

## Misuse of Drugs, Alcohol or Other Substances Policy

### Introduction

- The School acknowledges the importance of its pastoral role in the welfare of young people and the centrality of our mission as a Catholic school to create a caring community.
- The School is committed to the health and safety of its members and will take action to safeguard their well-being.
- The School commits to educate students regarding all issues relating to drugs and alcohol, including their misuse and illegal supply.

### Context

Education can play a key role in ensuring that young people know the risks of drug-taking and have the knowledge and skills to resist. The school works in partnership with parents, health and social services, the police, specialist drug prevention workers in delivering drugs education and responding to any substance-related incidents

### Drugs

Under the Misuses of Drugs Act 1971, it is illegal to possess or supply a drug covered by the Act, unless authorised (e.g. possessing drugs prescribed for personal medical use). Solvents are dangerous substances as well. Under the Intoxicating Substances (Supply) Act 1965, it is illegal for anyone to supply or offer to supply a substance if they know or believe that the substance being supplied will be inhaled by a person under 18 for the purpose of intoxication. Paradoxically it is not actually an offence to inhale solvents for the purpose of intoxication. However, the police are normally able to deal with such offences under public order provisions.

### Tobacco

Smoking is the single most preventable cause of premature death and ill-health in our society. The school policy on smoking aims to give students the message that the habit creates health problems for smokers and non-smokers alike, that non-smoking represents the norm in society and that it receives support from the School and staff. It is an offence for children under 18 years to be sold tobacco products.

### Alcohol

Alcohol is a depressant drug, particularly when taken in large quantities. Even at low levels, the potential for serious accidents arises. The Licensing Act of 1964 makes it generally illegal for alcohol to be sold to anyone under the age of 18, or for a person under 18 to buy alcohol.

Signature: <b>Chair of Academy Representatives</b>	Name:	Date:
Signature: <b>Principal</b>	Name:	Date:
Signature: <b>Chair of Pupil Welfare Committee</b>	Name:	Date:

**The possession, use or supply of illegal and other unauthorised drugs within school boundaries is unacceptable.**

If a pupil is suspected of being under the influence of drugs or alcohol on school premises, the school must prioritize the safety of the young person and those around them. If necessary, it should be dealt with as a medical emergency, administering First Aid and summoning appropriate support. Depending on the circumstances, parents or the police may need to be contacted. If the child is felt to be at risk, the Safeguarding Policy will come into effect and social services may need to be contacted, in line with DfES guidance.

When managing drugs and drug-related incidents, the first concern will be for the health and safety of all involved, followed by the pastoral concerns of pupils.

- The school will consider very carefully the implications of any action it may take
- It will seek to balance the interests of the pupil involved, the other school members and the local community
- Factors to be considered will include the age of the pupil, whether the incident involved one pupil or a group and whether peer pressure is evident
  - The fact that certain behaviour could constitute a violation of the criminal law will not in itself necessarily lead to a more punitive response
- In all cases the school will ensure that the pupil has access to professional support and advice from the relevant services and agencies.

Some pupils may require medicines that have been prescribed for use during the school day. In most of these cases pupils will leave their medicines in the school office when they arrive in the morning and will return to take their medicine at the appropriate time. However, there are exceptions when pupils will be required to carry medication themselves, such as auto injectors and inhalers. Responsibility for coordinating drug issues lies with The Principal who will involve all relevant people as appropriate.

**Drug education**

The aim of the school's drug education programme is to provide opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge, skills and attitudes and understanding about drugs and appreciate the benefits of a healthy lifestyle, relating this to their own and others' actions.

**Drug education objectives:**

- to increase knowledge and understanding of drugs and their effects by providing accurate information
- to improve self-knowledge, particularly in terms of risk taking
- to promote positive attitudes towards healthy lifestyles; to challenge and try to modify these when they may lead to behaviour harmful to health
- to promote a sense of responsibility towards the use of drugs
- to develop social skills such as making informed choices and resisting unhelpful pressures from peers and from advertising
- to enable young people to identify sources of appropriate support
- to widen understanding about related health and social issues such as sexual health and crime

The programme will reflect the views and needs of pupils so that it is appropriate. It will be based on the requirements of the National Curriculum. It will be delivered within a whole school approach through well-planned SMVSC days.

### **The teaching of drug education will**

- provide opportunities for active learning
- give accurate and unbiased information
- allow for the expression and consideration of a range of attitudes and values
- offer opportunities for discussion and reflection

### **Managing drug-related incidents at school**

The first priority will always be for the safety of all, meeting medical emergencies and securing appropriate help.

The school will employ a range of responses, so that the needs of the individual are balanced against those of the wider community. The precise response will be determined after a full and careful investigation into the exact nature of the incident. Pupils will be aware of the range of possible responses and the effect those responses may have on them.

Support for pupils as appropriate will be a priority, including referrals to agencies such as SPACE (Worcestershire's multi-agency substance misuse service for young people) and FRANK. In such cases careful attention will be given to issues of confidentiality, in line with the school's confidentiality policy.

The school nurse will be able to give advice regarding all health-related matters. The school will normally involve the pupil's parents/carers, unless this would jeopardise the pupil's safety. A full record will be made of every incident.

### **Discovery of Suspected Substances on School Premises**

- Staff discovering substances which are suspected of being harmful, illegal or requiring further investigation should observe the following guidance:
- Consider the possible need for first aid and follow the school's first aid procedures.
- If possible, remove the suspected substance from the location in the presence of a witness. If there is no witness, do not delay, remove the substance and take it to the Principal, or member of staff authorised to deputise.
- Staff are entitled to search a student's bag or locker where there is reasonable cause to believe it contains illegal items. Staff are entitled to take temporary possession of a substance suspected of being a controlled drug. It should then be handed to the police. Cigarettes or alcohol should be confiscated and may be returned only to parent(s) in person.
- Intimate physical searches should never be made by a teacher.
- Record the time, place and circumstances of the discovery and also record the details of what was found, but do not investigate the substance.
- If a student discloses to a teacher that he or she is taking drugs the teacher should make clear that he or she can offer no guarantee of confidentiality. All teachers should be aware of their position on 'confidentiality'.
  - It is advisable for a teacher not to make promises of absolute confidentiality and to pre-empt disclosure details by informing the student of the possible need to involve others;
  - If the disclosure involves immediate danger to the student or others confidentiality should not be maintained.

- If a student's disclosure is connected with a criminal offence, any promise of confidentiality is inadmissible in a court of law;
- However open relationships are between students and teachers, and teachers and the Principal, one still has authority over the other.
- Where drug-related paraphernalia, such as needles and syringes, is discovered, do not attempt to handle this. It should be collected by the appropriate personnel in accordance with health and safety guidelines. The Principal must ensure that materials are placed in a secure container to await proper collection.
- No entry of an incident should be made on the pupil's record until the suspected substance is confirmed by the police as being a controlled substance. If the substance is not a controlled substance, then the entry on the pupil's record will be determined by the Principal.
- There is no legal obligation to inform the police, although they may be able to give relevant support and advice. Once the nature of the substance is confirmed, arrangements should be made with the local policing team officer for disposal. Where a substance is confirmed as being controlled, it is the responsibility of the principal to notify the parents concerned, and, if necessary, to consider further action, including notifying the Chair of Governors
- In circumstances where it is possible that the school premises are being used for illegal drug use, all reasonable steps must be taken to prevent this, in order to avoid contravening the law.

### **Working with the police**

The school is not legally obliged to involve the police regarding illegal drugs, but we will work in partnership to the benefit of the school and wider community. The school is able to seek assistance from the local policing team officer, who will give guidance on the law, the identification and disposal of substances, and whether or not the police should be more actively and formally involved in a given situation.

Any instances of possession (including drug paraphernalia) use of supply of drugs and/or drug paraphernalia on school premises, on school events, on any activities or on any journey to and from school will be regarded with the utmost seriousness. Where a student is considered to place the health and safety of other students at risk, this could lead up to and include a permanent exclusion.

Parents/carers will be issued with a hard copy of this Policy on request. This Policy will also be made available to parents/carers via the School's website.