

Drugs Education Policy



Approved by:	CEO	Date: 20/09/2024
Last reviewed on:	New Policy	
Next review due by:	19/09/2025	

Aims of this policy

- To clarify the legal requirements and responsibilities of the school
- To reinforce and safeguard the health and safety of learners and the whole school community
- To clarify the school's approach to drugs for all staff, learners, governors, parents/carers, external agencies and the wider community
- To clarify the procedures for responding to and managing any drug-related incidents that may occur so that they are managed with confidence and consistency and in the best interests of those involved
- To ensure that the response to incidents involving drugs and the drug education programme complement the values and ethos of the school
- To reinforce the role of the school in contributing to local and national strategies. As part of their statutory duty to promote learners' wellbeing, schools have a clear role to play in preventing drug misuse.
- The Drugs Education Policy has been developed with reference to Department for Education advice and guidance: DfE and ACPO drug advice for schools (DfE-00001-2012) which is non-statutory.

Other related policies and documents include

- PSHE curriculum
- Child Protection Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- School Behaviour Policy

Policy Scope

This policy applies to all school staff, students, parents/carers, governors and other partner agencies working with the school. The policy applies to the school premises, the school day, while travelling to and from school, journeys in school time, work experience, day and residential trips and when the school is deemed to be in loco parentis.

Definition of Drugs

The definition of a drug given by the United Nations office on Drugs and Crime is: "A substance people take to change the way they feel, think or behave".

Here, "drugs" and "drug education" is used to refer to:

- all illegal drugs (those controlled by the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971)

- all legal drugs, including alcohol, tobacco, volatile substances (those giving off a gas or vapour which can be inhaled), ketamine, khat, alkyl nitrites (known as poppers) and new psychoactive drugs ('legal highs')
- all over-the-counter and prescription medicines.

Drugs, health and the needs of learners

The possession, use or supply of illegal and other unauthorised drugs in Releasing Potential is not acceptable. The school is committed to safeguarding the health, safety and wellbeing of all members of the school community. In providing drugs education and responding to incidents involving drugs, our first concern is the pastoral care and health and safety of students.

Drugs Education

Drug education is a major component of drug prevention. The following aims of drug education at Releasing Potential will be consistent with the values and ethos of the school and laws of society as well as being appropriate to the age, ability and maturity of the learners, and relevant to their particular circumstances it aims:

- To increase students knowledge and understanding and clarify misconceptions about the short and long-term effects and risks of drugs, the rules and laws relating to drugs, the impact of drugs on individuals, families and communities, local and national use and the complex moral, social, emotional and political issues surrounding drugs
- To develop students personal and social skills to make informed decisions and keep themselves safe and healthy, including promoting positive attitudes to healthy lifestyles, assessing, avoiding and managing risk, communicating effectively, resisting pressures and finding information, help and advice.
- Assist in devising problem-solving and coping strategies, developing and maintaining self-awareness and self-esteem in order to motivate them to value their welfare and conscientious care of themselves
- To enable students to explore their own and other peoples' attitudes towards drugs, drug use and drug users, including challenging stereotypes, and exploring media and social influences
- To ensure that students have access to and knowledge of up to date information as sources of help. This includes local and national helplines (including FRANK for drugs, NHS Smoking Services for tobacco and 4 Drinkline for alcohol), youth and community services (YDAP) These sources are used in addition to the school's own drug and alcohol education.

Drug Education Content

Releasing Potential school provides a planned drug education curriculum through the PSHE Programme, following the statutory guidance for relationships and health education:

Drugs, alcohol and tobacco

- The facts about legal and illegal drugs and their associated risks, including the link to serious mental health conditions
- The law relating to the supply and possession of illegal substances

- The physical and psychological risks associated with alcohol consumption and what constitutes low risk alcohol consumption in adulthood
- The physical and psychological consequences of addiction, including alcohol dependency
- Awareness of the dangers of drugs which are prescribed but still present serious health risks
- The facts about the harms from smoking tobacco (particularly the risk to lung cancer), the benefits of quitting and how to access support to do so

Confidentiality

Staff should always ensure that students know that staff cannot offer unconditional confidentiality. All students should be provided with sensitive and appropriate support as needed. Students should be encouraged to talk to their parents and carers and supported to do so. It is important that Information about sources of help is made available e.g., helplines, YDAP. If there is any possibility that a child may be at risk or putting others at risk, the school's Child Protection/Safeguarding procedure should be followed. Staff should reassure students that their best interests will be maintained and any child concerned will be supported through the process.

Management of drug-related incidents

Drug-related incidents include any or all of the following:

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

If there are any suspicions, observations, disclosures or discoveries of situations involving illegal and other unauthorised drugs (possession, supply or imbibing):

- Utmost priority will be placed on safety, meeting any medical emergencies with first aid and summoning appropriate help before addressing further issues. If in doubt, medical assistance will be sought immediately.
- The Head of School or SLT will be informed of the situation immediately.
- Dialogue with the student(s) will be undertaken by the Head of School or SLT as soon as possible in order to determine the facts. The emphasis will be on listening to what people have to say and asking open rather than closed or leading questions. Consideration will be given to separating any students involved in the incident and ensuring that a second adult witness is present.
- The Head of School or the SLT member will inform, consult and involve others as necessary. Careful attention will be given to respecting the confidentiality of those involved.

- The school will maintain vigilance about drug-related incidents in the local community through contact with police and other relevant agencies

Right to Search

- Where they have reasonable grounds for suspecting that a student(s) may have an illegal or unauthorised drug, they will be escorted to a senior member of staff who will make every effort to encourage the individual to hand the item(s) over voluntarily, in the presence of a second member of staff. Where the individual refuses, the Head of School, or member of staff authorised by them, may exercise their statutory power to search the learner(s) or their possessions, without consent. (Education and Inspections Act 2006 (s93)
- Staff may search school property, for example, student's coats, bags, 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.
- Be aware of the requirement for children to have an Appropriate Adult and guidance in PACE Code C 2019.
- After any search involving students, parents/carers will be contacted by the school, regardless of whether the result of the search was positive or negative.
- Any substance suspected of being a drug will be confiscated. In taking temporary possession of a suspected substance, a second adult witness will be present, the sample will be sealed in a plastic bag and handed to SLT.
- If the substance is suspected to be an illegal drug, contact with the Police should be considered. This decision is based on the quantity and type of drug and the circumstances in which it was found. This is a dynamic decision and should be made in consultation with the Head of School. In the majority of cases, parents will be notified immediately unless this is not in the best interests of the student.
- A detailed record of the incident will be made on CPOMS.

Responses to drug related incidents

The school will consider each incident individually and will employ a range of responses to deal with each incident. Any response will balance the needs of the individual with those of the wider community and will aim to provide students with the opportunity to learn from their mistakes and develop as individuals. While there is no legal obligation to inform the police, if an offence against the Misuse of Drugs Act is suspected or substantiated, it will be appropriate to consider contacting the police. If so, the Head of School, or member of staff authorised by them, will make the call. If necessary, an urgent meeting will take place on the same day as the incident, or as soon as possible (between the Head of School and appropriate member of SLT) in order to decide whether others outside the school should be informed. These may include parents/carers, YDAP, Together For Children and police.

Responses to / consequences against students who commit drug offences will be decided following dialogue between the Head of School and appropriate member(s) of staff. Possible responses include:

- targeted intervention

- referral to police or Social Services
- pastoral support plans
- inter-agency programmes
- suspension
- Positive Re-Engagement Programme

Responses and consequences will take into account the seriousness of the incident, the short and long term welfare of the student(s) concerned and the short and long term welfare of other students. The Head of School will take responsibility for liaison with the media (if required).

Early Intervention

The school has a key role in identifying students at risk of drug misuse. The process of identifying needs should aim to distinguish between students who require general information, those who could benefit from targeted prevention, and those who require a detailed needs assessment and more. The school will also be alert to behaviour which might indicate that the child is experiencing difficult home circumstances. Where problems are observed or suspected or if a child chooses to disclose that there are difficulties at home, safeguarding procedures will be followed. This may include involving sources of support for the child such as Together For Children and services commissioned by the Youth Drug and Alcohol Programme (YDAP)

Role of the Governors

As part of their general responsibilities for the strategic direction of the school, governors have a key role to play in reviewing and monitoring this policy.

Liaison with other agencies

The school works closely with external agencies in order to provide a team around the child. Normal channels of communication would be used unless it is deemed an emergency.

Staff conduct and drugs

Staff are aware of their responsibility to provide a positive role model to students through the Code of Conduct Policy and Staff Handbook. No member of staff should be under the influence of drink or drugs when at work. All staff should be fit for work and not undertake any activities which would impair their judgement.

Useful Organisations

Addaction is one of the UK's largest specialist drug and alcohol treatment charities. As well as adult services, they provide services specifically tailored to the needs of young people and their parents. The Skills for Life project supports young people with drug misusing parents. Website: www.addaction.org.uk ADFAM offers information to families of drug and alcohol users, and the website has a database of local family support services. Tel: 020 7553 7640 Email: admin@adfam.org.uk Website: www.adfam.org.uk

Alcohol Concern works to reduce the incidence and costs of alcohol-related harm and to increase the range and quality of services available to people with alcohol related problems Tel: 020 7264 0510. 8 Email: contact@alcoholconcern.org.uk Website: www.alcoholconcern.org.uk

ASH (Action on Smoking and Health) A campaigning public health charity aiming to reduce the health problems caused by tobacco. Tel: 020 7739 5902 Email: enquiries@ash.org.uk Website: www.ash.org.uk

Children's Rights Alliance for England - A charity working to improve the lives and status of all children in England through the fullest implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Email: info@crae.org.uk Website: www.crae.org.uk

Drinkaware - An independent charity that promotes responsible drinking through innovative ways to challenge the national drinking culture, helping reduce alcohol misuse and minimise alcohol related harm. Tel: 020 7307 7450 Website: www.drinkaware.co.uk/

Drinkline - A free and confidential helpline for anyone who is concerned about their own or someone else's drinking. Tel: 0800 917 8282 (lines are open 24 hours a day)

Drug Education Forum – this website contains a number of useful papers and briefing sheets for use by practitioners: Website: www.drugeducationforum.com/ DrugScope is a centre of expertise on illegal drugs, aiming to inform policy development and reduce drug-related risk. The website includes detailed drug information and access to the Information and Library Service. DrugScope also hosts the Drug Education Practitioners Forum. Tel: 020 7520 7550 Email: info@drugscope.org.uk Website: www.drugscope.org.uk

FRANK is the national drugs awareness campaign aiming to raise awareness amongst young people of the risks of illegal drugs, and to provide information and advice. It also provides support to parents/carers, helping to give them the skills and confidence to communicate with their children about drugs. 24 Hour Helpline: 0800 776600 Email: frank@talktofrank.com Website: www.talktofrank.co