

Peacehaven Community School

Drug and Substance Misuse Policy

Document Management

Date approved: October 2024

Next review date: October 2025

Approved by: Headteacher and Chair of Governors

Context and rationale:

This policy is under continuous review by the Strategic Leadership Team and the Governors' because of the changing drugs scene both nationally and locally. The philosophy of the school is to provide a supportive and nurturing environment in which all pupils are supported to develop their learning and personal skills. We aim to prepare them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences they may encounter in their future lives such that they make informed and positive choices that will keep them safe and physically emotionally well.

Rationale

It is our aim to help all pupils to be able to take their place safely in a world where a wide range of drugs exists. We recognise that some drugs have beneficial medicinal effects, but also that every drug has potential harm. For this reason, all drugs need appropriate and responsible care and management. In order to be able to make informed choices, staff and pupils need to understand the nature of drugs, their social and legal status, their uses and effects.

Definition of a drug

A drug is a substance that affects the way in which the body functions physically, emotionally or mentally.

The words “drugs” and “substances” are used interchangeably and encompass:

- Legally available drugs such as alcohol, tobacco, caffeine and solvents, including legal highs
- Over-the-counter and prescribed medicines such as tranquillisers and pain killers
- Illegal drugs such as cannabis, ecstasy and heroin

This policy is concerned with the use of illegal drugs and the misuse of legal drugs and applies during the normal school day , travel to and from school, any school trip (residential or day) and any situation where the school’s reputation or the welfare of any pupils is compromised.

Aims of the policy:

- To support the school's endeavour to maintain the safety and well-being of all pupils and staff
- To clarify legal responsibilities, entitlement and obligations
- To support all the members of the school community by providing clear guidance and procedures on drug related issues to ensure clarity and consistency

In addition, we have a whole school approach to drug education through the PSHE curriculum and pastoral activities.

Drugs on school premises

The legal definition of premises of a school includes everything within the property boundaries or any venue managed by the school at the time e.g. premises of a school trip or visit.

- Medicines

The school has a policy for the administration of medicines that must be followed for everyone's safety.

- Alcohol

No alcohol will be consumed during the course of a normal school day. Pupils and visitors under the effects of alcohol will be asked to leave the premises. Parents or carers will be asked to collect their children

- Smoking

The school is a no smoking site at all times. Pupils are not permitted to bring to school smoking materials, including matches and lighters. In the interests of health and safety, should a pupil be found in possession of any of these on school premises, they will be confiscated and parents/ carers informed

- Illegal drugs

No illegal drugs are allowed to be brought on to, or used on school premises

- Solvents

The school will ensure that potentially hazardous substances are stored safely and pupils will be supervised if it is necessary that they come into contact with them in the course of their work. Pupils are not permitted to be in possession of sniffable products

Responses to drug related incidents

A drug incident may be any of the following:

- Finding drugs, or related paraphernalia, on school premises
- Possession of drugs by an individual on school premises
- Use of drugs by an individual on school premises
- Intoxication of an individual as a result of drug use
- Supply of drugs on school premises - Individuals disclosing information about their drug use
- Rumours of parents, staff or pupils using drugs
- Reports of parents, staff or pupils using drugs

The school is aware of its legal responsibilities in regard to drug related incidents and in responding to incidents, seeks to work in line with local and national guidance. A member of the SLT will be responsible for co-ordinating the management of drug-related incidents, offering sources of support and liaising with outside agencies.

Designated Staff

In the first instance, all incidents should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Mathieu Verniol (Assistant Headteacher). In their absence incidents should be reported to another member of the leadership team. Students with any concerns relating to drugs should speak to their tutor or Head of Year or any other trusted adult. It is the responsibility of all staff employed at Peacehaven Community School to inform the designated Assistant Head teachers of any drug related incident in school or in the near vicinity of school who will coordinate action.

Incidents will be dealt with after making an assessment of the situation and will be reported to the Head teacher. All incidents and responses will be recorded. Appropriate support will be offered to those with substance related problems. Talking with an individual about a drug related incident will have as its purpose to confirm or reject suspicions or allegations, rather than conduct a wider investigation.

Any instances of unauthorised possession, misuse or supply of illegal drugs, alcohol, tobacco or other substances on school premises will be regarded with the utmost seriousness and any members of the school community involved in a drug-related incident would be dealt with by using appropriate sanctions. The normal response to the supply of illegal drugs is permanent exclusion. In exceptional circumstances a pupil may not be permanently excluded as permanently excluded pupils become significantly more vulnerable to drugs than those within formal schooling.

There are many factors to consider which may be of equal or greater importance when making a decision on the course of action to be taken. The diagram below shows the extremes of ten areas of possible concern. Each factor should be considered carefully, in order to build up a whole picture. Other factors may also come into account, such as the character of the pupil involved. When all of the circumstances and factors have been thoroughly explored, possible responses can be considered and discussed.

Assessing individual cases – factors that may influence the school’s response

Rumour/suspicion	Definite evidence
Not intoxicated	Intoxicated
Pleasure seeking	In personal turmoil
In no immediate danger	Medical emergency
Careful low-risk use	Reckless as to safety
Ignorant of rules	Understood rules
Uncontrolled drug	Class A illegal drug
Possession of small quantity	Persistent supply
Admission	Denial
First offence	Persistent offender

All information will be recorded in the student’s file.

Individuals in possession of drugs/ suspected of being in possession of drugs

If a student or adult on school premises is found in possession of an unauthorised drug the police will, in general, be called into PCS when a drug related incident occurs. In most cases the school will attempt to use the school’s Police Liaison Officer rather than the police in general. • Only the Head teacher or Deputy Head teachers may take the decision to call in the police. See “Sussex Protocol for Suspected Illegal Drugs found by Schools”.

If the police are called into interview students then the school will do all in its power to inform parents/ carers prior to the interview taking place. A parent/ carer or responsible adult must be present with the police at the interview. Parents/ carers have the right to refuse to allow their child to be interviewed.

The unauthorised drug will be confiscated, if possible. Illegal substances will be legally destroyed or handed to the police as soon as possible and not stored. Removed substances will be bagged, labelled, dated and held securely. Any transfer should be witnessed by another adult. Parents/carers will normally be informed (for a student) and other professionals such as Children’s Services will be informed or consulted as appropriate. All information concerning the above will be recorded.

Removal and security of a suspected unauthorised substance

PCS has followed guidance from 'Searching, screening and confiscation Advice for schools' July 2022

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/62d1643e8fa8f50bfbefa55c/Searching__Screening_and_Confiscation_guidance_July_2022.pdf

Searching

School staff can search a student for any item if the student agrees. PCS searches will be carried out by members of the Strategic Leadership Team Year Leaders or Heads of Year and parents/carers will always be informed when this has happened.

Where there is reasonable suspicion that a student or students are in possession of an unauthorised substance they will be asked to turn out their pockets and bags and to enable a search of their locker.

It is a condition of having a locker or desk that the pupil consents to have these searched for any item whether or not the pupil is present.

If a member of staff instructs a student to enable a search and the student refuses an appropriate consequence will be put in place

Lack of consent

The Headteacher and staff authorised by him, have a statutory power to search pupils or their possessions, without consent, where they have reasonable grounds for suspecting that the pupil may have a prohibited item in their possession. This power will only be used in exceptional circumstances where there are concerns about the safety of students or staff. In some circumstances a decision may be taken to ask the Community Police Officer to conduct the search.

In this case a member of staff of the same sex as the student will carry out the search and will be accompanied by another staff member

The search of a student by a staff member of the opposite sex without a second member of staff present, will only take place where we reasonably believe that there is a risk that serious harm will be caused to a person if we do not conduct the search immediately and where it is not reasonably practicable to summon another member of staff.

No search will require the student to remove any clothing other than outer clothing; 'outer clothing' means clothing that is not worn next to the skin or immediately over a garment that is being worn as underwear. 'Outer clothing' includes hats; shoes; boots; gloves and scarves.

Statutory requirements

Schools have **no legal obligation to report an incident involving drugs to the police**. Nevertheless, not informing the police may prove to be counter-productive for the school and wider community. **The police should, however, be involved in the disposal of suspected drugs.**

The law does not require a school to divulge to the police the name of the pupil from whom the drugs were taken. Where a pupil is identified the police will be required to follow set internal procedures

The law permits school staff to take temporary possession of a substance suspected of being an illegal drug for the purposes of preventing an offence from being committed or continued in relation to that drug providing that all reasonable steps are taken to destroy the drug or deliver it to a person lawfully entitled to take custody of it.

Handling the media

The school is fully prepared to co-operate with the media as long as it is in the school's and pupil's best interests. All contact with the media should be through the head teacher, or deputy head teacher in their absence. When dealing directly with the media the guidelines in Appendix VIII should be considered. In case of a disaster, reference should be made to the Critical Incidents Policy located in the office and the action plan should be followed.

3. Evaluation

Recording, monitoring and reviewing

The success of this drugs policy relies upon the careful recording of drug related incidents and the actions taken. These incidents can then be monitored and the effectiveness of the policy with regard to individual incidents can then be reviewed.

All incidents should be referred to the Assistant Heads and a report form should be completed for each incident. These reports will be kept in a central location. See Appendix IX; "Recording drug related incidents." Criteria by which the effectiveness of the policy will be assessed include the level of knowledge of the pupils, the number of repeated offences following different kinds of support and sanctions and the number of fixed term and permanent exclusions.