



Dame Alice Owen's School  
The Dame Alice Owen Foundation - 1613

# SUBSTANCE MISUSE POLICY

Agreed by the Behaviour and Wellbeing Link Governor  
on behalf of the School Community Committee  
To be reviewed  
(reviewed every 2 years)

Autumn 2024

Autumn 2026

To be monitored by the Headteacher, the Deputy Head, Pastoral and the Behaviour and Wellbeing Link Governor

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## 1. Aims

This policy covers the possession, use and misuse of both legal and illegal substances.

We live in a society where legal and illegal substances are readily available to young people. Our policy spells out how we educate students about substances and how we deal with drug related incidents within the bounds of school jurisdiction. What can be defined as school jurisdiction is laid out in the behaviour policy.

We aim to:

- make the School's approach to substances clear.
- ensure that the School fulfils its safeguarding responsibilities regarding substances.
- outline the education process for staff and students and within this, how we promote healthy lifestyles.
- enable staff to manage any incidents relating to drug possession or use within the confines of our jurisdiction.

## 2. Substances covered by the policy

A drug can be defined as ‘a substance people take to change how they feel, think or behave’. These include but are not limited to:

- Alcohol
- Illegal substances such as cannabis, cocaine, heroin, ecstasy etc
- Volatile substances such as aerosols, butane gas, Nitrous oxide
- Psychoactive substances e.g. LSD, THC
- Prescription medicines with a potential for abuse e.g. Ritalin.

Whilst some students are over the legal age for alcohol, they are still prohibited to possess alcohol on site.

Tobacco is not covered under this definition, smoking on the school site is prohibited. Possession and use of tobacco on school site is covered under the Behaviour policy.

Some prescription substances are potentially harmful; it is recognised that some students may be in possession of these for legitimate reasons and they have no potential for abuse e.g. asthma inhalers. Students are prohibited from carrying paracetamol on their person.

## 3. Drug Education

The school has a responsibility to promote student wellbeing, and as part of this we need to provide students with the relevant information allowing them to manage risk and reduce the likelihood that they will be harmed by the use of legal and illegal substances.

We aim to:

- increase student knowledge and understanding of substances
- counter inaccurate messages and myths, which students may receive about substances
- consider, in particular, short and long term effects of substances, laws relating to substances
- raise awareness on the impact of substances on families and communities and personal behaviour, the availability and acceptability of drug use with peers, and the moral, social and emotional issues surrounding substances
- help students distinguish between different substances, to consider their use, misuse, benefits and harms
- develop students’ personal and social skills to make informed decisions about staying safe including how to find information and advice and to develop coping strategies

- enable students to explore their own and other people's attitudes towards substances and their use.

To achieve these aims:

- Aspects of Drug Education occur within the Science, PE, Religious Studies as well as the Drama and English curriculum.
- Learning for Life Programme is taught within extended form time, by a team of staff who specialise in that aspect of the curriculum.
- We work with visiting presenters. Students find presentations from visiting specialists highly engaging and informative. Sometimes we complement our curriculum with a range of specialist outside agencies, in particular from youth groups, health agencies and the Police. Before they present to the students there is an in depth discussion with the visitors to ensure that the material delivered is appropriate to our particular student body and takes into account any particular sensitivities. We also ensure that the presenters are fully aware of the material used by the School with their 'in-house teaching'. Allied to this we ensure that there is an opportunity for follow up sessions within the form time structure. We allow students to give confidential feedback and follow up on any issues these sessions may bring to light.

#### **4. Managing drug related issues**

This section of the policy relates to the government's guidance on managing drug related incidents within the school jurisdiction

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/drugs-advice-for-schools](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/drugs-advice-for-schools)

The School treats all aspects of drug possession and misuse extremely seriously. We appreciate that each situation needs to be considered individually and that all aspects of an incident need to be taken into account. Given that drug problems rarely occur in isolation, responses need to take a holistic approach rather than focus solely on the substances.

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

##### **4.1. Suspected intoxication**

Student safety is paramount and the required support needs to be found. If a student is found to be intoxicated on school premises, the student will firstly be placed in a safe place under the supervision of an adult. The relevant member of the Pastoral team and a member of the SLT will be informed. The parent/carer will be informed as soon as possible and asked to come to school to collect their child.

#### **4.2. Suspected possession**

A member of the Pastoral team and/or SLT will be informed. The student will be removed to an appropriate location and will be under constant supervision. The student will be interviewed and a statement taken. Other statements will be taken as appropriate in order to gain as full an understanding of what has happened as soon as possible. A second adult witness will be present throughout. Please see Appendix one for guidance on searching.

#### **4.3. Supplying substances within school jurisdiction**

A member of the pastoral team and/or SLT will be informed. The student will be removed to an appropriate location and will be under constant supervision. The student will be interviewed and a statement taken. Other statements will be taken as appropriate in order to gain as full an understanding of what has happened as soon as possible. A second adult witness will be present throughout. The School could take steps to permanently exclude the student(s). Please see Appendix one for guidance on searching.

#### **4.4. Possession of substances of any sort on the school site**

A member of the pastoral team and/or SLT will be informed. The student will be removed to an appropriate location and will be under constant supervision. The student will be interviewed and a statement taken. Other statements will be taken as appropriate in order to gain as full an understanding of what has happened as soon as possible. A second adult witness will be present throughout. This could lead to fixed-term exclusion; or even permanent exclusion for repeat offenders. Please see Appendix one for guidance on searching.

#### **4.5. Recording the incident**

In all cases, the [Drug Related Incident Form](#) will be completed and stored within the student's school file. If substances are found, the following procedures will be followed:

- Section 91 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 enables the School to confiscate, retain and dispose of a student's property as a disciplinary penalty if it is reasonable to do so. This applies even if the substance does not come under the remit of this policy. If it is felt that it might be harmful or detrimental to good behaviour, discipline and the student's safety, it can be retained. If the legal nature of the substance cannot be determined then it should be treated as a controlled drug. Please see Appendix one for further information about confiscation.
- A full record of the proceedings will be made, including a police incident reference number if appropriate.
- The Headteacher, in consultation with the relevant Pastoral Director will decide on the appropriate sanction which can include fixed term or permanent exclusion.
- The Pastoral team will decide on the best form of support for the student and family.

**5. Policy training**

All relevant staff will be made aware of their responsibilities under this policy and will receive relevant training and support according to their responsibility.

**6. Useful links**

YoungMinds - <https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/for-parents/parents-guide-to-support-a-z/parents-guide-to-support-drugs-and-alcohol/>

Hope UK - <https://www.hopeuk.org/>

Talk to Frank - <https://www.talktofrank.com/>

## Appendix 1 - Searching and Confiscation at School

This section provides a quick guide and summary of the government guidance, but details in the government guidance can be referenced as part of this policy. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/searching-screening-and-confiscation>

### Who can search?

Only the Headteacher or a member of SLT can undertake a search. The DSL will be informed of any searching incidents. The member of staff conducting the search must be the same sex as the student being searched and there will always be another member of staff present as a witness to the search. There is a limited exception to this rule. This is that the member of staff can search a student of the opposite sex and/or without a witness present only:

- if the member of staff carrying out the search reasonably believes there is a risk that serious harm will be caused to a person if the search is not carried out as a matter of urgency; and
- in the time available, it is not reasonably practicable for the search to be carried out by a member of staff who is the same sex as the pupil or it is not reasonably practicable for the search to be carried out in the presence of another member of staff.

When a member of staff conducts a search without a witness they should immediately report this to another member of staff, and ensure a record of the search is kept.

The member of staff conducting the search must not require the student to remove any clothing other than the outer clothing. 'Outer clothing means any item of clothing that is not worn wholly next to the skin or immediately over a garment that is being worn as underwear, as well as hats, shoes or scarves.

Strip searches can only be carried out on the school site by police. While the decision to undertake a strip search itself and its conduct are police matters, school staff will retain a duty of care to the student involved and will advocate for student wellbeing. Parents will be informed at the earliest opportunity.

### What can be searched for?

The items below are classified as 'banned from school' and as such can be searched for and confiscated without consent:

- Knives or weapons, alcohol, illegal substances and stolen items
- Tobacco and cigarette papers, vapes, fireworks and pornographic images
- Any article that the member of staff reasonably suspects has been, or is likely to be, used to commit an offence, or to cause personal injury, or damage to property
- Any item banned by the school rules which has been identified in the rules as an item which may be searched for.

### **Informing Parents of search**

- Parents will be informed at the earliest opportunity. A record of the search must be kept.

### **Confiscation**

- Confiscated substances should be passed onto the Headteacher or member of SLT without delay. The substance should be placed in a sealed and labelled container. It should also be signed and dated and stored in a safe or lockable container with access only to SLT.
- The Police must be notified without delay. The confiscated items must be passed onto the Police at the first opportunity. The School has no legal responsibility to pass on information relating to the person from whom the substances were confiscated.