



Drug, Alcohol & Tobacco Misuse Policy

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Aim of policy:

The School is committed to providing a safe, healthy and supportive environment in which pupils can learn and develop. This policy sets out the School's expectations in relation to drugs, alcohol, tobacco, vaping, psychoactive substances, the misuse of medicines and solvents. It is intended to protect pupils, staff, visitors and the wider School community by combining clear rules alongside preventative education, proportionate sanctions that consider the wider safeguarding implications and appropriate support. The School recognises that substance misuse may be a behavioural, health, welfare or safeguarding issue, and that its response must therefore consider both accountability and the needs of the pupil or other person involved.

Related Guidance and School Policies

This policy outlines the schools approach towards the misuse of drugs, alcohol and tobacco products but is not exhaustive in its scope and should be used in conjunction with the following policies, statutory guidance and advice:

Policies:

- *Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy*
- *Behaviour & Sanction Policy*
- *Anti-Bullying Policy*
- *Relationships, Sex & Health Education (RHSE) Policy*

- *Personal, Social, Health & Economic Education (PSHEE) Policy*
- *Administration of Medicines Policy*
- *Controlled Medicines Policy*
- *Educational Visits & Offsite Activities Policy*
- *First Aid Policy*
- *Low Level Concerns Policy*
- *Search & Confiscation Policy*
- *Staff Code of Conduct*
- *Whistleblowing Policy*

Statutory & Regulatory Guidance:

- Misuse of Drugs Regulations 2001 (2001)
- Psychoactive Substances Act 2016 (2016)
- Health Act 2006 (2006)
- Children Act 2004 (2004)
- Equality Act 2010 (2010)
- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (2014)
- The Independent School Standards: Guidance for Independent Schools (April 2026)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026)
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation in Schools (Department for Education, July 2023)
- Behaviour in Schools (Department for Education, February 2024)
- Drugs: Advice for Schools (Department for Education, current version)
- Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools (Department for Education, November 2018)
- Smoking, Vaping and Tobacco Use: Guidance from the UK Health Security Agency and Department of Health and Social Care (current guidance)
- **Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 — the primary drugs legislation; only the 2001 Regulations are currently cited**
- **Tobacco and Vapes Act 2026 — now law; phased smoke-free generation and vaping restrictions**
- **Environmental Protection (Single-use Vapes) (England) Regulations 2024 — supply of single-use/disposable vapes banned from 1 June 2025**

Scope

This policy applies to all pupils, including day pupils and to all staff, governors, visitors, volunteers, contractors and other adults on the School site. It applies during the School day, on School transport, during educational visits, fixtures, residential trips, off-site activities, public examinations, social events and any occasion where a pupil is representing the School or is under the School's care. It also applies to pupil and staff conduct away from School where that conduct affects the welfare of pupils, the safety of the School community, the reputation of the School, or the good order and discipline of the School.

The policy also applies to staff whenever they are on duty, supervising pupils, working on School premises, attending School events, accompanying trips, or otherwise acting in a professional capacity on behalf of the School. Visitors, contractors and other adults are expected to comply with the School's standards while on site or while participating in School activities.

Prohibited Substances & Related Items

For the purposes of this policy, prohibited substances and related items include any substance or item that is illegal, unauthorised, harmful, misused, or inconsistent with the School's duty to safeguard pupils and maintain a safe learning environment. The term "drugs" in DfE guidance includes alcohol, tobacco, illegal drugs, medicines, new psychoactive substances and volatile substances unless otherwise specified.

The prohibited substances and related items covered by this policy include:

- Illegal drugs, including controlled drugs classified as Class A, Class B or Class C under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971.
- Alcohol, including beer, cider, wine, spirits and any other intoxicating liquor.
- Tobacco, cigarettes, cigarette papers, nicotine products, snus or similar tobacco/nicotine pouches, and any associated paraphernalia.
- Vapes, e-cigarettes, vaping liquids, pods, devices and associated equipment.
- Psychoactive substances, sometimes referred to as "legal highs", whether or not marketed as safe or lawful.
- Prescription medicines, over-the-counter medicines or controlled medication when possessed, supplied or used otherwise than in accordance with medical advice and School procedures.
- Solvents, aerosols, gases, glue and other volatile substances held or used for the purpose of misuse.
- Drug paraphernalia or items associated with the use, concealment, preparation, supply or distribution of substances.

The Home Office controlled drugs list explains that commonly encountered controlled drugs are classified under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 and the Misuse of Drugs Regulations 2001, and that the list is not exhaustive. The Psychoactive Substances Act 2016 makes it an offence to produce, supply, offer to supply, possess with intent to supply, import or export psychoactive substances intended for human consumption and capable of producing a psychoactive effect.

Education through PSHEE

The School will provide age-appropriate education about drugs, alcohol, tobacco, vaping, medicines, solvents and psychoactive substances through its PSHEE curriculum, and through wider pastoral and safeguarding education. The aim of this education is to help pupils understand risk, make informed choices, resist pressure, seek help and understand the legal, health and social consequences of substance misuse.

The curriculum will be planned so that pupils receive clear and accurate information at an age and stage appropriate level. Teaching will address physical and mental health risks, addiction, decision-making, peer pressure, online influence, criminal exploitation, county lines, the law, emergency responses and how to access support. The PSHE programme will be delivered in a supportive environment where pupils understand the rules, can discuss issues safely, and know how to ask for help.

Prevention

The School will promote a culture in which healthy choices, self-respect, respect for others and personal responsibility are actively encouraged. Preventative work will be embedded in pastoral care, assemblies, tutor time, PSHEE, safeguarding education, staff supervision and the School's behaviour expectations.

The School's approach supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development by helping them understand the rule of law, the importance of making responsible choices, the impact of behaviour on others, and the need to contribute positively to the community. It also supports British Values by reinforcing respect for the law, individual liberty, mutual respect and responsibility. Preventative education will be supported by consistent adult modelling, safe supervision, early identification of risk and a clear expectation that pupils seek help for themselves or others when concerned.

Rules for Pupils

Pupils must not possess, use, consume, purchase, attempt to purchase, supply, share, distribute, conceal, sell, handle, transport or be knowingly involved with any illegal drug or unauthorised substance. Possession, use or supply of illegal drugs is a serious breach of School discipline and may result in permanent exclusion and referral to the police. Supply, intent to supply, encouraging others to use substances, or involvement in distribution will be treated as among the most serious disciplinary matters.

Alcohol is prohibited for pupils on School premises, on School transport, during trips, visits, fixtures and activities, and whenever pupils are under the care or authority of the School. Tobacco, vaping and nicotine products are prohibited for all pupils. Pupils must not smoke, vape, possess tobacco, possess vaping equipment, possess nicotine products or possess associated paraphernalia on School premises, on School transport, on trips or activities, or while representing the School. This prohibition applies to all pupils, and pupils who are aged 18 or over but remain subject to School rules and the School's duty of care.

Searches & Confiscation

The School may search pupils and their possessions where lawful and appropriate, in accordance with the School's Search and Confiscation Policy and DfE guidance. DfE guidance states that headteachers and authorised staff have statutory powers to search pupils or their possessions where they have reasonable grounds to suspect that the pupil may have a prohibited item, including alcohol,

illegal drugs, tobacco and cigarette papers, and that schools may include additional banned items such as vapes in their rules.

Searches will be conducted sensitively, proportionately and with regard to safeguarding, privacy, age, SEND, disability and individual circumstances. Wherever possible, the pupil will be asked to cooperate and the reason for the search will be explained. The School will follow the requirements relating to who may conduct a search, witnesses, location, the extent of a search, recording and parental notification. School staff will not conduct strip searches; where such an issue arises, any police involvement will be managed with safeguarding and pupil welfare at the centre of decision-making.

Confiscated substances or items will be stored, disposed of or handed to the police in accordance with law and guidance. Controlled drugs must be delivered to the police as soon as possible unless there is a good reason not to do so, and staff should treat an unidentified substance as a controlled drug where they have reason to believe it may be one. Alcohol, tobacco, cigarette papers and similar items may be retained or disposed of as appropriate and will not be returned to the pupil.

Sanctions

The School will apply sanctions fairly, consistently and proportionately, taking account of the seriousness of the incident, the pupil's age and needs, the substance involved, whether there was possession, use, concealment, supply or intent to supply, whether others were placed at risk, whether there are safeguarding concerns, and whether the pupil has previously breached this policy.

Sanctions may include:

- A formal warning or reflective sanction.
- Detention or loss of privileges.
- Internal exclusion or supervised isolation.
- Fixed-term suspension.
- Permanent exclusion in the most serious cases.

Supply, intent to supply, coercing others, encouraging others to use substances, bringing illegal drugs onto School premises, or involvement in criminal exploitation will normally be treated as the most serious category of breach.

Safeguarding Response

Every incident involving drugs, alcohol, tobacco, vaping, psychoactive substances, solvents or misuse of medicines will be considered from a safeguarding perspective. Substance misuse may indicate unmet need, mental health concerns, peer pressure, coercion, exploitation, abuse, neglect, child criminal exploitation, county lines involvement or risk outside the family. Staff must report concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead without delay.

County lines is a violent and exploitative form of drug distribution in which children and vulnerable adults may be used to move, store or sell drugs, money or weapons, and the Home Office states that

any child or vulnerable person at risk of county lines exploitation requires a safeguarding response. Where substance misuse may indicate abuse, exploitation or significant harm, the DSL will consider referral to children's social care, police, health services or other relevant agencies. The School's response will combine support and accountability; sanctions may be necessary, but they will not replace safeguarding action.

Support for Pupils

The School will support pupils affected by their own substance misuse, the substance misuse of others, or wider family or peer-related drug and alcohol concerns.

Support may include referral or signposting to:

- The School's pastoral team, DSL, school nurse or counsellor.
- The pupil's GP or relevant health professional.
- CAMHS or other mental health services where appropriate.
- Local young people's substance misuse services.
- Addaction or successor/local equivalent services where available.
- FRANK for drugs information and advice.
- Other local authority, police, social care or voluntary sector services.

Parental Involvement

Parents will normally be informed promptly where:

- a pupil is suspected or found to have breached this policy
- a search has taken place for a prohibited item
- a substance or related item has been confiscated
- a sanction is imposed
- support or safeguarding action is required

Parents will be informed of any search for a prohibited item and the outcome as soon as practicable.

The School will work in partnership with parents to support the pupil, reduce risk and reinforce expectations. In exceptional cases, parental notification may be delayed or managed carefully where informing parents immediately could place the pupil or another person at risk of harm; in such cases, the DSL will determine the appropriate safeguarding response.

Police Involvement

The School will involve the police where illegal drugs, suspected controlled drugs, supply, intent to supply, exploitation, violence, weapons, serious risk, or other criminal conduct is suspected. DfE drug guidance advises schools to notify the police without delay where suspected controlled drugs are seized, to record full details including any police incident reference number, and to identify safeguarding concerns and support or disciplinary responses.

Suspected controlled drugs will be secured safely, witnessed, recorded and handed to the police as soon as possible unless there is a lawful and clearly documented reason not to do so. The School will preserve evidence appropriately, avoid unnecessary handling, record the circumstances of seizure, and cooperate with police enquiries.

Staff Conduct

Staff must not be under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, psychoactive substances or misused medicines while on duty, supervising pupils, driving on School business, attending School activities, or otherwise acting in a professional capacity. Staff taking prescribed or over-the-counter medication that may affect their ability to work safely must seek appropriate medical advice and notify the School where there may be a risk to pupils, colleagues or themselves in order that appropriate support and risk assessments can be put in place.

Smoking and vaping by staff are not permitted in the presence of pupils or in pupil areas. Staff may not smoke or vape on site, in accordance with smoke free legislation and DfE drug guidance the school operates a wholly smoke-free and vape-free site, staff must comply fully with that rule.

Testing

Drug testing will not be used routinely or as a general screening measure. It will only be considered where there is a specific, serious and proportionate reason to do so, such as a significant safeguarding concern, suspected use of illegal drugs, suspected possession or supply, or as part of an agreed support plan. The School will consider the pupil's welfare, age, capacity, rights, dignity and safeguarding needs before any testing is proposed and any such testing will be completed by either the police or relevant health care professional as part of the wider support put in place for that pupil.

Where drug testing is considered, the School will normally seek written parental consent and the pupil's cooperation. Where there is an urgent safeguarding concern or a serious risk to the pupil or others, the School will seek legal advice before taking any step that departs from the usual consent-based approach and in consultation with local police. Searches using drug dogs and testing should not be used where there is no evidence of drugs on School premises.

Medical Emergencies

Where a pupil or adult appears to be under the influence of drugs, alcohol, solvents, medicines or any harmful substance, the first priority is immediate safety and medical care. Staff must call for first aid, contact the school nurse or appropriate medical staff where available, and call emergency services where symptoms are serious, uncertain or deteriorating. Staff must not wait for disciplinary investigation before seeking medical help.

Where a pupil is suspected of being under the influence of drugs or alcohol on school premises, the School will prioritise the safety of the young person and those around them, treat the matter as a medical emergency where necessary, administer first aid and summon appropriate support. The DSL

must be informed as soon as possible, and safeguarding procedures will apply where the incident indicates risk of harm, exploitation or unmet need.

Recording

All incidents under this policy must be recorded accurately and promptly. Records will be held securely in accordance with the School's safeguarding, behaviour and data protection procedures. Recording is essential for safeguarding, disciplinary consistency, evidence management, trend analysis and governor oversight.

The incident record should include:

- The pupil or adult involved.
- The date, time and location of the incident.
- The substance or item suspected or found.
- The circumstances and initial concerns.
- Staff involved and witnesses present.
- Search, confiscation or evidence-handling actions.
- Medical action taken.
- Parents informed and any parental response.
- Police, social care or external agency involvement.
- Sanctions imposed.
- Support offered or referrals made.
- Safeguarding assessment and DSL decisions.

Monitoring & Review

The School will monitor all incidents involving drugs, alcohol, tobacco, vaping, psychoactive substances, solvents and misuse of medicines. The DSL, senior leaders and relevant pastoral will review incidents to identify patterns, locations of concern, repeated behaviours, emerging risks, curriculum needs, supervision issues, safeguarding themes and any disproportionate impact on particular groups of pupils.

PARK SCHOOL