
GDST

Policy - Drugs, alcohol and tobacco (GDST policy)

Policy owner	Deputy Head Pastoral
Policy last reviewed	September 2023
Policy next review date	September 2024
Policy audience	Staff, parents and pupils

1. Introduction

Drug misuse is a threat to individuals, families and the wider community. GDST recognises the role that schools have to play in helping to prevent the misuse of drugs, including alcohol.

In our schools we have a responsibility to provide an effective programme of drug education, and to take steps to promote the health, safety and well-being of our pupils.

Involvement with Drugs and alcohol can be so damaging that regardless of where drug-related incidents take place, it may be that a detrimental impact will be felt within the school community.

2. Scope

This policy applies to pupils at all times on school premises, and in school related activities including sporting events, educational visits, and clubs. It also applies when pupils are identifiable e.g. travelling to and from school, in the vicinity of the school, and otherwise in school uniform.

This policy may also apply entirely outside of the school context, where it is likely that there will be an impact on the welfare of members of the school community, or on the ethos of the school.

3. School aims

- To create an environment which engenders safety and well-being for all members of the GDST school community;
- Through education to enable our young people to make informed, healthy choices by understanding the nature of drugs, their social and legal status, the implications of

committing a criminal offence, and the potential harm to both the individual and society as a whole;

- To give pupils an opportunity to debate the issues concerning their use and abuse through the curriculum, PHSE and, where appropriate, visits by outside speakers;
- To provide clear procedures and guidance to support school staff in dealing with any drug-related incidents;
- To keep drugs out of GDST schools and prevent drug (including alcohol) misuse by means of education, detection of those involved with drugs, the imposition of strong disciplinary sanctions, coupled with the provision of appropriate support and pastoral care;
- To encourage an environment in which pupils feel able to discuss anxieties relating to drugs, able to make disclosures and seek help, and in which information is provided to pupils to ensure they are aware of available sources of support;
- To ensure a recognition that drug-related issues may also involve safeguarding concerns, and appropriate safeguarding procedures will be followed; and
- To work in partnership with parents, the school community and other agencies, including the police, in relation to the above aims.

4. Definitions

Drugs are defined by the Department for Education (DfE) as:

- 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 and alkyl nitrites (known as poppers); and
- All over-the-counter and prescription medicines.

Legal highs: New psychoactive substances (NPS) or 'legal highs' are substances designed to mimic the effect of illegal drugs but are structurally different to avoid being classified as illegal substances. For the avoidance of doubt GDST recognises legal highs as drugs.

Drug-related incident: Any issue relating to drugs being (or potentially being) used, bought, sold, distributed, promoted, or held, either on or off school premises, including any disclosure, suspicion or allegation relating to drugs.

5. Alcohol use

Drinking, or being in possession of alcohol is prohibited when a pupil is under NHS' authority. However, Sixth form pupils may be permitted to drink small quantities of alcohol at certain school events and on school trips. This would be under the supervision of staff.

Drinking to excess will not be permitted or tolerated. Staff are reminded that they are responsible for pupils' consumption.

6. Over-the-counter and prescription medicines

Where a pupil has medicine for a legitimate medical purpose, the GDST Administration of Medicines Protocol must be followed, together with the relevant school's procedures relating to the administration of medicines.

7. Disciplinary Sanctions

Drug related incidents will be dealt with by schools in accordance with the GDST exclusions policy.

Anyone involved in the **supply or distribution** of drugs on or off school grounds should expect to be permanently excluded.

Anyone **using or in possession of** drugs on or off school grounds should expect to be excluded in some form.

Any suspected criminal offence is likely to be referred to the police.

There may be exceptional circumstances in which the normal disciplinary sanctions would not be appropriate.

8. Searching pupils for drugs, alcohol and tobacco

Any member of school staff can, in appropriate circumstances, search pupils for any item with their consent.

Heads and authorised staff are entitled to carry out searches of pupils and their property (including bags, pockets, desks and lockers) **without consent**, where there are reasonable grounds for suspecting the pupil may have a **prohibited item**.

Prohibited items are:

- knives or weapons
- alcohol
- illegal drugs
- banned legal drugs including new psychoactive substances (NPS), volatile substances (those giving off a gas or vapour which can be inhaled), ketamine, khat and alkyl nitrites (known as poppers)
- stolen items
- tobacco and cigarette papers
- fireworks
- 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 to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil)

- any item banned by the school rules which has been identified in the rules as an item which may be searched for.

Prohibited items may be confiscated, disposed of, or handed to the police.

9. Drug testing

Random drugs testing (in accordance with the GDST Drug Testing Protocol for Pupils), may be put in place in exceptional circumstances.

10. Support for Pupils

Education and pastoral support is provided through Form Tutors, Heads of Year, School Nurse, School Counsellor and the wider pastoral team. Education is given during PSHE sessions, assemblies and as appropriate. Guest speakers are welcomed into school to deliver powerful key messages. Pupils are reminded of the support contact details listed in their planners for drugs, smoking and drinking related issues.

11. Support for parents

Research shows that parents/carers have a crucial role in preventing problem drug use. From time to time the school may arrange sessions in which information about illegal drugs and their use will be presented, as well as on tobacco and alcohol. Materials specifically for parents/carers are also available from the FRANK helpline (0300 123 6600) or website (www.talktofrank.com).

12. Linked Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with GDST and school policies relating to:

- Behaviour and discipline
- Safeguarding
- Exclusions
- Educational visits
- Administration of medicines
- GDST drug testing protocol for pupils.