

St. Benedict's Catholic High School



Management of Drugs Incidents and Substance Misuse Policy

Adoption / Review	Committee	Lead Personnel	Review Date
Autumn 2016	Ethos	HT	Autumn 2017

Policy Statement

This policy formalises and clarifies the way in which the School responds to drug related incidents and substance misuse.

The Management of Drugs Incidents and Substance Misuse Policy has been developed in consultation with other secondary schools in South Warwickshire. Central to this is the understanding that the unauthorised possession, use or supply of illegal and other unauthorised drugs (and alcohol) within School boundaries is unacceptable. Clear protocols and expectations relating to the management and reporting of drugs incidents within School are set out within this policy.

The policy seeks to support and encourage an underlying culture of intolerance to drugs within our society and the principle of 'Say no to drugs'. It is considered likely that drug and substance misuse will undermine a young person's health, safety, independence, opportunities and respect for the law and will also damage the integrity of the School community by exposing other pupils to temptation and to the risk of criminal proceedings.

In order to discourage drug and substance misuse, both within School boundaries and off site, the School places an emphasis on education and deterrence. As a result, a programme of education about drugs and substance misuse is delivered through School staff and qualified individuals.

It is recognised that drug and substance misuse is a criminal offence and if discovered on School premises will be dealt with robustly. The investigation of such incidents is often complex and time consuming. In some cases, in order to deal with the matter appropriately and with as little disruption to both the individuals concerned and the School as a whole, the matter may be reported to the police and where appropriate, advice will be taken from them. The methods of investigation and sanctions will be in keeping with the School's Behaviour Policy.

This policy also provides advice and guidance to staff on the procedures to be followed when dealing with drug-related incidents (whatever the circumstances) in a fair, professional

and proportionate manner. Staff have a specific responsibility to operate with the boundaries of this policy and, when in a position of seniority, to ensure that all staff understand the standards of behaviour expected of them. Practical Guidance for staff can be found at Appendix 2.

1. DRUG-RELATED INCIDENTS

1.1. Legislation defines 'Drug Misuse' as the non-medical use of drugs that are only intended for use in medical treatment, and the use of drugs that have no accepted medical purpose. Such drugs are prescribed and controlled under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971. The Act does not cover other substances such as solvents, tobacco and alcohol or legal highs. Details of drug penalties can be found on the following website: <https://www.gov.uk/penalties-drug-possession-dealing>

1.2. A substance-related incident is:

'Any incident which is suspected to be substance-related by any responsible person affected, occurring within the confines and curtilage of the School premises or featuring within organised School activity, occurring outside the premises and usual School times.' – the reasonable person test.

This includes any or all of the following:

- drugs or drugs paraphernalia found on School premises;
- students in possession of unauthorised drugs;
- students supplying unauthorised drugs;
- students under the influence of drugs, or exhibiting signs of intoxication or illness;
- disclosure of drug use;
- information suggesting student(s) involved in substance misuse
- illegitimate sale/supply of drugs in the School vicinity.

But it will not include:

- the supply and management of prescribed drugs to students as approved by a medical practitioner and parents/guardian.

- 1.3. It is recognised that some substances which are not illegal many have an intoxicating, and/or stimulating and/or hallucinogenic effect known as “legal highs”. For the avoidance of doubt, use of these substances will also be against School policy and will be dealt with in a similar fashion to those using illegal substances.

2. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 2.1. The Headteacher takes overall responsibility for the policy, its implementation and for liaison with the governing body, parents/guardians, Local Authority and outside agencies.
- 2.2. The governing body will oversee policy implementation and effective operation within the School. They will be involved in drug education and drug-related incidents in the same manner as any other matters concerning the direction of the School.
- 2.3. The School may decide to deploy sniffer dogs on a random basis around the School’s premises. Typically, an active dog is used to search areas for illegal drugs and traces of illegal substances. If any indication is given, the room concerned will be immediately locked for further investigation and parents informed. In addition, a passive dog may be used to detect the presence of drugs and illegal substances carried by an individual.
- 2.4. The Headteacher will ensure all staff dealing with substance issues are trained and experienced. If appropriate, training will be given in:
 - 2.4.1. The nature and causes of alcohol and drug problems;
 - 2.4.2. The effect of alcohol and drug misuse on safety and performance;
 - 2.4.3. The assistance that can provided both internally and externally.

3. INVESTIGATION

- 3.1. If an allegation of drug/substance misuse is raised, the Headteacher (or Deputy, in the Headteacher’s absence) will decide upon the appropriate level and nature of investigation, having established the basic details and seriousness of the situation. It is the primary role of the police to investigate a criminal offence such as those

encompassed under the Misuse of Drugs Act. This will run in conjunction with and in support of School's discipline procedures.

- 3.2. It is good practice to isolate the person suspected to allow a better examination of the issue. This may include suspension to enable investigations to take place.

4. SANCTIONS

- 4.1. The School has an ongoing duty of care and will periodically review how best their duty should be exercised in respect of this policy. Any response will balance the needs of the individual with those of the wider community, and aim to provide students with the opportunity to learn from their mistakes and develop as individuals. Exclusion, be it fixed term or permanent, is the accepted response for proven violations of possessing and supplying drugs, and students should understand that they may be excluded if they are involved in drug or substance use.
- 4.2. The nature of the drug involved and its classification as prescribed by the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 and amendments is the significant factor in this decision. The attendant circumstances such as quantities involved, the number and vulnerability of others in the School population affected, impact on the community, repeat offending, and previous character of persons involved should be further considered as aggravating or mitigating features in any decision-making process.
- 4.3. Whilst the School's approach to drug and substance misuse must be flexible, for the protection of its staff and pupils it must also be firm. Save in exceptional circumstances and on the basis that each case will be assessed individually, a student will be permanently excluded for possession, possession with intent to supply or supplying controlled drugs, even for a one-off or first time offence and details may be passed to the Police.
- 4.4. Whilst supply, possession or use of drugs will continue to be treated as an extremely serious disciplinary offence, following an incident where a student remains in or returns to School, opportunities will be provided for the student to learn from their mistakes and develop as individuals. Opportunities include:

- review with parents/carers after the incident
- further drugs education
- targeted support on a one to one basis.
- referral to an outside agency

4.5. Further, in circumstances where the pupil returns to the School, support shall be given to ensure they are not subjected to any aggressive or other detrimental behaviour by other pupils and they are able to proceed positively with the School.

5. ANONYMOUS INCIDENT REPORTING

- 5.1. If staff notice a change in pattern of behaviour or any further indicators as detailed in Appendix 1, they should immediately report this to the Headteacher.
- 5.2. Verification will be sought on any anonymous information before positive action is considered.

6. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

- 6.1. Every effort will be made to review an incident after a formal School/police investigation. Appropriate records will be kept in each circumstance.
- 6.2. This policy will be regularly reviewed by South Warwickshire Education Partnership members to ensure relevance and content in accordance with need.

Appendix 1: Signs of Possible Drug Misuse or Substance Misuse

Some of the main signs which may be associated with drug misuse are summarised in Tables 1, 2 and 3. The presence of these signs alone is not conclusive proof of drug or solvent misuse; many of them are part of normal adolescence.

Early detection of drug misuse is extremely important. If a young person's drug misuse is identified at an early stage, it is easier for action to be taken to prevent further misuse of drugs. Teachers, and non-teaching staff, should be alert to the warning signs which may indicate that a student is misusing drugs. Teachers need to be particularly vigilant when they are in charge of activities which take groups away from the School premises.

Table 1: Warning Signs in Individuals

- changes in attendance, and being unwilling to take part in School activities
- decline in performance in Schoolwork
- unusual outbreaks of temper, marked swings of mood, restlessness or irritability
- reports from parents that more time is being spent away from home, possibly with new friends or with friends in older age groups
- excessive spending or borrowing of money
- stealing money or goods
- excessive tiredness without obvious cause
- no interest in physical appearance
- sores or rashes especially on the mouth or nose
- lack of appetite
- heavy use of scents, colognes etc. to disguise the smell of drugs
- wearing sunglasses at inappropriate times (to hide dilated or constricted pupils)

Table 2: Warning Signs in Groups

- regular absence on certain days
- keeping at a distance from other students, away from supervision points (eg groups who frequently gather near the gate of a School playground or sports field)
- being the subject of rumours about drug-taking
- talking to strangers on or near the premises

- stealing which appears to be the work of several individuals rather than one person (eg perhaps to shoplift solvents)
- use of drugtakers' slang
- exchanging money or other objects in unusual circumstances
- associating briefly with one person who is much older and not normally part of the peer group

Table 3: Objects that may indicate Drug Misuse

- foil containers or cup shapes made from silver foil, discoloured by heat
- metal tins
- spoons discoloured by heat
- pill boxes
- plastic, cellophane or metal foil wrappers
- small plastic or glass phials or bottles
- twists of paper
- straws
- sugar lumps
- syringes and needles
- cigarette papers and lighters
- spent matches
- plastic bags or butane gas containers (solvent abuse)
- cardboard or other tubes (heroin)
- stamps, stickers, transfers or similar items
- shredded cigarettes, home-rolled cigarettes and pipes (cannabis)
- paper (about 2 inches square) folded to form an envelope (heroin)

Appendix 2: Practical Guidance for Staff

1. All incidents involving illegal drugs, either inside or outside of School, must be reported to the Headteacher. Never assume it is a rumour or isolated incident. Any information may help to give a more accurate picture of substance misuse in the area and help to safeguard the health and safety of young people.
2. If a member of staff suspects that a student is intoxicated or under the influence of drugs they should follow the First Aid and Medical Emergencies guidelines.
3. While it is advisable to isolate the individual from other students, he or she must not be left alone. Do not shout, threaten them or initiate discussion about drug use. Talk quietly and calmly, especially if the student is distressed.

4. Searches

Personal searches

When a person is suspected of concealing illegal or other unauthorised drugs, every effort will be made to persuade the person to hand over any drugs voluntarily, in the presence of a second witness. Where the individual refuses, the Headteacher or staff authorised by them have a statutory power to search the pupil or their possessions including clothing, backpacks and other packages, without consent, where they have reasonable grounds for suspecting that the pupil may have drugs. The School will take all reasonable steps to follow the latest Government guidelines in conducting a search. After any search involving students, parents/carers will normally be contacted by the School, regardless of whether the result of the search is positive or negative.

Searches of School property

Staff may search School property, for example, students' lockers if they believe drugs to be stored there. Prior consent will always be sought. Individuals will be made aware that if consent is refused the School may wish to proceed with a search. However, when consent is refused, the School will balance the likelihood that an offence has been committed against the risk of infringing the individual's privacy without just cause.

5. Disposal

In taking temporary possession and disposing of suspected illegal drugs the School will:

- ensure that a second adult witness is present throughout;
- seal the sample in a plastic bag and include details of the date and time of the seizure/find and witness present;
- store it in a safe and secure location with access limited to two senior members of staff;
- without delay notify the police, who will collect it, and then store or dispose of it in line with locally agreed protocols. The law does not require the School to divulge to the police the name of the student from whom the drugs were taken. Where a student is identified, the police will be required to follow set internal procedures;
- inform parents/carers, unless this would jeopardise the safety of the student.

Alcohol and tobacco

These will be disposed of, and parents informed.

Volatile substances

Given the level of danger posed by volatile substances, the School will arrange for their safe disposal. Small amounts will be placed in a bin to which students do not have access.

Needles/sharps

Needles or syringes found on School premises will be removed with due regard to health and safety (eg by picking up with a litter picker or with thick leather gardening gloves or sweeping up using a dustpan and brush) and then placed in a plastic screw top bottle, or other suitable container. This will be placed in the domestic waste. If a significant number of syringes are found, Stratford District Council should be contacted for further advice on disposal.