Westcliff High School
for Boys

# SUBSTANCE MISUSE POLICY

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| **REVIEWED:** | **Summer 2026** |
| **COMMITTEE:** | **Teaching Quality & Pastoral** |
| **DATE OF NEXT REVIEW:** | **Summer 2028** |

## INTRODUCTION

Young people face growing pressures to use or experiment with controlled drugs, alcohol and other substances. Our purpose at WHSB is to do all that we can to reduce these pressures, to educate our students about the risks of substance misuse and to maintain an environment that is as free as we can make it from drugs and the paraphernalia, culture and temptation to use drugs and other harmful substances.

The possession or use of tobacco, vapes, alcohol, solvents, drugs and other forms of legal highs on School premises or on School occasions is unacceptable and severe punishment may result. Likewise, the School recognizes in both the wide availability of drugs and solvents and their growing misuse a very serious threat to young people.

The School, while mindful of the danger that Drugs Education can encourage the very behaviour it is designed to challenge, will take measured steps to broaden knowledge on drugs and their misuse and will seek to use education to discourage involvement.

The School wishes to give an unequivocal message that the purchase, pushing, promotion, exchange, sale or use of drugs (including legal highs) and solvents is a serious matter which will invite severe disciplinary sanctions. This also applies to the misuse of prescription drugs. While the School has no wish to elevate drug offences above all others a specific response is required. Moreover, the School wishes to reiterate its commitment to the idea that respecting other people (with which drug involvement is frequently incompatible) is a central principle.

This Policy covers drugs and solvents and subsequent references to drugs in the Policy should be regarded as a reference to drugs and solvents.

## AIMS OF POLICY

- To clarify the legal requirements and responsibilities of the School;
- To reinforce and safeguard the health and safety of pupils and others that use the School;
- To clarify the School's approach to drugs for all staff, pupils, governors, parents/careers, external agencies and the wider community;
- To give guidance on developing and monitoring the Drug Education Programme;
- To enable staff to manage drugs on School premises and any incident which occur with confidence and consistency and in the best interests of those involved.

## DRUGS EDUCATION

We believe that education about the use and misuse of substances is most effective as part of a wider Personal, Social and Health Education Programme.

The School will seek to shape attitudes within the School to drugs through:
- The School's Ethos and its Learner Profile;
- Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHEE) lessons;
- Science lessons;
- Form Periods and Assemblies;
- External agencies.

In approaching these issues, staff will ensure that teaching is directed towards:
- clarifying the distinction between drug use and drug misuse;
- emphasizing the healing powers of drugs when properly utilized;

- emphasizing the destructive power of drugs when these are used for casual, recreational or escapist purposes or when they are taken to impress others in the peer group.

Parents will be made familiar with the School's approach to Drugs Education through School publications, letters and circulars.

## DRUGS AND SCHOOL DISCIPLINE

The School has a very clear stance against drugs and drugs involvement but some aspects of drug involvement will be treated in pastoral rather than disciplinary terms. Hence the grid below makes distinctions between different patterns of engagement with drugs and the responses which are likely to follow.

School Policy makes clear distinctions between the different levels in which pupils may engage in drugs. While the table below should not be regarded as prescriptive in respect of the School's response (in that the particular circumstances are relevant in each case), it does indicate clearly a hierarchy of involvement and the scale of response which may be anticipated.

Offences relating to the use of tobacco or alcohol are not covered within this framework although the normal School response to a first offence in these cases will be to give a warning, to impose a punishment falling short of fixed-term exclusion, to inform parents and to provide guidance and support.

**Table outlining Sanctions in Cases of Drug Involvement for First Offences**
The repetition of offences will invite more serious penalties.

| | Involvement | On School Premises or School Occasions | Off School Premises and away from School Occasions |
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| 1 | Taking drugs without the knowledge of others. | External suspension probable (2-5 days). Support and guidance given.<br>Police may be informed. | Treated as a pastoral case. Support and guidance given. Police may be informed. |
| 2 | Taking drugs with the knowledge of others who are not members of the School. | External suspension is probable (2-5 days or longer depending upon the severity of the case) and support and guidance would be given. Police may be informed. | Treated as a pastoral case. Support and guidance given. Police may be informed. |
| 3 | Taking drugs with the knowledge of others who are members of the School. | External suspension is probable (5-10 days or longer depending upon the severity of the case). Support and guidance would be given. Police may be informed. | Treated as a pastoral case. Support and guidance given. Suspension possible (2-6 days or longer depending upon the severity of the case). Police may be informed. |
| 4 | Seeking to promote an interest in others in drugs. | External suspension probable (2-5 days or longer depending upon the severity of the case). Pastoral support and guidance given. Police may be informed. | Treated as a pastoral case. Police may be informed. |
| 5 | Receiving or buying drugs from others. | Permanent exclusion possible. External exclusion probable (5-15 days or longer depending upon the severity of the case). If latter support and guidance given. Police informed. | Treated as a pastoral case. If any other member of the School is involved then suspension possible. Police informed. |

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| 6 | Possession of drugs with an intention to supply. | Permanent exclusion probable. Police informed. | If any other member of the School is involved then permanent exclusion possible. Otherwise treated as a pastoral case. Support and guidance given. Police informed. |
| 7 | Supplying or offering to supply drugs to others. | Permanent exclusion almost inevitable. Police informed. | Permanent exclusion probable. Police informed. |

In investigating cases arising, the School will have due regard to the principles of natural justice, will enable a pupil to speak in his/her own defence and, if permanent exclusion is being considered, will enable the parents of the pupil to make representations before the decision is taken.

In all cases covered while some cases may be handled exclusively by School's Pastoral staff, the Headmaster will be kept informed. Where questions of suspension (internal or external) and permanent exclusion arise the decision will be the Headmaster's.

## DEALING WITH SUBSTANCE-RELATED INCIDENTS: GUIDANCE FOR STAFF

All staff have a responsibility for the safety and well-being of pupils at WHSB. Staff need to be vigilant for evidence of drugs involvement and to take action where they have grounds for believing that there is misuse.

The following practice guidelines are to assist staff with immediate issues and thereafter other responsibilities arising from suspected substance use by any pupil at the School:

**Health & Safety Issues**
Where there has been the possibility of substance misuse:

- Staff must assess the pupil's health and well-being and closely monitor this;
- Staff should endeavour to gather as much information regarding the incident including what drug(s) was used, when it was used and how it was used;
- If there are any concerns about a pupil's health, the relevant Pastoral Office should arrange for the pupil to be taken immediately to the A&E Department at Southend Hospital and parents should be contacted immediately.

**Other Responsibilities**
- All substance-related incidents should be reported to a member of the School's Senior Team;
- All substance-related incidents are to be viewed as serious and detailed, dated notes should be maintained;
- Pupils may wish to disclose information in confidence. Staff should explain that they cannot guarantee confidentiality;
- If drugs are found in School other than in the possession of pupils they should be taken by the member of staff to the First Deputy Headmaster, Senior Master Sixth Form or Third Deputy Head School and a written note given to them on the timing and location of the find. The law permits staff to take temporary possession of confiscated suspicious items. Substances should be placed in an envelope, signed, sealed, dated and the time must be recorded on the seal of the envelope. These should then be kept in a locked place;
- Confiscated substances will be handed to the Police or destroyed if asked to do so by the Police. Any substances that the Police ask to be destroyed must be destroyed in the presence of a witness (two members of the Senior Team) and records kept;
- If drugs are found on a pupil or if a pupil is suspected of carrying drugs the pupil should be taken to the Headmaster, the First Deputy Headmaster, Senior Master Sixth Form or Third Deputy Head where the pupil may be required if both members of staff are satisfied that there is a case to

answer, to empty his/her pockets or turn out the contents of his/her bag. If a further or more intimate search is felt necessary or if the pupil refuses to cooperate, the Police will be called;

- If a pupil who is being questioned relating to the possibility of drug involvement is uncooperative then a senior member of staff may choose to summon the Police. The School intends to work closely with Police in dealing with incidents where drugs are involved;
- In circumstances where a pupil's potential involvement in drugs has been investigated by the School, normal practice would be for the parents to be informed.

While the School will always be mindful of individual circumstances both pupils and parents must understand that those who engage in the misuse of drugs while members of the School and, in particular those who do so in School or through their links with School, will probably be deemed to have behaved in a manner incompatible with their future membership of the School.