



# DAME ALICE OWEN'S SCHOOL

## SUBSTANCE MISUSE (DRUGS) POLICY

Author: Sara Jones

- Agreed by the Governing Body Curriculum Committee May 2016
- To be reviewed Summer 2018  
(reviewed every 2 years)

To be monitored by Hannah Nemko, Headteacher, and Sara Jones, Co-ordinator, PHSE and Effective Form Time

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### 1. Overview

From December 05 to February 06 this policy was developed by a working party consisting of Dr B Davies (Sex and Health Education Co-ordinator), Alan Davison (Headteacher), John Godfrey (Deputy Head), and 4 student representatives. In addition, the working party was advised by Richard Boxer, Drug Education Consultant, Hertfordshire LEA.

The policy has been written under the guidelines set out by DfES publication, *Drugs: Guidance for Schools and Managing Medicines in Schools and Early Years Settings*

The policy will be available on the school website, accessible to parents and students. We will remind parents of its existence in the half-termly newsletter.

### 2. Substances Which the Policy Covers

The policy is concerned with mood-altering substances:

1. Illegal drugs including cannabis, cocaine, heroin, ecstasy etc
2. Alcohol
3. Tobacco
4. Other legal substances such as caffeine, khat, cold remedies
5. Volatile substances such as aerosols, butane gas, alkyl nitrates
6. Prescription medicines with a potential for abuse (e.g. Ritalin, tranquillisers)
7. Psychoactive Substances such as legal highs

Whilst it is recognised that other prescription drugs are potentially harmful, it is recognised that they have no potential for abuse (eg. asthma inhalers, paracetamol, antibiotics). Students may be in possession of these items for legitimate reasons.



### 3. Aims

The school aims to promote healthy lifestyles, good standards of behaviour and respect for all individuals in the school community.

We live in a society where drugs are available. However, the possession use or supply of unauthorised drugs within school boundaries is unacceptable. For the purpose of this policy *school boundaries* include journeys in school time, work experience and residential trips. Travelling to and from school is a shared responsibility with parents.

### 4. Related Policies

This policy relates to the Health and Sex Education policy, Behaviour policy, Health and Safety policy and the Offsite Visits and Learning Outside the Classroom (LOTC) policy.

### 5. Drug Education

Research has shown that certain models of drug education can achieve reductions in the consumption of cannabis, alcohol and tobacco and delay the onset of their use (DfES guide).

We aim:

- To enable students to make healthy, informed choices through helping them to increase their knowledge, challenging and exploring attitudes and developing and practising skills
- To help students develop further a sense of self-worth and self esteem.
- To help students to distinguish between different substances, consider their use, misuse, benefit and harm
- To counter any inaccurate messages and myths which young people may receive about drugs with accurate information; and
- To aid students' understanding of the complex moral, social and emotional issues surrounding drugs.

We wish to develop students' skills to enable them to make informed decisions and keep themselves safe and healthy. We aim to inform students in ways that are appropriate to the age and maturity of students.

Drug education will not only occur in science lessons as part of the National Curriculum but in most subject areas at various times e.g. P.E., Religious Education, Drama, English etc. In addition, a range of outside speakers have been used in the past and we will continue with this practice. The school will use the resources of health agencies and the Police. Teachers' knowledge will be regularly updated and teaching materials will be reviewed for their quality and relevance. It is recognised that students' needs will potentially change rapidly.



Effective form time will be used to encourage social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) where pupils and tutors will work together on developing increased self awareness and motivation.

Health units for pastoral delivery during Effective Form Time cover smoking and alcohol (in years 8 and 10 respectively.)

The PSHE section of the VLE (Virtual Learning Environment), which can be accessed by all pupils both in school and at home, has links to reputable websites for drug information and advice.

## 6. Response to Possible Drug Related Incidents

Each situation will be considered individually. All aspects of an incident will be considered. Given that drug problems rarely occur in isolation, responses may need to take a holistic approach rather than focus solely on drugs. We recognise that a variety of actions may be necessary as outlined in *Drugs: Guidance for schools DfES February 2004*.

In dealing with any drug-related incident, the utmost priority must be placed on safety, meeting any medical emergencies with first aid and summoning appropriate help.

The Headteacher and the drug co-ordinator, Dr Mitchell, will be informed and an appropriate response considered. The implications of any action will be considered. The focus of the response will be the student and not the substance and we will seek to balance the interests of the individual, other members of the school community and the wider community. **Unless there are exceptional circumstances, we will inform parents/carers at the earliest opportunity so that we can work together to resolve any difficulties.**

The following outside agencies may be consulted in dealing with a drug-related incident:

- The school's education welfare officer
- A Connexions personal adviser
- The local police Youth Crime Reduction Officer/ Police Community Support Officer
- Representatives of the local Youth Offending Team (whose roles include supporting those at risk of re-offending); and
- Local Drug and Alcohol agencies and counselling services.

Our aim is to enable all students to fulfil their potential. We will work with the student, his or her parents/carers and colleagues from outside agencies to remove barriers to achievement and resolve any difficulties that exist. Drug related situations will be considered alongside other circumstances in the student's life and not in isolation. Permanent exclusion, whilst it remains an option, will be used as a last resort.



Fixed-period exclusion:

*Exclusion should only be considered for serious breaches of the school's behaviour policy, and should not be imposed without a thorough investigation unless there is an immediate threat to the safety of others in the school or the student concerned. It should not be used if alternative solutions have the potential to achieve a change in the student's behaviour and are not detrimental to the whole school community.*

(Section 5.4.6 in Drugs: Guidance for Schools)

Permanent exclusion

*A decision to exclude a child permanently is a serious one. Permanent exclusions should usually be the final step in the process for dealing with disciplinary offences after a wide range of other strategies have been tried without success. Supplying an illegal drug is a serious breach of school rules and it may be one the exceptional circumstances where the Headteacher judges that it is appropriate to permanently exclude a student. Even for a one-off or first-time offence.*

*Where students are permanently excluded for supplying illegal drugs, repeated possession and/or use of an illegal drug on school premises, the Secretary of State would not normally expect the governing body or an independent appeal panel to reinstate the student*

(Section 5.4.9 Drugs: Guidance for Schools)

Should a suspected illicit substance be found on the school premises, it should be handed to the headteacher who should place it in a sealed container in the presence of another member of staff. The sample should be signed and dated and then passed on to a police officer. The police officer will then advise the school of the most appropriate response. All such incidents will be recorded.

Drug paraphernalia should be disposed of safely. Staff should be made aware of the relevant protocols. (Section 4.9 Drugs: Guidance for Schools)

All staff will be made aware of the legal constraints on gathering evidence and questioning those involved. They will not take action without involving the headteacher or the drug co-ordinator.

Sara Jones  
May 2016

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