



SCHOOL POLICY DOCUMENT

DRUGS POLICY

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DRUGS POLICY

Statement

The School is committed to protecting the health and ensuring the safety of all its members and will take appropriate action to safeguard their wellbeing. We do not condone the misuse of drugs by members of this School and will actively oppose the illegal supply of these substances. As part of our general concern for the welfare of our students, the School believes it has a duty to inform and educate our students on the consequences of drug use and misuse. We believe that health education is a vital part of personal and social education. In addition, the School, through its general ethos, will actively encourage pupils in need of advice and help to come forward and share their problems. Our response will be positive and supportive.

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 are essential to the successful implementation of this policy.

Aims

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

- * to provide accurate information about substances
- * to increase understanding about the implications and possible consequences of use and misuse

- * to widen understanding about related health and social issues e.g. crime, HIV and AIDS
- * to enable young people to identify sources of appropriate personal support.

Substance Misuse and Supply - The School Response

- (1) Any instances of substance misuse or supply by students at School will be immediately referred to the Director of Studies and the Directors. After discussion between staff members who know the student well, the Director of Studies will inform parents at the earliest opportunity.
- (2) If a student admits to using or supplying substances off the School premises, the teacher should normally notify the Director of Studies who will, in turn, inform the parents. In such cases, the School is not legally obliged to inform the Police, though they may be able to give relevant support and advice.
- (3) The law states that a School cannot knowingly allow its premises to be used for the production or supply of any controlled drug, or the smoking of opium or cannabis. Where it is suspected that such activities are taking place on the premises, the Director of Studies will pass on as much information as possible, including the details of those involved, to the Police.
- (4) The School will consider each substance incident individually and recognises that a variety of responses will be necessary to deal with different circumstances. The School will consider very carefully what action to take, seeking to balance the interest(s) of the student involved, the other School members and the local community.

It may be appropriate to exclude the offender for a fixed period to allow the case to be fully investigated. The Police will be consulted for an appropriate response. The School reserves the right to permanently exclude a pupil whose actions are threatening the wellbeing of other members of the school community. This would normally arise if:

- a) A student was supplying drugs to other pupils on the school premises.
- b) A student was repeatedly misusing substances on the school premises.

In other circumstances the School will agree appropriate action with the parents. This could be:

- a. A contract requiring the student not to misuse or supply substances on the School premises in future, with a clear indication of the consequences of non-compliance.

- b. A meeting with the Police to outline the legal implications of the student's actions.
- c. Support from the St. Andrew's College Science Department to inform the pupil of the dangers to physical and mental health.
- d. Advice and support from Social Services and local Health and Drug Agencies, where appropriate.

Appendix 1 - Guidance for Staff

Where a young person discloses substance misuse or supply on the premises, staff will inform the Director of Studies without delay. Where a young person discloses substance misuse off the premises, the staff member will inform the Director of Studies without delay.

Where staff discover substances which are suspected to be harmful, illegal or deserving of investigation, they should note the following two circumstances in which substances may be removed:

- a) **from a place:**
if possible, remove the substance from where it was discovered in the presence of a witness. If this is not possible, do not leave the substance there while you enlist the support of a colleague as a witness. Continue with the procedure below.
- b) **from a person:**
When receiving or retrieving substances from a student, do so, if possible in the presence of a witness. In the absence of a witness, do not put off receiving substances, or, removing a suspicious substance from a student's possession.

The following guidelines should be observed at all times:

- 1) Remove the substance and record the time, place and circumstances when the substance came into your possession.
- 2) Do not investigate the nature of the substance, but do record its approximate size and appearance.
- 3) when possible, have the recordings countersigned by a witness.
- 4) Take the substance immediately to the Director of Studies or another senior member of staff. Do not keep the substance on your person or in a place of safekeeping; to do so may place you at risk.
- 5) In the presence of the Director of Studies or other senior colleague, place the substance in a suitable sealed container. The Director of Studies or other senior colleague, you and, when possible, the witness, should sign and date the package.

An official report will be completed by the Director of Studies, recording the time, date and circumstances of the findings.

- 6) The Director of Studies can choose to arrange for the Police to remove the substance from the premises or may choose to dispose of it in an appropriate way.
- 7) In the event of a discovery of any equipment associated with substance use, especially needles and syringes, students should not be allowed to handle such items. All equipment found must be handled by adults with utmost care. The Director of Studies must ensure that materials are placed in a secure and rigid container to await collection by the appropriate service.

Drug Misuse

It is important not to jump to conclusions. Signs of drugs misuse can be easily confused with indicators of other problems or quite usual behaviour shown by adolescents, e.g. changes in mood, quiet, over-excited, sleepy, heavy eyed. You can only really be sure if someone is using drugs if they tell you. They are more likely to tell you if they trust you and if you remain calm and supportive.

Some drugs act as stimulants and some as depressants. The after effects of stimulant use will include lethargy and drowsiness.

If several of the signs listed below are shown or if they recur they may give an indication of drug use.

- 1) Excessive spending or borrowing of money
- 2) Stealing money or goods
- 3) Reports from host families or House Wardens that more time is being spent away from home
- 4) Changes in attendance pattern and decline in willingness to participate at college or in other activities
- 5) Decline in performance at school or in other activities
- 6) Unusual outbreaks of temper. Sudden change of mood
- 7) Disregard of physical appearance
- 8) Lack of appetite or drastic increase of sweet foods
- 9) Heavy use of aftershave or perfume to disguise the smell of drugs or solvents
- 10) Wearing sunglasses at inappropriate times to hide dilated or constricted pupils

- 11) Bouts of drowsiness or sleeplessness
- 12) Increased evidence of telling lies or of furtive behaviour
- 13) Unusual smells, stains or marks on the body or clothes
- 14) A marked interest in glue, nail varnish or other solvent based products
- 15) Unusual soreness or redness around the mouth, nose or eyes
- 16) Persistent irritable cough
- 17) Slurred speech
- 18) Involvement in petty delinquency
- 19) Making or receiving a lot of furtive telephone calls
- 20) Rushing off "to meet somebody" at short notice

Possible Warning Signs in Groups

- 1) Small groups gathering in secretive places
- 2) Appearing "tipsy" - giggling and seeming unsteady on their feet
- 3) Pooling money
- 4) Petty stealing
- 5) Behaving aggressively
- 6) A small group sharing a "secret" with a great deal of giggling immediately following a break from fully supervised activity
- 7) Absence on days of particular significance (e.g. payout day for young people in receipt of pocket money)
- 8) Maintaining distance from other students away from supervision points
- 9) Being the subject of rumours of substance misuse
- 10) Talking to strangers on or near premises

- 11) Using the drug users' slang
- 12) Associating briefly with one person who is much older and not normally part of the peer group

Objects That May Indicate Drug Misuse

- 1) Foil containers or cup shapes made from silver foil, perhaps discoloured by heat
- 2) Metal tins, small bottles or pill boxes
- 3) Heat-discoloured spoons or tweezers
- 4) Twists of paper
- 5) Straws (amphetamine sulphate, cocaine or heroin - sniffing)
- 6) Syringes or needles (for injecting heroin, cocaine, amphetamine sulphate and others)
- 7) Discarded plastic bags, aerosols or butane gas containers (solvent abuse)
- 8) Cardboard or other tubes (heroin)
- 9) Shredded cigarettes or home rolled cigarettes (cannabis)
- 10) Small, patterned squares of blotting/absorbent paper (LSD)
- 11) Aromatic smell (cannabis)

