



ST GEORGE'S ACADEMY

DRUGS POLICY

1. Introduction

All young people, are likely to be exposed to the effects and influences of drugs in the wider community and be increasingly exposed to opportunities to try both legal and illegal drugs. We as an Academy have a responsibility which was made statutory within the Children's Act 2004 and Education and Inspections Act 2006. It is underpinned by the latest guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) and the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) which frames drugs misuse in safeguarding terms and stipulates that permanent exclusion should not be the automatic response to incidents. It guides schools in ensuring that the response to drugs misuse is robust, rational and safe.

Substance misuse affects all communities - crossing gender, cultural and social boundaries. No school, parent or carer can afford to be complacent or think that children and young people are not at risk. We have a key role to play in ensuring that young people understand the risks involved and have the confidence, knowledge and skills to avoid them.

We have a major contribution to make in reducing and/or preventing drug misuse by:

- Creating protective environments which discourage drug or substance misuse,
- Imparting knowledge and skills and supporting young people to make healthier choices
- Promoting positive behaviours and reducing risk taking behaviour
- Providing direct support and/or signposting children and young people to appropriate services whenever concerns around misuse arise.

We alone cannot solve the problem of drug misuse in society, but the implementation of an effective programme of drug education in St George's Academy is an essential step in keeping our young people safe. Furthermore, regular school attendance and engagement with learning is a key protective factor for young people. Establishing strong positive relationships with family members, teachers or other socially responsible adults provides a sense of connectedness. This is important to us and is explained through this policy.

2. Policy Statement

This policy outlines the manner in which instances of drug misuse on Academy premises or whilst on Academy trips/visits will be managed. It relates to Section 91 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006; DfE and ACPO drug advice for schools 2012; DfE Searching, Screening and Confiscation: Advice for Schools 2018; The Misuse of Drugs Act 1971; and Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Partnership's Model Drugs Policy.

This policy does not focus on drug education. It covers broader behaviour and pastoral support, as well as managing drugs and drug related incidents within the Academy. Drug education can be seen in our Life Skills Policy.

3. Roles, Responsibility and Implementation

Leaders and Managers including the Designated Safeguard Lead, PSHE leads, any external agencies involved and link Governor have a specific responsibility to ensure the fair application of this policy and all employees are responsible for supporting colleagues and ensuring its success.



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4. Aims of the Policy

We take a positive and proactive approach to the issue of drugs and this policy aims to:

- Give a clear view on the use of drugs in school and the responsibilities of the school and legal requirements
- Provide information so that everyone is clear about the school's overall approach to drugs and its procedures should an incident occur
- Give information about drugs education
- Give guidance to teachers, support staff and visitors about drugs education

This enables us to:

- Protect the health and welfare of students
- Clarify legal responsibilities and promote understanding of the relevant powers and duties in relation to searching for and confiscating drugs
- Support all members of the Academy by providing clear guidance and procedures on drug related incidents to ensure clarity and consistency

5. Definition of Drugs

The definition of drugs used in this policy is the definition given by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime - 'a substance people take to change the way they feel, think or behave.' This refers to all drugs:

- Illegal Psychoactive Substances/new psychoactive substances (Psychoactive Substances Act, 2016)
- Legal drugs, alcohol, tobacco, e-cigarettes / vapes, volatile substances (solvents) poppers,
- Misuse of over the counter and prescription medicines
- Illegal drugs (those controlled by the Misuse of Drugs Act, 1971) including ecstasy, cannabis, crack/cocaine, heroin and LSD, khat
- Other drugs such as anabolic steroids

Throughout this policy, the term 'drugs' is used to refer to all of the above.

Definition of other key words:

- 'Drug use' describes any drug taking. Any drug use can potentially lead to harm, including through intoxication, breach of the law or school rules, or future health problems
- 'Drug misuse' is drug taking which leads to social, psychological, physical or legal problems through intoxication, regular excessive consumptions and/or dependence

6. Legislation

Under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, it is generally illegal to possess or supply a drug covered by the Act, unless authorised (e.g. possessing drugs prescribed for personal medical use). Solvents are dangerous substances as well. Under the Intoxicating Substances (Supply) Act 1965, it is illegal for anyone to supply or offer to supply a substance if they know or believe that the substance being supplied will be inhaled by a person under 18 for the purpose of intoxication.



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7. Drugs misuse outside of the Academy premises

Where it has been brought to the attention of the Principal that a student has been formally cautioned by the police for the possession of an illegal drug, the Academy reserves the right to exclude a student.

8. Searching and confiscation

In line with the DfE guidance (Screening, Searching and Confiscation, DfE, 2018) the Principal and authorised staff can search students with their consent for any item. The Academy is not required to have formal written consent from the student for this sort of search - it is enough for the teacher to ask the student to turn out his or her pockets or if the teacher can look in the student's bag or locker and for the student to agree. Searching, screening and confiscation also permits the Principal and authorised staff to search students without consent for illegal drugs.

Academies' 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 students' property as a disciplinary penalty, where reasonable to do so.

Academies may search students and there is no legal requirement to inform parents/carers or keep records. However, the Academy requires any member of staff undertaking searches to keep records and inform parents/carers. This is particularly important so that the Academy is in a secure position in responding to complaints, if necessary.

9. Procedures when a student is found to be in possession of a drug (see Appendix A)

If any student is found in possession of a suspicious substance, it will be taken from them. The substance will then be taken immediately to the member of the Senior Leadership Team in the Academy responsible for student welfare. The Principal and Parents/Carers will also be informed.

If a student is suspected of being under the influence of drugs or alcohol on Academy premises, the school must prioritise the safety of the young person and those around them. If necessary, it should be dealt with as a medical emergency, administering First Aid and summoning appropriate support, and Parents/Carers will be informed. Depending on the circumstances, the police may need to be contacted. If the student is felt to be at risk the Academy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) should be contacted immediately.

When appropriate, the student will be interviewed by the Senior Leader. The police may be consulted concerning the nature of the substance. Where substances which are not believed to be controlled drugs are found these can be confiscated if a teacher believes them to be harmful or detrimental to good order and discipline. This would include 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. If it is a controlled drug, the student will be isolated immediately and their parents/carers informed. If necessary, the Senior Leader will contact the police. The drug may be handed over to the police who may prosecute the student.

- All situations will be carefully considered before deciding a response
- Permanent exclusion will not be the automatic response and will only be considered in the most serious cases
- The school will offer a referral to the We are With You organisation, Child and Family Early Help assessment or MACE referral



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- Advice will be sought from the pupil reintegration team
- The health and safety needs of the pupil will always come first, whilst also taking account of the health and safety needs of the school as a whole
- Parents/carers will be involved at an early stage and throughout any investigation (unless this would not be in the pupil's best interest)
- The Principal in consultation with DSL will decide whether a disciplinary and/or counselling response should follow
- Incidents will be reported to the Chair of Governors

A review of an incident involving Drugs to assist schools will be carried out in assessing the appropriate, proportionate response to any incident involving drugs. An assessment tool will be used by the LA (PRT) to review the situation with the Academy. Where it is not evidenced that allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education and welfare of others, the LA will offer advice, support and guidance to schools to enable them to successfully maintain the pupil in their school. A managed move will not be supported since this would meet the Ofsted definition of off-rolling, as well as being outside the spirit of this guidance, which seeks to put the child first.

Discrimination and Protected Characteristics

When considering the response to an incident, the Principal must consider whether:

- The pupil has needs which impact on their understanding or behaviour e.g. ADHD, ASD
- The pupil has or may have anxiety or mental health needs which are impacting on their behaviour

The Principal must ensure that the school's policy and their decision does not discriminate and that due consideration has been given to the pupil's protected characteristics, situation and circumstances.

10. Controlled drugs

In taking temporary possession and disposing of suspected or known controlled drugs, schools are advised to:

- Ensure that a second adult witness is present throughout
- Seal the sample in a plastic bag and include details of the date and time of the seizure/find and witness present
- Store it in a secure location, such as a safe or other lockable container with access limited to senior members of staff
- Notify the police without delay, note down who will collect it and then store or dispose of it in line with locally agreed protocols. The law does not require a school to divulge to the police the name of the student from whom the drugs were taken but it is advisable to do so
- Record full details of the incident, including the police incident reference number
- Inform parents/carers, unless this has been agreed with the Principal that this is not in the best interests of the student
- Identify any safeguarding concerns and develop a support and disciplinary response

11. Drug Testing

Where there is concern about a student regarding the misuse of drugs, it is possible, with the consent of the relevant student and parents/carers, for drug testing to take place. Our medical team are able to carry out drug tests in our medical room. This decision can only be taken by the Principal.



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12. Discipline

Being under the Academy authority means:

- Throughout the Academy day, whether on or off the premises
- Whenever the student is involved in any activity organised by the Academy
- Whenever the student is identifiable as a member of the Academy

Any student involved in any way with drugs when they are under the Academies' authority could expect to be excluded from the Academy. Each case will be looked at individually and any specific circumstances taken into account.

Suspension should not be the automatic response to a drug incident and permanent exclusion should only be used in serious cases. (More detail on excluding students can be found in the DfE Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England 2017. In line with the approach taken by Lincolnshire Local Authority, a restorative approach may be endorsed.)

Drug use can be a symptom of other problems and St George's should be ready to involve or refer students to other services when needed. It is important that we are aware of the relevant youth and family support services available in their local area.

We are sensitive to the needs of pupils whose parent/carers or family members have problems with drugs. Where problems are observed or suspected or a pupil discloses problems, we will assess the pupil's welfare and support needs and offer a Child and Family Early Help assessment. School will also involve external support for the child if needed.

13. Managing Medicines

Some students may require medicines that have been prescribed for their medical condition during the school day. For more information and procedures, please refer to the Medical Policy.

14. Staff Support and Training

The safeguarding team will receive training on drugs and responding to issues of misuse as part of their CPD training pathway. Pastoral staff may undertake training as and when necessary.

15. Educational Programme

The Academy has a pro-active approach concerning the use of drugs and substances including alcohol, tobacco and vapes. This is expressed in assemblies, tutor periods, science lessons, RE classes and the Life Skills Programme. The LCC Stay Safe Partnership (specialist external speakers) also deliver Drugs education to Year 7 and 9 students each academic year. Drug education curriculum is part of a well-planned programme of PSHE education delivered in a supportive environment, where students are aware of the school rules, feel able to engage in open discussion and feel confident about asking for help if necessary.

In science lessons, St George's follow the National Curriculum Science programme of study concerning drug education.



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Any educational programme will be designed to strengthen the students' ability to assess and manage risk appropriately and to keep themselves safe.

We work closely with external organisations such as Lincolnshire's Horizon organisation and Young Oasis. 14.4 We have invited external organisations into the Academy to deliver whole school assemblies on illegal drugs and explained about the legalities of carrying drugs and the role of 'drugs dogs'.

16.Governors

Through local governing body meetings and Link meetings governors will have access to appropriate training. They will be informed by a Senior Leader if there are any drugs issues which might affect the school.

The governor linked to safeguarding will be the lead governor on drugs issues.

17.Child Criminal Exploitation/County Lines

When speaking with pupils and responding to any incidents involving drugs, staff will be vigilant to the pupil's vulnerability to criminal exploitation and particularly County Lines. Any concerns about a young person such as erratic school attendance and/or changes in their attitude and engagement with learning; unexplained or disproportionate access to money/expensive items; pupil being reported as missing; or where staff become aware that a pupil has several mobile phones could indicate the pupil is a victim of exploitation and must be shared with the DSL.

Referrals will be made to appropriate agencies for support including We Are With You and MACE (Multi-Agency Child Exploitation Screening).

The governing body of St George's Academy recognises that pupils who are not accessing school due to low levels of attendance or exclusion are at greater risk of all forms of exploitation. Any attendance issues will be addressed in line with the school's/academy's attendance policy. Furthermore, any fixed-term exclusion will be for the shortest time necessary and in line with the published behaviour policy.

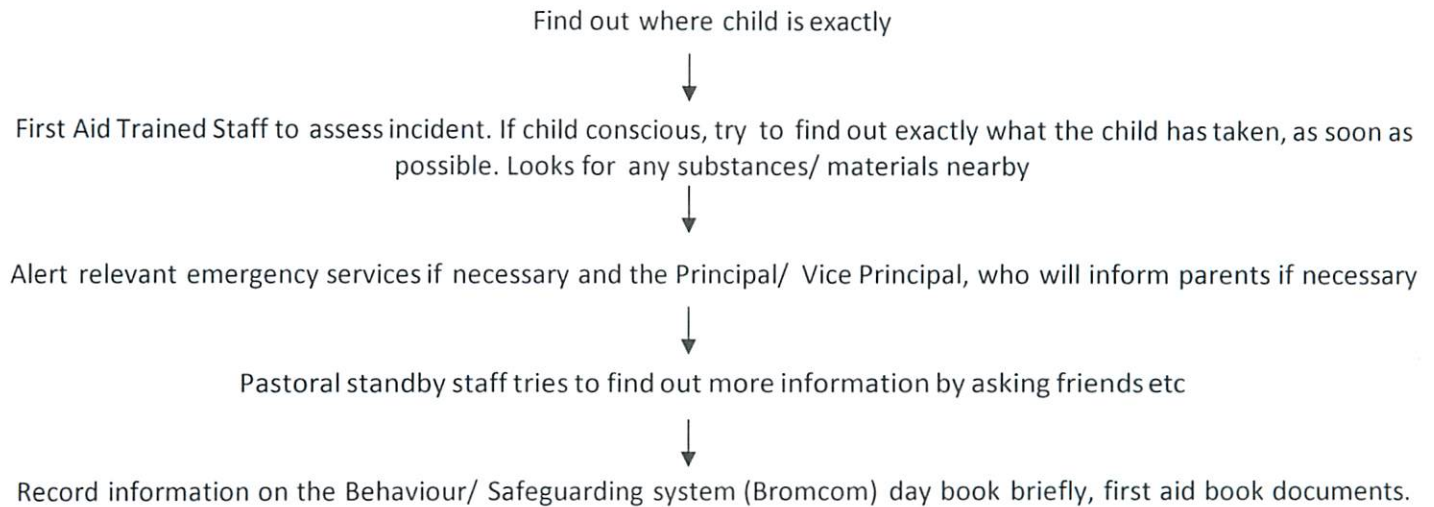


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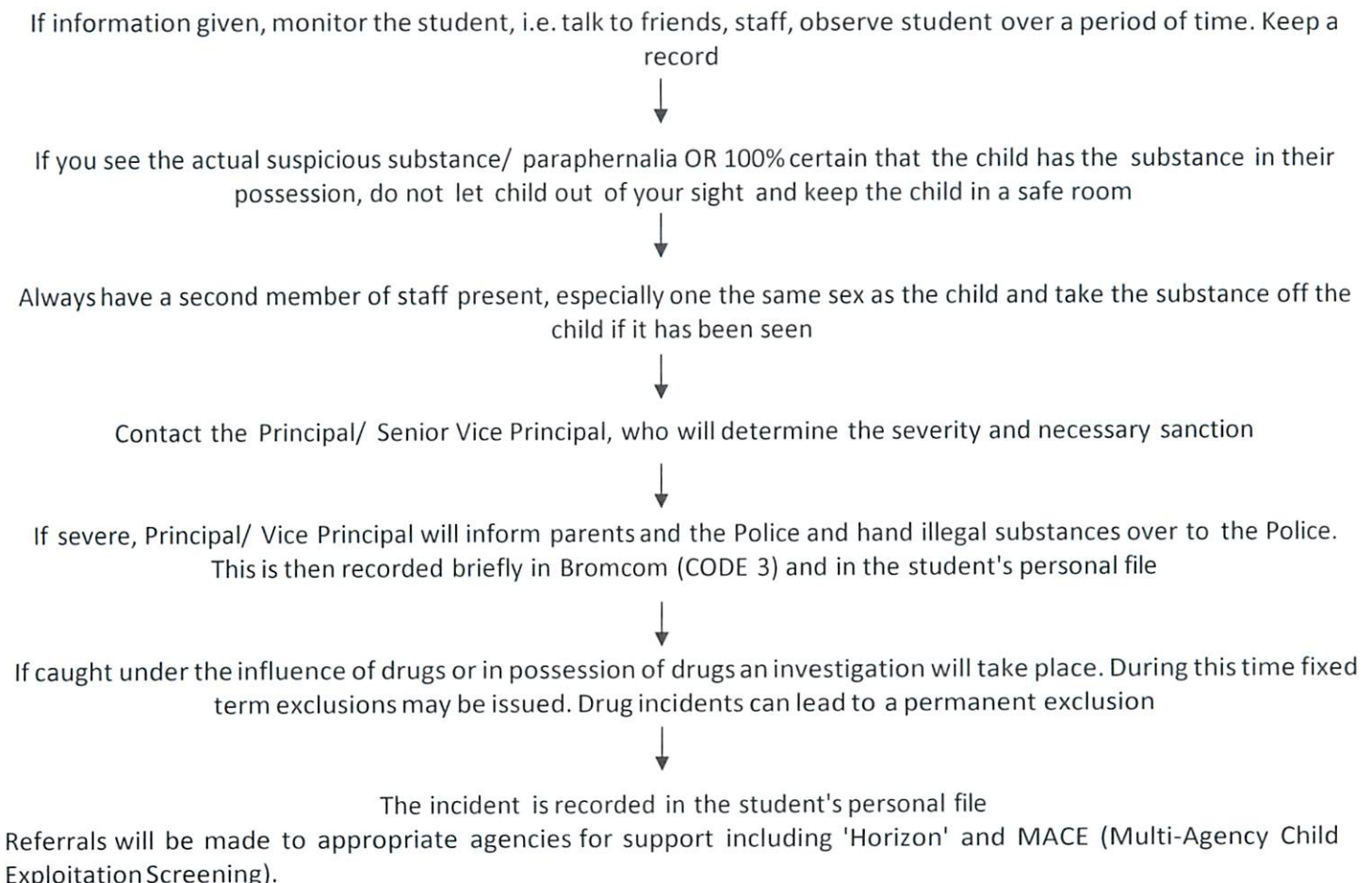
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Appendix A - Plans of Action Following Different Situations

Situation A- Emergency/Child unwell



Situation B- Dealing with suspicion or rumour of possession





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Policy Developed by: Jeanette Steward, Senior Vice Principal

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To be reviewed by: *January 2027*

Name *S. Harvey* Signature *S. Harvey*

Committee: *Student Support*