

Aylesford School

and Sixth Form College



wonder aspiration respect discipline

SUBSTANCE ABUSE POLICY

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Via: Personnel and Curriculum

'from potential to reality'

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Introduction and Relationship to other School Policies

Drugs can be defined as substances that alter the way somebody feels or behaves. The use of such substances for their physical and/or psychological effects is not new and all cultures have accepted certain substances for their pleasurable effects. Alcohol and tobacco have been used in many cultures for thousands of years. Drugs that are now illegal have often been legal in the past. Drug taking has increased amongst young people with greater use of both legal and illegal drugs. Against this background a school must offer drug education that gives accurate information to enable students to make informed choices.

Definition

At Aylesford School we use the term “drugs” to include: nicotine, legal substances (e.g. medicines), illegal substances, volatile substances and alcohol.

- 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 and vapour which can be inhaled), ketamine, khat and alkyl nitrites (known as poppers) and legal Highs
- All over the counter and prescription medicines

The School’s stance towards drugs, health and needs of students

At Aylesford School we believe in the need to contribute to the safety of our students and to prepare them for life. It is recognised that drug taking affects all areas of society.

Aylesford School has a clear position against illegal drug use or the abuse of legal or other unauthorised substances. The school will not condone or allow drug use anywhere on the premises. Sanctions will be taken against anyone bringing illegal drugs onto the school site. However, it is important to recognise that some young people will experiment with and use illegal drugs. The school must acknowledge the importance of its pastoral role and offer support for our students.

We believe that healthy students who can manage their lives positively are better able to learn and achieve.

We aim to inform students about the risks and consequences of drug misuse in a realistic and practical way that has their well-being and safety as the central focus. Students need to be informed about drugs, to have thought carefully about them and to be encouraged to make sensible, informed and healthy decisions about their own and other people’s drug use. Young people, and those responsible for them, need to be prepared both to resist drugs and, as necessary, to handle drug-related problems. Information, skills and support need to be provided in ways which are sensitive to age and circumstances, and in particular, efforts need to be made to reach and help those groups at high risk of developing very serious problems. We can only achieve this if governors, staff and parents are well informed and work together.

The Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of our school substance abuse policy is to:-

- Clarify the legal requirements and responsibilities of the school
- Reinforce and safeguard the health and safety of students and others who use the school
- Clarify the school’s approach to drugs for all staff, students, governors, parents/carers, external agencies and the wider community
- Give guidance on developing, implementing and monitoring the drug education programme
- Enable staff to manage any substance related incidents that occur, with confidence and consistency, and in the best interests of those involved
- Ensure that the response to incidents involving substance abuse complements the overall approach to drug education and the values and ethos of the school

- Provide a basis for evaluating the effectiveness of the school drug education programme and the management of incidents involving illegal and other unauthorised drugs
- Reinforce the role of the school in contributing to local and national strategies

Where and to whom the Policy applies

- All staff, governors, volunteer adults, parents/carers working with the school.
- All students educated full or part-time, at school or at college/work based learning/or work experience places.
- During normal school hours or extended school hours if on a school visit/journey accompanied by staff/carers/governors.
- On residential trips.
- Journeying to and from school.

Vulnerable Students

The school is aware that some students are more vulnerable to drug misuse and other social problems. The table below illustrates the range of risk and protective factors associated with drug misuse.

Vulnerable Groups	Risk Factors	Protective Factors
Homeless	Chaotic home environment	Strong family bonds
Looked after children	Parents who misuse drugs or suffer from mental illness	Experience of strong parental monitoring with clear family rules
School truants	Behaviour disorders	Family involvement in the lives of children
Students excluded from school	Lack of parental nurturing	Successful school experiences
Sexually abused	Inappropriate and/or aggressive classroom behaviour	Strong bonds with local community activities
In contact with mental health and criminal justice system	School failure Poor coping skills	A caring relationship with at least one adult
Children of parents with drug problems	Low commitment to school Friendship with deviant peers Low social-economic status Early age of first drug use Being labelled as a drug misuser	

The school will help to reduce the impact of risk factors and strengthen protective factors by promoting:-

- Positive social behaviours and activities
- Supportive and safe relationships
- Regular school attendance
- The ability to cope well with academic and social demands at school
- Strong and supportive social networks

- Realistic self-awareness and self esteem
- A good knowledge of general health and how to ensure good mental health
- A good knowledge of how to access help and information
- Work with parents/carers, particularly around communication and setting boundaries
- Participation in extra-curricular activities
- Counselling, mentoring and other support mechanisms

Staff with key responsibility for substance abuse issues

- Any incidents involving drugs will be referred to a member of SLT.
- The SLT member will make a full and careful assessment of all circumstances, consulting where appropriate, before action.
- Headteacher will take appropriate action and inform outside appropriate staff and agencies/parents/police as appropriate.

Staff Training and Development

- Induction of new staff covers management of drug incidents in school and location/reference to Substance Abuse Policy.
- Periodic whole school staff training for teachers and support staff to refresh and update knowledge and management of incidents.
- First Aid training will cover recognition of possible symptoms of substance abuse and comply with all relevant legislation.
- We will contribute to the initial teacher training in this area with our annual PGCE students from University of Warwick.

Drug Education

a) Key Learning Objectives

- To promote healthy lifestyles and positive activities not involving drugs and other substance misuse.
- To promote students' self-esteem and confidence.
- To give accurate, up-to-date information about drugs.
- To challenge attitudes which students may have concerning drug use and misuse.
- To persuade those who are experimenting with or misusing drugs to stop and seek help if appropriate.
- To provide opportunities for students to be equipped with the skills they need to resist pressure to misuse drugs.
- To help make the misuse of drugs less culturally acceptable.
- To enable any students who are misusing drugs or who have concerns about the misuse of drugs to identify sources of appropriate personal support.

b) Assessment, Monitoring, Evaluation and Reviewing

- Assessment of students takes place using the PSHE + C objectives. The programme is assessed using student written feedback at the end of each module.
- Lesson observations with written feedback to staff form part of the annual monitoring cycle, if PSHE+C is their main subject.
- The schemes of work are evaluated, reviewed and re-written using both of the above and using national/local emerging priorities and current affairs.

Management of Drugs at School

Legal Responsibilities of the School

The Headteacher's responsibilities in this respect lie essentially within two main areas.

- (i) the paramount duty of care for the education, safety and well-being of students entrusted to the school;
- (ii) the observance of and compliance with, laws relating to controlled substances, viz drugs, alcohol etc.

The Headteacher, being 'in loco parentis', has an established legal duty to act as a prudent and careful parent at all times when entrusted with responsibility for students.

Responding to incidents

Where incidents of abuse occur, or there is reasonable suspicion of such incidents, the school must act promptly since not doing so could result in serious breach of duty of care. It is essential that parents should always be informed as soon as possible if the school has evidence of their child's involvement in or with alcohol, drugs or solvent abuse. To withhold information from the parent or guardian regarding a student's behaviour which might lead to his/her serious physical or mental damage, or even death, would be a grave dereliction of a professional duty of care whilst in 'loco parentis'. However, any information concerning individual students in relation to abuse must be treated with the utmost confidentiality and not disclosed to anyone except the appropriate staff, without the parent's consent. Students should be made aware of the boundaries of confidentiality before they begin to disclose. Local child protection procedures will be followed if a student's safety is considered under threat (managed under Child Protection Policy).

Dealing with individual users in school

When dealing with individual cases of drug or solvent abuse the school has three responsibilities:

- (i) the welfare of the student is paramount
- (ii) legal requirements must be fulfilled
- (iii) records and correspondence relating to the case should be confidential.

Schools' general power to discipline, as set out in Section 91 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, enables a member of staff to confiscate, retain or dispose of a student's property as a disciplinary penalty, where reasonable to do so. Where the person finds other substances which are not believed to be controlled drugs these can be confiscated where a teacher believes them to be harmful or detrimental to good order and discipline. This would include novel psychoactive substances or 'legal highs.' If school staff are unable to identify the legal status of a drug, it should be treated as a controlled drug.

Schools are not required to inform parents before a search takes place or to seek their consent to search their child.