



# DRUGS POLICY 2024 ONWARDS

## **RATIONALE**

The school is committed to promoting the health, safety and welfare of all members of its community, and recognises the potential harm that the misuse of drugs (see definition of drug below) may cause.

## **OVERALL PURPOSE**

To seek to protect the school community from the dangers of drug misuse through education and guidance, and by the appropriate management of drug-related incidents in school.

## **AIMS**

To keep the school free from drugs.

To work collaboratively with parents and outside agencies in the implementation of this policy.

To ensure that the school's practices meet legal requirements.

To provide drugs education which helps individuals to make healthy choices about their lifestyles by increasing their understanding of the implications of drug use and misuse.

To enable individuals to identify sources of appropriate personal support when confronted by issues involving drugs.

## **PRINCIPLES**

This policy will be implemented in a way that:

- recognises the health, safety and well-being of our young people as paramount;
- strikes an appropriate balance between the needs of individuals and the wider school community;
- is consistent with the school's overall aims and ethos.

## DRUGS – A DEFINITION

The World Health Organisation defines a “drug” as any substance which alters the physical and/or psychological function of the body when taken internally, excepting food and water. Examples include, but are not limited to, analgesics, alcohol, tobacco, cannabis, amphetamines, narcotics and solvents.

For the purpose of this policy the following definition of a drug will apply:

*“a substance people take to change the way they feel, think or behave.”*

This broad definition allows for the inclusion of all medication legal/illegal drugs (including alcohol and tobacco) volatile substances and all over the counter and prescription medicines.

This policy recognises prescribed medicines and over the counter medicines that are being taken according to instruction (see APPENDIX A). Misuse of medicines would be considered misuse of drugs and therefore considers using this policy.

Electronic cigarettes (for the practice known as “vaping”) can be used for both tobacco products and also illegal drugs. These can be broadly defined as:

- tobacco-based products that are psychoactive
- cannabidiol (known CBD) products derived from cannabis that are psychoactive but not normally intoxicating
- tetrahydrocannabinol (known as THC) products that are a form of cannabis and are both psychoactive and intoxicating.

The technical ability to distinguish between psychoactive and intoxicating liquids is not available to schools and so the school’s judgement regarding the contents of an electronic vaping device or its intended use will depend on the context of an incident.

Where an incident of vaping or smoking is not judged to be a drugs incident, the school will follow the smoking policy as detailed in APPENDIX B.

## **DRUGS EDUCATION**

Drugs education can be clearly identified within the school's provision of Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education.

The Drugs Policy will be shared with students each year and will be available on the school's website.

Where appropriate, information will be shared with students regarding emerging local or national issues linked to drugs. The channel for such communication will usually be form time or assemblies.

The pastoral support of the school will ensure students have a range of ways in which they can communicate information, concerns or issues regarding drugs to staff. These include (but are not limited to) their form tutor, their head of year, pastoral support officers, safeguarding leads. The school's contact email can be used by families for the same purposes or they may wish to contact a head of year or deputy headteacher.

All members of staff will be vigilant for signs of drug misuse and will report any suspicions to a head of year, deputy headteacher, headteacher or by using the school's safeguarding referral processes.

The school's drugs education programme will be kept under review by the headteacher and deputy headteachers.

## **MANAGING DRUGS RELATED INCIDENTS IN SCHOOL**

These incidents are defined as the possession, intended use or supply of drugs by students in school, travel to and from school whether or not using school transport, on educational visits or any school-organised activity. This includes paraphernalia relating to drug taking and devices that can be used both for tobacco and illegal drugs.

- All such incidents will be carefully investigated and viewpoints forms will be taken from the students involved. The investigation will be overseen by a deputy headteacher or the headteacher.
- A trained first-aider will be involved wherever there is a suspected danger to the health of a student.
- Parents will be informed if their child is involved in an investigation.
- We will search students if we suspect they have prohibited items with them at school. The Search and Confiscation Policy is provided as APPENDIX C.
- All incidents involving illegal drugs will be reported to the police. Names of any students engaged in possessing, using, supplying or purchasing /

obtaining illegal drugs will be divulged to the police if requested. Any drugs that are found in school will be secured on the school site. The police will be asked to advise in the disposal of suspected illegal drugs.

- We will signpost appropriate support to students where possible. This may include (but is not limited to) online resources, a GP, the police.

## **SANCTIONS**

Establishing the involvement of an individual in an incident will always explore:

- The actions and choices of an individual
- The relationship between individuals involved
- Whether or not coercion has been exerted in any way
- The possible influence of individuals who are not members of our school community
- Any other matters of safeguarding related to the incident
- Any other information we receive from external agencies e.g. social care, police.

The sanction imposed against students involved in drugs-related incidents will be determined in the light of the particular situation. The following principles are also in place:

- Vaping incidents will lead to contact with parents and may incur sanctions outlined in the behaviour policy.
- Vaping that leads to a fire alarm being triggered will, other than in exceptional circumstances, lead to a one-day suspension from school and two or more days of suspension if a Public Examination is affected.
- The distinction between a drugs incident and a smoking/vaping incident depends on many factors including but not limited to:
  - The substance(s) involved and whether they can reasonably be identified
  - Intoxication and/or the impact of ingesting substances
  - The devices or paraphernalia retrieved
  - The students involved and their age
  - The involvement of persuasion, coercion or money
  - The extent to which participants cooperate with any investigation
- School will inform parents and carers when an incident is judged to be a drugs incident and reasons for this will be explained.
- Any involvement in a drugs incident will always lead to a suspension. Permanent exclusion will be considered in all cases.
- If a suspension exclusion has been imposed on a student for involvement in a drugs incident, involvement in a subsequent incident will bring a permanent exclusion.

- When a student has joined the school and has received a suspension or permanent exclusion from a previous school for a drugs offence, a first drugs offence in our school will bring a permanent exclusion.
- When a student has supplied drugs to members of the school community in exchange for money or any other goods, a first drugs offence will bring a permanent exclusion unless there are exceptional circumstances.

## **REVIEW**

This policy will be reviewed every two years. A deputy headteacher will be responsible for organising this review. After each review and approval by full governors the policy will be communicated to all students and parents. All new parents, in-year admissions, will receive a copy of the policy.

Authored: JD LM

Approved by the Full Governing Body – 09.05.24

Date of Next Review: Spring term 2027

## **APPENDIX A – Appropriate use of medication**

Students may bring prescribed medicines to school if they need to take them during the school day and if they are clearly labelled and handed in at the office in the morning where they will be stored securely. Parents/carers must complete and sign a request form giving required information. Staff will keep an accurate record of when medicines have been given.

Students with inhalers must keep these on their person at all times and they are permitted to use them as and when necessary. There are circumstances in which students may bring into school and take over-the-counter medicines such as those providing relief from period pains or hay fever.

Medicines prescribed for an individual must not be given or passed to a third party. Non-prescribed medicines that an individual is allowed to have in school for his or her own use should not be given or passed to a third party and should only be used by that individual according to the dosage and any other instructions supplied when the medication is purchased.

If medication is misused then its misuse falls under the full drugs policy.

## APPENDIX B – Smoking and Vaping Policy

### Rationale

As a school we are committed to preventing smoking and vaping on the school site.

### Definition of Smoking and Vaping

The school will act when a student is caught smoking/vaping or suspected of smoking/vaping for good reasons such as:

- Being found in possession of smoking/vaping materials;
- Being found together with others smoking/vaping;
- Sharing a toilet cubicle;
- Being in out-of-bounds areas where smoking/vaping takes place.

Smoking/vaping on the perimeter of the school site is not permitted e.g. at the school gate and will result in the same sanctions in school.

Any items associated with smoking/vaping when discovered will be confiscated and returned to parents, if they wish to retrieve them, if not they will be disposed of. (See Search and Confiscation Policy)

### Sanctions

PREVIOUS FIRST/ SECOND/ THIRD SANCTION SECTION NOW OMITTED

According to the nature of the smoking or vaping incident, the school will use any of the typical sanctions available as outline in the behaviour policy for out of lesson behaviour although **these may not be sequential**.

*contact with parents and carers - school day detentions - after school detention*

*half day internal exclusion - full day internal - exclusion suspension*

**Sharing a toilet cubicle is considered unsafe behaviour and the school believes that creating areas in which students can gather and effectively lock themselves away from adults is a safeguarding risk. Therefore, gathering in cubicles may carry a more serious sanction.**

## **APPENDIX C – Search and Confiscation Policy**

### **Search and Confiscation Policy**

The school has a responsibility to ensure that students, staff and visitors are safe at school. Ensuring that students do not have in their possession prohibited or dangerous items, forms part of the school's responsible approach to behaviour policy.

We will search students if we suspect they have a prohibited item with them at school. Prohibited items include:

- Knives, bladed items, weapons
- Alcohol
- Illegal drugs
- Stolen items
- Any items related to smoking and vaping e.g. cigarettes, tobacco, cigarette papers, lighters, grinders, packaging, electronic cigarettes
- Fireworks
- Pornographic images
- Any item that the member of staff reasonably suspects has been, or is likely to be, used to commit an offence, or cause personal injury to, or damage property.

### **Searching Students**

The Headteacher and any staff authorised by the Headteacher have a statutory power to search without consent for any item which is banned by the school.

- This means that staff may search a student's bag, locker or possessions before informing the student of their actions.
- If a student is present, staff can search students' pockets with their consent for any item which is banned by the school. Staff can also search bags and belongings if they have not already done so.
- Schools are not required to have formal written consent from the student for this sort of search. It is enough for the teacher to ask a student to turn out their pockets or to ask to look in a locker or bag.
- All searches will be conducted by two members of staff. In the case of a student with special educational needs, it would be appropriate for the student to have a familiar adult. This would also be the case where particular religious or cultural sensitivities apply.
- A student's possessions can be searched (and the search witnessed) by staff of the opposite sex to the student. The student should be present.
- If a student refuses to cooperate with a search the school will record this refusal and inform parents. This may mean that the student's possessions remain unsearched. In seeking to resolve the incident, the school will consider this refusal along with all the other evidence collected for the incident under investigation. This will lead to a judgement founded on the balance of probabilities from all the evidence available.



## **Confiscated Items**

- School staff can confiscate items on the list of prohibited items above.
- All confiscated items should be stored securely.
- Police advice will be sought in regards to the disposal of illegal items including prescription drugs, unknown substances, drugs, knives and weapons.
- Stolen items will be returned directly or via the police to their owners where possible.
- Other items can be returned to parents if collected from school within ten school days by the parents.

## **APPENDIX D – Text Template for Involvement in Vaping Incident**

I am writing to you to inform you that NAME has been in the vicinity with a group of students that were vaping in the toilets. We investigated the incident and NAME was either vaping or was knowingly with students who were vaping. We have intercepted vaping materials from students.

I would therefore like to remind you that the school commits to action with all students who are:

- Being found together with others smoker/vaping
- Being in out-of-bounds areas where smoking/vaping takes place  
(Appendix B of the school's Drugs Policy)

This letter, along with a conversation XXXX has had with students, represents that intervention. The school's drug policy is available online on our website (School Information > Policies and procedures > Drugs Policy).

I would like to make you aware that if NAME was found to be near another similar incident, s/he risks more serious sanctions. Furthermore, it is unclear as to how much s/he was involved but his/her presence and exposure to these materials only increases the risk of him/her using them in the future.

If you wish to discuss this please do not hesitate to contact me at school.

Yours sincerely

## **APPENDIX E – Suspension Letter Templates for Involvement or Presence in Vaping Fire Alarm Incident**

On [DATE], [STUDENT] was vaping in a toilet and this set off the school's fire alarm.

This behaviour is unacceptable for a number of reasons. Firstly, vaping in school is prohibited under our drugs policy. Secondly, it is intimidating to students who wish to use the toilets for their intended purpose. Finally, students are well-aware that vaping triggers the fire alarm.

When this happens students and teachers have their lessons interrupted resulting in an irreplaceable loss of learning time for 1200 students. Additionally, support staff have a series of tasks that must take place to resolve the incident thus hindering their working day and therefore the good order and running of the school.

Vaping in school and activating the fire alarm will not be tolerated. Students are regularly reminded in form time about the sanction for this action.

Therefore, a one day suspension is an appropriate sanction following both our behaviour policy and drugs policy.

### **For incidents involving Public Examinations**

Additionally, an examination was taking place meaning that students were evacuated from the examination rooms. This caused significant upset and distress for students at a time when they should be offered conditions that allow them to perform at their best.

Our examinations team also have to complete several hours of additional paperwork to represent the sequence to the relevant examination boards.

A [ days ] suspension is therefore an appropriate sanction following both our behaviour policy and drugs policy.