

# Substance Misuse Policy

**DOCUMENT CONTROL**

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Ratified by Governors: March 2023

Date of next Review: March 2025

Persons Responsible: JS and SS School Psychologists

## Substance Misuse Policy

### 1. Scope of the Policy

This policy is concerned with prescribed drugs, legal drugs such as alcohol and tobacco, illegal drugs and the abuse of substances and related to students at the Junior and Senior School. The policy covers all school activities for pupils on and off school premises and encompasses behaviour during travel to and from school.

### 2. Policy aims

This policy emphasises the School's pastoral role and proactive approach to drugs education and on handling the problems of drug use by students. This policy considers the School's legal responsibility, and the needs of students, teachers and parents/carers.

This policy aims to provide clear guidelines on the school's procedures for dealing with students who misuse substances. It is the aim of The Junior and Senior School to ensure that all pupils understand the consequences of drug taking and receive advice to avoid situations where they may put themselves at risk. We aim to support students in being safe and having the confidence to make wise and responsible choices in all areas of adult life. This policy is in line with the school's overall values and vision.

The school is a no-smoking site.

### 3. The use of prescribed drugs and medication

The school adheres to a strict code of practice with regard to prescribed drugs which have to be taken by pupils during the school day. Please refer to the School document: **Medicines Policy** for detailed information.

The School does not dispense any drugs or medication unless specific written instructions are received from the doctor or paediatrician (**FORM MED 1**). In such cases, pupils must bring the drugs or medication to the School Nurse for safe keeping. It is a breach of school rules for a pupil to bring to school prescribed drugs or medication without presenting them in this way. The administration of the dosage of such drugs or medication is supervised by the School Nurse (**FORM MED 2**). Parents must inform the School (**FORM MED 3**) in writing if their children use inhalers to treat asthma or a similar illness. In such cases, pupils may carry their inhalers in school for their exclusive personal use (where age appropriate).

**\*At School we recognise that there is no legal duty that requires School or staff to Administer medicines.**

### 4. Definition

#### Substance misuse

The NICE guidelines define substance misuse as follows: "Intoxication by – or regular excessive consumption of and/or dependence on psychoactive substances, leading to social, psychological,

physical or legal problems.” It includes problematic use of both legal and illegal drugs (including alcohol when used in combination with other substances).

**Warning signs** (The list below is not exhaustive)

Mood and personality

- Withdrawn or depressed
- Decrease in motivation
- Hyperactive or unusually elated
- Difficulties in concentrating
- Reserved
- Easily irritated
- Sudden loss of inhibitions

Behaviour

- Change in relationships with family and friends
- Loss of interest in school, or other activities
- Limited eye contact
- Unusually tired
- Unusually clumsy: stumbling, lacking coordination, poor balance
- Difficulties in finishing tasks, fulfilling responsibilities
- Use of chewing gum or mints to cover up breath
- Periods of sleeplessness or high energy, followed by extended periods of “catch up” sleep

Hygiene & appearance

- Poor hygiene
- Smell of smoke or other unusual smells on breaths or on clothes
- Frequently red or flushed cheeks or face
- Burns or soot on fingers or lips
- Track marks on arms or legs (or long sleeves in warm weather to hide marks)
- Appearance is messier than usually

Physical health

- Nosebleeds and/or runny nose
- Frequent sickness
- Sudden increase or decrease in body weight
- Sores, spots around mouth
- Skin abrasions/bruises
- Unable to speak intelligibly, slurred speech or rapid-fire speech
- Frequent perspiration
- Seizures and/or vomiting

## 5. Procedures

**How the school will support pupils who misuse substances**

- Protect students from substance misuse by focusing on prevention strategies (e.g. helping students develop healthy coping strategies, connect meaningfully with peers and adults, deal with peer pressure etc.).

- Provide workshops and training by specialists to students and staff.
- Provide all students with the knowledge, attitudes and skills to make secure, informed and safe choices;
- Promote a positive school ethos to help students feel valued and part of the school community and in so doing help foster positive self-images which may help pupils to cope in situations involving drug use;
- Give students the confidence to say no to experiences that they feel unable or unwilling to accept or that they know to be wrong.
- Provide the opportunity to discuss responses, perceptions, values and experience.

## **6. Support and Education**

This School provides a drugs education curriculum within the Personal Social Health Education (PSHE) programme and in other curriculum areas where relevant.

This is done by group activities during PSHE lessons, outside speakers who are specialists in the field and assembly presentations. The school is in close contact with the Anti-Drugs Council which publishes regular newsletters for schools and holds meetings with teachers and is normally attended by Deputy Head Pastoral.

If we suspect a student is using drugs out of School we will inform the parents immediately and offer our support with access to our counsellor, referral to relevant drug support units and advice and education for the parents. Our aim is to protect the student from harm and we will do everything we can to carry out that role in conjunction with parents. However, the school cannot condone or accept any use of drugs on the school site or transport to school and will need to apply appropriate sanctions in these cases to keep other children safe from exposure to illegal drugs and alcohol.

## **7. Staff training and awareness**

The School recognises that the drugs culture in society is constantly changing: new substances become available, new ways to abuse existing substances develop and terminology changes. In this context, the School will undertake to provide training for staff by qualified and recognised bodies in the identification of symptoms of drug or substance abuse and to raise awareness of related moral, ethical and legal issues.

Staff are also encouraged to be vigilant to adults or young people loitering at the school gates in the school car park or trying to come onto the school site, who are not from the school community. They should report such activity to the school's management including details such as car number plates, dates and times and descriptions.

If staff suspect students to be using drugs they should follow the reporting procedure outlined in the school's safeguarding and child protection policy.

## 8. When a concern is raised

In case a student discloses substance misuse to a member of staff for themselves or another student the following procedures should take place:

1. The member of staff records all information and make the student aware of the steps that will follow.
2. The member of staff informs the Designate Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
3. The DSL informs the parents/carers and the student is referred to the school nurse or psychologist according to the individual student's needs.
4. Parents are recommended to seek consultation with family GP and to inform the school of the outcome within a nominated period of time. Parents might be also referred to Perseas (Counselling Centre for Parents and Adolescents on Addictions)
5. If no follow up occurs with the GP or Perseas and the school remains concerned, the school may refer directly to the Social Welfare Services.
6. Follow up meetings are arranged between the parents/carers and designate staff (e.g. Pastoral leaders) so that progress can be assessed and any targets reviewed.
7. Nominated staff member from a named core team will act as a link with the student (DSL?)
8. Any student who uses a substance at school will be suspended until they are able to contain this behaviour at school.
9. Disciplinary steps will be taken by school if a student is found with substances or implements (e.g., Pipes, matches) at school which may include suspension.
10. Based on medical feedback, the suitability of the students continuing attendance at school will be assessed.
11. Contagion will be managed by staff keeping an eye on the peer group and other potentially vulnerable young people in the year, by continued education on the fact that substance misuse is an expression of distress rather than a risk behaviour that should be 'tried out'.
12. Steps may be taken to ensure that parents of the year group are informed (without naming) and that they monitor their children.

## 9. Parental Involvement

Parents will be contacted if their child is caught breaking the rules on drugs or where there is general concern about the risk to students. We will endeavour to support and work with parents at this stage.

If we are made aware of a student's actual or possible involvement with drugs outside school then we will contact parents and inform them of our concerns.

## 10. Police Involvement

In the event of a young person's arrest for a drug related incident outside the School's time and premises the Police will inform the Ministry of Education who will inform the School if the arrest leads to a court case. In such cases it is at the School's discretion how to proceed. Sanctions may range from none to permanent exclusions depending on the nature and severity of the incident and whether the young person is considered a danger to other students or not.

## **11. Management of other relevant circumstances**

The Junior and Senior school will take steps to support the return of a pupil to school after a period of in-patient treatment or period of time off school (e.g. if the student was in a detox programme). The steps may be decided in collaboration with student and their parents/carers.

## **12. Experimentation with drugs**

This has increasingly become a feature of many young people's lives. It is the responsibility of schools to uphold the law as well as to:

- reduce the harm from drugs
- play a role in the prevention of drug abuse
- help those who misuse drugs
- deal with incidents which pose a threat to school health and safety

## **13. Use of drugs**

Students may not carry, use, sell, trade or pass legal or illegal drugs, or substances purported to be drugs or substances intended for abuse, in school, during school activities or when travelling to or from school. Pupils may not entice or subvert others to try, experiment or use drugs of any description, whether prescribed, legalised or illegal.

## **14. Breaking of School rules and sanctions**

The breaking of the School's rules on drugs will result in sanctions being imposed. Although each case will be considered on its merits, the following are indicative of the School's responses:

- Pupils found smoking or vaping on the school site will be given a detention by a pastoral leader and a letter informing the parents/guardians of a first offence will be sent home. A second offence will result in a longer after school detention given by a senior member of staff and a letter will be sent home to parents/guardians. Further offences will result in meetings with parents and sanctions in line with our Behaviour Policy and may result in internal or external fixed term exclusions.
- The use of alcohol by students in or around the School or on a school trip will usually lead to a fixed term exclusion.
- The actual or intended procuring, use, or passing of illegal drugs will result in exclusion which may be permanent.
- The distribution, selling or trading of illegal drugs will result in permanent exclusion.

## **15. Response to possible drug related incidents in School**

Our aim is to enable all students to fulfil their potential. We will work with students, their parents / guardians and colleagues from other agencies to remove barriers to achievement and resolve any difficulties that exist. Drug related situations will be considered alongside other circumstances in the young person's life and not in isolation.

We will consider each situation individually and recognise that a variety of actions in response to drug related incidents may be necessary. If the situation leads to a medical emergency the school emergency aid procedures will be followed.

## 16. Searching

The school reserves the right to ask a pupil to empty out the contents of his/her bag or pockets after informing the parents if senior staff suspect that a theft has taken place or the pupil is in possession of alcohol, cigarettes, drugs, weapons or any other illegal or dangerous substances. If the parent objects to this then the police will be called to carry out the search. The search will be carried out by a Senior Member of Staff nominated by the Principal and one other member of staff of the same gender as the pupil. The search will be carried out in an office or room away from other pupils.

In addition, from time to time the School might require pupils to open their bags for spot checks. Parents will not be informed when general spot checks take place.

The Principal will be informed and an appropriate response considered. The implications of any action we take will be carefully considered. We balance the interests of the individual, other members of the school community and the wider community.

Should a substance suspected of being illicit be found on the school premises it will be handed to the Principal and, in the presence of another member of staff, placed in a sealed container and both signed and dated. It should then be safely stored until it can be collected by a police officer. S/he will also be involved in advising the school on the most appropriate response to the situation. All such incidents will be recorded.

All staff will be made aware of the legal constraints on gathering evidence (including personal searches), and questioning those involved. They will not take action without involving the Principal.

Response will be cross-referenced with related school policies such as:

- Behaviour
- Health and Safety
- Child Protection & Safeguarding
- PSHE Policy

Unless there are exceptional circumstances, we will inform parents or guardians at the earliest opportunity.

The students will always be told when information is being passed on, in accordance with the school's policy on confidentiality.

The School will act in accordance with following rationale with regard to permanent exclusion: A decision to exclude a child permanently is a serious one. Permanent exclusion should usually be the final step in the process for dealing with disciplinary offences after a wide range of other strategies have been tried without success. Supplying an illegal drug is a serious breach of school rules and can have harmful effects on other students and put them at risk and it may be one of the exceptional

circumstances where the Principal judges that it is appropriate to permanently exclude a student, even for a one-off or first-time offence.

This policy will apply to staff, parents/guardians and other visitors to the school. If a member of staff is found to be using drugs, alcohol or cigarettes whilst at school or attending school under the influence of drugs or alcohol then the Disciplinary Policy will be applied. If a parent or visitor is found to be using drugs or alcohol or smoking on the school site they will be asked to leave immediately.

### **17. Staff support**

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will have a duty to keep up to date with information regarding substance misuse and any support available at school. Particularly, staff who may have been involved with a student who has misused substances may need support and will be offered this opportunity. This might include support by the school psychologist, discussion with another experienced member of staff, or referrals to external services if needed.

### **18. School Policy on Confidentiality**

As per our school's policy on confidentiality, we will need to inform parents/carers if we feel that the student is at risk or harm to themselves or others.

If a staff member feels that the student's welfare is at risk, then he/she will consult the DSL. The passing on of such information does not necessarily result in disciplinary action. What is of paramount importance is the welfare and safety of students and in most cases, action will involve consultation with parents, followed by support and counselling (Please refer to separate Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy). Also, some of the staff might need to be informed. The students and their parents/carers will be made aware of such a step, as well as of the reasons why such staff need to know. The student will be informed about sharing information with staff and parents, as well as of the content of the information. The students might be encouraged to tell their parents/carers or with the support of a member of staff.

If a friend/s raised concerns about a student, it should be decided with the student what feedback is given to their friends about next steps. The school will make sure that friends will be also supported.

### **19. Documentation**

A complete record of all incidents, course of actions and dates will be made.

### **20. Implementing and Reviewing the policy**

Parents/carers and staff should be made aware of this policy and its content. The policy and any updates will be published on the school's website. Parents/carers should work closely with school to support students who misuse substances or might be at risk. Students should be aware that they can disclose any sensitive information securely and that further support will be provided, based on their needs. This policy will be reviewed annually.