



Statement of Policy on Substance Use and Misuse

- The college condones neither the misuse of drugs and alcohol by members of the school, nor the illegal supply of these substances.
- The college is committed to the health and safety of its members and will take action to safeguard their well-being.
- The college acknowledges the importance of its pastoral role in the welfare of young people, and through the general ethos of the school, will seek to persuade pupils in need of support to come forward.

In response to our shared concerns at a local and national level, we wish to state that as part of its care for the welfare of its pupils, the college believes it has a duty to inform and educate young people on the consequences of drug use and misuse. The school takes a pro-active stance on this matter, believing that health education is a vital part of the personal and social education of every pupil.

Fundamental to our school's values and practice is the principle of sharing the responsibility for education of young people with parents, by keeping them informed and involved at all times. Effective communication and co-operation is essential to the successful implementation of this policy.

Whilst we acknowledge that the number of young people who use and misuse substances is rising, it is seen as important to recognise that a larger number of young people are choosing not to use or misuse substances. We will continue to support their differing needs.

We believe and support the following educational aims in respect of substance use and misuse:

- to enable pupils to make healthy, informed choices by increasing knowledge, challenging attitudes and developing and practising skills
- to provide accurate information about substances
- to increase understanding about the implications and possible consequences of use and misuse

- to encourage an understanding for those experiencing or likely to experience substance use
- to seek to minimise the risks that users and potential users face
- to enable young people to identify sources of appropriate personal support

These aims are fulfilled through aspects of the student's experiences in the taught curriculum, the informal curriculum and through opportunities for extra-curricular activities. We deliver in the taught curriculum mainly through PSHE and Science, but other opportunities to reinforce learning will occur in other parts of the teaching programme. The school actively co-operates with other agencies such as Community Police, Social Services, LA and Health and Drug Agencies to deliver its commitment to Drugs Education and to deal with incidents of substance use and misuse.

The Roles of the Head Teacher and Governing Body

The head teacher takes overall responsibility for the policy and its implementation, for liaison with the Governing Body, parents, LEA and appropriate outside agencies. The head teacher will ensure that all staff dealing with substance issues are adequately supported and trained.

In instances involving substance misuse or supply on the premises, positive action will be taken. Parents/carers will be informed and in most cases there will be a fixed term exclusion and may be a permanent exclusion depending on the outcomes of the college's investigation.

A school cannot knowingly allow its premises to be used for the production or supply of any controlled drug, or the preparation or smoking/taking/ingestion of cannabis, opium or another controlled drug. Where it is suspected that substances are being sold on the premises, details regarding those involved along with all information will be passed to the Police.

Dealing (selling or supplying) of any substance that is deemed to be harmful to students in the college may lead to a fixed term or permanent exclusion.

The Governing Body will be involved in substance related incidents in the same manner as any other matter concerning the direction of the college.

The college will consider each substance incident individually as a variety of responses may be necessary to deal with incidents. The college will consider very carefully the implications of any action it may take. It seeks to balance the interests of the student involved, the other college members and the local community.

Regarding the welfare of staff, the college will follow the County Council Policy on Drug and Alcohol Misuse as part of its Health and Safety Policy.

The head teacher will take responsibility for liaison with the media. As the issue of substance misuse is an emotive one, and is likely to generate interest from the local and national media, the school will take appropriate advice and guidance from the LA Press Office and Legal Department to ensure that any reporting of incidents remains in the best interests of the young people, their families and the college.

Warning Signs

Early detection of drugs 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 his or her further misuse of drugs. Therefore teachers need to be vigilant, particularly when they are in charge of activities which take groups of young people away from the school premises. Research has shown that first experiments with drugs by young people almost always involve a substance provided by a friend.

The signs listed in Tables 1 and 2 may indicate that individuals or groups of young people are misusing drugs. **Their presence alone is not conclusive proof of drug or solvent misuse: many of them are a normal part of adolescence**, but the presence of several signs together may point to a need for greater vigilance. Table 3 lists equipment which, if found in certain circumstances, might also give grounds for concern.

Table 1

Warning Signs in Individuals

Changes in attendance, and being unwilling to take part in school activities

Decline in performance in school work

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 pupils, away from supervision points (e.g. 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 (e.g. 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, perhaps 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 and 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)

Monitoring procedures:

All staff will have a responsibility to record instances of behaviour which might indicate involvement with substances. All such information will be kept and collated by a nominated member of staff. Appropriate intervention will be taken when sufficient indicators suggest potential involvement, as a preventative measure.