governors in May 2008 and published on the European Schools website (<https://www.eursec.eu/BasicTexts/2007-D-441-en-5.pdf>), lays down certain responsibilities for the management and staff of European Schools, in particular requiring them to develop a child protection policy, with the involvement of parents:**

***Article 1.1 “Following the principles above and the guidelines below, each school has to develop its child protection policy and procedures in place (taking account of local legislation as well) and this policy is to be communicated to parents whose representatives should be involved in creating the document. Publication and dissemination of the policy on child protection would be vital to ensure ownership of the policy and compliance of all members of the school community.”***

**In addition the School should educate children through the curricular programme on topics such as EVRAS, internet safety, cyberbullying and drug and alcohol abuse.**

***Article 1.4 “Schools should educate children through the curriculum programmes in the fields of the danger of emotional, physical and sexual abuse as part of Relationships and Sex Education as well as the negative effects of smoking, alcohol consumption and drug abuse as part of the Personal and Health Education programme. Schools also should educate pupils on good behaviour on the internet and safe internet use in order to avoid cases of web-bullying or false accusations, etc.”***

**We note that this obligation, imposed already twelve year ago, has not yet been met by our School. (The APEEE has also raised this issue at the September 2019 and January 2020 EEBI Administrative Board meetings.)**

**The APEEE believes that it is imperative that the school develop a Child Protection Policy along the lines laid down in the BoG document. To ensure the continued safety and well being of our children, the APEEE also calls on the school to work with stakeholders to relaunch a comprehensive Drug Abuse and Addictions Programme in the 2020-2021 school year. Finally, we urge the task force to complete needed updates to the *Guidelines for the Care and Prevention of Addictions* (as formally requested by the APEEE in January 2019) to bring it firmly in line with Belgian legal requirements and current expertise. Ideally a finished policy could be sent to the December SAC and approved by the school's Admin Board in January 2021.**

## ANNEX I -Update on Addiction prevention program for secondary students

### Timeline:

**2013.** The school had no prevention program for students.

### **2014. March:**

- Kriszta Szabo (member of APEEE and former EMCDDA-REITOX employee) made a presentation for the CA board meeting and Ms. Ruiz Esturla on possibilities to start a drug prevention/addiction prevention program. The program was named Unplugged, an EU-Dap development, with 3 days teacher training for chosen teachers of the school staff.
- The school and the APEEE could not agree on any solution and the school did not take the leadership in this matter.
- The German section and soon after the Hungarian section did not want to wait for another year for the debate and started their own prevention programs funded by the parents mainly with help from the school and/or the APEEE.

### **2015.**

- Mr. Louarn, former Head Educational Advisor, recommended “Stop a la Drogue” from Lille to provide French and English addiction prevention. APEEE approves the program and agrees to finance 50% of the program.

### **2018.**

- In September 2018, the **Bien-Etre Working** group **reviewed all existing programs** before asking the APEEE for re-funding. Unfortunately, there was no written evaluation of the Stop a la Drogue program.
  - WG attended the presentation for parents by Richard Mallet and realized that it was the same every year, and only concentrated on cannabis. It advised parents to look out for signs that would reveal the cannabis use of a teenager.
  - The program for the students was LECTURE style, a PPT presentation with lots of information by a university student. This

made the program cheap, but the effectiveness was never measured.

- Part of the program is that the school pays for a former addict, who can enter the campus. There is no scientific or other evidence that a former problem user can help with prevention of drug use if that person has no education in mental health, addiction or psychology etc.
- **APEEE agrees to stop financing the program and the school agrees to look with the APEEE and other stakeholders for a better solution.**

## 2019. January

- The Drug Policy Task Force is formed (to re-write the Guidelines for the care and prevention of addiction); this is an opportunity to **reshape** not just the Drug Policy but the Drug Prevention program From October 2019 outsider experts form the CGG Brussels are invited to help re-create the Drug Policy of the school.
- The Bien-Etre WG starts looking for a new addiction program, which:
  - is mainly a health promoting program that can educate about all types of addiction: legal and illegal drugs and behavioral addiction
  - employs an interactive style with drama games and discussion
  - uses the framework of a change of attitude, not acting through a negative example
  - aids the development of a realistic self-image, the development of a healthy self-esteem and the ability to say no
  - uses interventions tailored to current situations: CBD oil, nitrous-oxide (laughing gas), vaping, legalized cannabis use, new psychoactive substances, darknet, psychological problems behind drug use etc.
  - increases the knowledge of students by introducing credible sources
  - includes sessions for parents and teachers

The Bien-Etre WG looks for an NGOs with a solid program and also capable to educate a large student population. And as a third factor: at a price that the APEEE and school can co-finance.

- The EU drug agency local office works together with several local institutions, CGG Brussels is one of them. As the Drug Policy Task Force is

already working with them, we ask their advice on prevention as well. CGG recommends a company, Drugstories, for all secondary addiction prevention. Kriszta Szabo from the Bien-Etre WG meets with the director of Drugstories and finds it a valuable and feasible program to adapt at EEB1.

## 2020. January

- Ms. Kunster and Ms. Jokinen have a meeting with the director of Drugstories, Mr. Luc Rombaut. They do not approve the program, it being in their opinion “too open” and providing too much information on drugs. They feel is not just information on drugs but somehow the tacit approval to consume drugs.
- At a bilateral meeting on 4 February 2020 Kriszta Szabo informs Ms. Kunster and Ms. Jokinen that we are running out of options and still don't have any programs. **Ms. Kunster promises to look for other programs. We never got a word back, since the Covid19 started right after these meetings.**
- **The only model that is available now (which is used by most of the local schools) is teacher training.** This model was rejected 7 years ago as well as in 2019 by the directors. Maybe now, that we have no other possibilities that both the parents and school would support we should re-visit this solution. Again, after 7 years, we recommended the **Unplugged** program, again. (See details in Annex.) The only problem that the teacher training is 3 days long. The school has to give an answer soon, if they can commit to this training.

## ANNEX II - Unplugged

[https://www.eudap.net/Unplugged\\_HomePage.aspx](https://www.eudap.net/Unplugged_HomePage.aspx)

[http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/best-practice/xchange/unplugged\\_en](http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/best-practice/xchange/unplugged_en)

### Developers

European Drug Addiction Prevention (EU-Dap) Centre.

### Format

**This workbook-based program is designed to be administered by teachers. The program involves:**

- 12 × 1-hour lessons delivered weekly
- Teacher and student handbooks are provided
- Guidelines for facilitating a 3-session parent workshop are also provided.

The program is has been adapted for cross-cultural use and is available in several languages, including: Arabic, Czech, German, Greek, Croatian, Czech, French, Italian, Polish, Spanish, and Swedish.

#### **Training:**

Training for teachers is a recommended before programme is implemented. Three-day training workshops are available in Europe. The effectiveness of implementing the program without specialist training is not yet known.

### Summary

The Unplugged program is designed to prevent or delay initiation to experimental alcohol, tobacco and cannabis use, and to prevent progression from casual use to dependence. The program is used across Europe and has been translated into a number of languages, making it suitable for a wide audience. The program aims to provide young people with information on drugs, and challenge their beliefs and perceived norms surrounding substance use. Students will also develop coping mechanisms and learn of the short- and long-term biopsychosocial consequences of different decisions related to substance use.

### Benefits

- Reduces alcohol consumption
- Increases abstinence from alcohol
- Reduces daily tobacco use
- Reduces recent cannabis use
- Less positive attitudes towards drugs
- Reduced positive expectations about use of alcohol, tobacco and cannabis.

### Evidence Base

The Unplugged program has been trialed in over 8 European countries, including Austria, Belgium, Germany, Greece, Italy, Spain, Sweden and the Czech Republic. Some publications have found differential effects of the program according to gender, socioeconomic status and risk level.