

St. Mary's College



Alcohol & Drugs Policy

2022/2023

ST MARY'S COLLEGE

ALCOHOL & DRUGS POLICY

Principles

Pupils are entitled to a College environment free of pressure to take drugs or alcohol. The pressures and influences are all around us. The College itself must be a drug/ alcohol free zone. Parents are entitled to assume that the College will not be an arena for offering or pushing drugs or alcohol. For children, drugs and alcohol can impact on their education, their relationships with family and friends and prevent them from reaching their full potential.

The College's aims are to:

- educate pupils on the dangers of the illicit use of drugs;
- develop refusal skills and independence of character to say "no";
- make the College Community a "no go" area in relation to illegal drugs;
- reflect the College's commitment to responsible citizenship and health.

This policy aims to provide a framework to realise the College's aims. This policy applies at all times when pupils are on College premises or off College premises while on College activities, such as College trips, on work experience, on the way to or from College or on any occasion outside College life where the good name of the College is damaged. This policy is written in accordance with DfE Guidance 'DfES Guidance 0092/2004' (superseded but contains useful/helpful advice) 'DfE and ACPO drug advice for schools' (2012) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/searching-screening-andconfiscation> (DfE, updated September 2018) 'Behaviour and discipline in Schools - A guide for head teachers and school staff' (DfE, updated January 2016)

Definition

Save where expressly stated, the use of the word "drugs" in this policy includes both drugs that are illegal under legislation and legal drugs such as alcohol, tobacco (including vaping materials), volatile substances, psychoactive substances whether covered by the Psychoactive Substances Act 2016 or not) and medicines.

College's Approach

The use or supply of drugs, as defined above, is strictly prohibited, save where express permission is granted, for example, parental consent for the limited consumption of alcohol on College Sixth Form trips or the administration of medicines in accordance with the medicine policy.

At all times the first concern for the College in managing drugs is the health and safety of the College Community and meeting the pastoral needs of pupils.

Roles and Responsibilities

(a) Governing Body

Governors have a key role in the development of the College's policy on drugs. As a matter of law, they are responsible for the safety of pupils while on College premises or engaged on College activities.

Such responsibilities have been delegated to the Principal.

Nevertheless, the Governing Body will wish to be confident that:

- the Head of Pastoral has the appropriate time and expertise to fulfil the responsibilities expected of her/him;
- guidance is available to inform the College's policy, practices and procedures relating to drugs and education and the management of drugs.
- both drugs education and the management of drugs in the College community is well planned in advance and undertaken in a professional manner.

(b) Role of Principal/Vice Principal

While the Principal has an important role in being the focal point of the College, some of his/her responsibilities have been delegated to the Head of Pastoral who oversees the person i/c PSHE Personal, Social, Health & Economic education

The Principal will insist:

- the Governing Body is kept aware of the provision of drugs education and the management of drugs in the School Community;
- the Head of Pastoral and Head of PSHE are suitably trained and competent to discharge his/her responsibilities;
- the Head of PSHE discharges his/her responsibility, particularly dealing with the provision of drugs education both to provide the

education and to raise awareness of the issue of drugs within the School Community.

(c) Role of Head of PSHE in relation to drugs

He/she is responsible for:

- developing drugs education as part of a cohesive and progressive programme within the curriculum;
- ensuring that drugs education is taught by teachers with the necessary subject knowledge;
- ensuring such teachers receive sufficient training to develop skills, knowledge and confidence, in providing drug education; see above
- ensuring all staff are aware of the procedures for managing incidents, including who they should inform and who has authority regarding issues such as searches and police involvement.
- assessing the elements of drug education in the curriculum to include assessment of the learning by pupils and feedback from pupils about what they have learned;
- monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the provision of drugs education;
- ensuring that pupils and parents are aware of the College's strict approach and its rationale for drug education.
- ensuring this policy is reviewed at least annually and after any drugs incident, and if necessary, updated.

(d) Role of Staff

Staff are required to:

- be vigilant at all times about the possible use or supply of drugs in the School community or in accordance with this policy;
- report any suspicions about drug use or supply to the Principal or Deputy immediately;
- attend such training sessions on the provision of drugs education or the management of drugs in the College community as they are reasonably required to attend from time to time;
- support this policy and the approach taken by the College towards the provision of drugs education and management of drugs in the College community.
- Ensure they are aware of their responsibilities in relation to drinking and other drug use in school hours and on school trips.

Drugs Education

The Principal will ensure that teaching is provided by teachers who have the necessary subject knowledge and are able to employ appropriate teaching methods. This will inevitably require both in School and external training.

The Head of PSHE will be responsible for devising a programme of drugs education within the curriculum, this may be delegated. Issues to take into account when planning a programme include:

- pupils' existing knowledge and understanding;
- trends and local drug use;
- pupils' diversity;
- delivery to pupils with special educational needs;
- pupils who require regular medication;
- pupils who are vulnerable to drug misuse.
- curriculum organisation.

In discharging his/her responsibilities, the Head of PSHE will have regard to the guidance referred to above together with any learning materials issued by the DfE, QCA or other educational bodies. The Head of PSHE will endeavour to provide an interesting and varied teaching approach to the use of drugs, which may include pupil discussion, real life stories, drama, peer education or the use of external contributors.

Drugs education will primarily be provided through the PSHE programme, for example, drugs education and refusal skills currently form part of the College's programme of education in personal relationships.

The Principal will be responsible for the assessment, monitoring and evaluation and review of drug education provision. This may include the use of:

- pupil self-assessment, peer group assessment and teacher assessment;
- lesson observations, looking at a sample of pupils' work and/or including drug education as an agenda item in staff meetings;
- receiving completed questionnaires from pupils and teachers about particular aspects of the drug education programme, which they found useful and interesting.

The College recognises that parental input has a crucial role in preventing drug use through its Parents' Information Evenings or information booklets sent to them. The College will therefore ensure that parents are aware of the College's approach and rationale for drug education and are given information about their child's drug

education and school rules in relation to drugs. In this regard it is essential that all parents appreciate the seriousness of any drug incident.

Alcohol

Catholic teaching is that alcohol is not in itself an evil, only the abuse of it. Schools have a duty to discourage and deter unhealthy and immoderate patterns of drinking, while helping to educate pupils in the balanced, limited, social use of alcohol if and when appropriate.

Pupils are forbidden to bring alcohol onto College premises, to consume it on College premises, to take it with them and/or consume it on College outings, trips, fixtures etc. unless the group leader has been given express permission by the Principal to permit U6 students to drink in moderation under staff supervision. A breach of this rule may be treated as a major disciplinary offence, except where express permission has been given by the member of staff in charge. The following guidelines are provided for staff:

- (a) The College must never be in the position of tolerating or condoning the illegal purchase or consumption of alcohol. It is an offence for a person under the age of 18 to buy or attempt to buy alcohol in either on-or off- licensed premises, or to consume alcohol in a bar. Underage drinking is forbidden and will be treated as a serious breach of College discipline
- (b) Pupils aged 18 and over may, on trips or tours involving an overnight stay, be given permission to drink alcohol in moderation under staff supervision. No alcohol may be bought and/or consumed without the express permission of the member of staff in charge. The rule is moderation: drunkenness would be a serious breach of College discipline. On any day trip or outing (in effect, College time), drinking alcohol would be inappropriate and permission should not be given.
- (c) Legally, children over the age of 14 may be present in licensed bars during permitted hours, but it is illegal for them to purchase alcohol and for others to purchase it for them. To avoid the problems which would arise from the presence of younger pupils on licensed premises, it is a College rule that, while under the responsibility of the College, no pupil below Sixth Form may enter a public house or bar. Sixth Formers under the age of 18 may not purchase or consume alcohol, save for U6 students aged 17 who may be permitted to drink in moderation under staff supervision with parental permission.

Tobacco

St. Mary's College is a public place; smoking is therefore illegal for everyone, including staff and visitors (this includes vaping materials).

Pupils are forbidden from possessing or using tobacco (or vaping materials) on College premises or taking it with them on College outings. Any use of tobacco by Sixth Formers on School premises, on College outings or to or from School is strictly prohibited and is a serious disciplinary offence.

Older pupils are prohibited from purchasing tobacco for pupils under the age of 18 years old. This is both a criminal and disciplinary offence.

Part of the College's drugs education programme will include information about the dangers of tobacco. The College wishes to make significant progress towards smoke free status and will organise meetings for those pupils who wish for counselling or have expressed a desire to stop smoking.

Volatile Substances

The College takes great care in the use, security and management of solvents and hazardous chemicals. Such arrangements are set out in the College's Health and Safety Policy. The personal use or possession of solvents by pupils is strictly prohibited, apart from under the strict supervision of a teacher in the delivery of the curriculum.

Medicines

Some pupils may require medicines which have been prescribed for their medical condition during the College day. The administration of medicines will only take place in accordance with the practice outlined in the Pupils with medical Conditions Policy. At no time during the day should a pupil have control of medicines (including but not limited to non-prescribed medicines such as paracetamol and hay fever remedies) apart from where the College has agreed in advance following written advice from a medical practitioner.

Management of Illegal Drugs at School

It is the policy of the College that any pupil involved in the possession of illegal drugs or in drug transactions, whether on College premises, during organised College activities or on the way to or from College, is liable to permanent exclusion.

Involvement in drug related activities out of the College context may also have implications for the welfare of other pupils in the College, together with the good name, ethos and discipline of the College. The College has a duty to protect its pupils from such harmful influences. Thus, drug taking in the home environment may be construed as prejudicial to the interests of the College and the welfare of its pupils, and become grounds for permanent exclusion.

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Drug incidents may fit into the following categories:

- A pupil is found in possession of drugs or associated paraphernalia.
- A pupil is found to be supplying drugs on College premises.
- A pupil is thought to be under the influence of drugs.
- Knowledge or suspicion about drugs generally on College premises.

The management of drug related incidents will be as follows:

- (a) Any member of staff who becomes aware of drug misuse by pupils or has good reason to suspect it must inform the Principal or, in his/her absence, the Vice Principal, who will decide whether and how to investigate, and whom to involve.
- (b) All investigations must observe principles of natural justice. These are observed if the pupil is not pre-judged, if the procedures are fair and impartial, if there is proper care for the well-being of the pupil being questioned, and if the pupil and parents are given a proper opportunity to be heard
- (c) On reasonable suspicion that an offence has been or will be committed, searches of College property such as a pupil's desk or locker may be made. Searches must always be made in the presence of a second adult witness. Pupils may be asked to turn out their pockets or bags. The law allows for certain items to be searched for without consent in maintained schools. The College follows the principles of the relevant legislation and guidance (S550ZA of the Education Act 1996.) Guidance on searching for items can be found in DfE Guidance 'Screening, Searching and Confiscation; advice for head teachers, staff and governing bodies.
 - Items that can be searched for include alcohol, illegal drugs and Tobacco (including vaping materials). In addition, any item banned by the school rules which has been identified in the rules as an item which may be searched for can be searched for.
 - The Principal or any member of College staff authorised by the head teacher can undertake the search if they have reasonable grounds for suspecting that a pupil is in possession of a prohibited item.
 - The teacher must decide in each particular case what constitutes reasonable grounds for suspicion.

The circumstances in which a search can be undertaken are as follows: -

The teacher/ member of staff undertaking the search must be the same sex as the pupil being searched; and there must be a witness (also a staff member) and, if at all possible, they should be the same sex as the pupil being searched.

- There is a limited exception to this rule. A teacher/ member of staff can carry out a search of a pupil of the opposite sex and without a witness present, but only where they reasonably believe that there is a risk that serious harm will be caused to a person if they do not conduct the search immediately and where it is not reasonably practicable to summon another member of staff.
- A teacher/ member of staff is not required to inform parents before a search takes place or to seek their consent to search a child
- Searches without consent can only be carried out on the school premises or, if elsewhere, where the member of staff has lawful control or charge of the pupil, for example on school trips in England or in training settings.

Complaints about searching will be dealt with through the normal School complaints procedure

- (d) During questioning the Principal/Vice Principal or, if necessary, a second member of staff must be present and must keep a record. If a pupil shows signs of distress he/she should be offered the opportunity of speaking to parents on the telephone or to have them present. At the end of this session the pupil should be asked to initial the notes (with date and time) or to write out their own account.
- (e) Witnesses should be interviewed in such a way as to preserve confidentiality. They should be asked to make a written statement, with name, date, and time. Hearsay should be discounted.
- (f) Witnesses must not be promised confidentiality although confidentiality will be maintained if possible.
- (g) If it is concluded that a serious breach has occurred – one that is likely to lead to exclusion, the pupil should be segregated and, unless there are fears for the pupil's safety, the parents/guardian should be asked to attend without delay.

- (h) The Principal will inform the Chairman of Governors and will follow the procedure within the Pupil Disciplinary Policy.

The Principal may decide that exclusion is not an appropriate sanction. Other responses may include:

- referral to other agencies such as the Area Child Protection Committee or Connexions
- counselling
- suspension
- a pastoral support programme may be drawn up
- a behaviour contract may be agreed

The Principal may require that participation on one or more of the above is a prerequisite for continued attendance at the College.

- (i) Unless there are fears for the pupil's safety parents will be informed of what is alleged, the evidence, and the disciplinary decisions made (suspension pending further investigation, temporary exclusion, and permanent exclusion). They will also be informed of the College's appeal procedure.
- (j) The Principal or Deputy will ensure that a record of the incident is made in the drug incident log, and that all paperwork is stored safely. He/she will also evaluate the effectiveness of this procedure and whether any lessons can be learned from the incident.
- (k) The Principal must decide whether to inform the police. Any illegal substance now in the College's possession must be handed to the police. The Police will remove the substance and 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 pupil from whom the drugs were taken but it is advisable to do this.

The current School Liaison Officer will be contacted.

- (l) The College has a duty of continuing care for pupils who have been removed or excluded. This may include counselling and aid in restarting at another school.
- (m) The Principal will be responsible for ensuring that a report of the incident is sent to the Chair of Governors.