



ARTS EDUCATIONAL SCHOOLS
Drugs and Substance Misuse Policy (Pupils)

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Day School and Sixth Form

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DRUGS AND SUBSTANCE MISUSE POLICY²

1. Aims

1.1 ArtsEd is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare, health and wellbeing of all pupils. The school recognises that substance misuse presents both a health and wellbeing concern and, in some circumstances, a significant safeguarding risk.

1.2 This policy aims to:

- protect pupils from the risks associated with drugs, alcohol, tobacco, vaping products and other substances;
- maintain a safe, healthy and disciplined school environment;
- promote informed and responsible decision-making through education;
- ensure a clear, consistent and proportionate response to substance-related incidents;
- fulfil the school's safeguarding responsibilities and statutory duties.

1.3 For the purposes of this policy, the term "substances" includes illegal drugs, alcohol, tobacco products, vaping devices, nicotine products, prescription medication, over-the-counter medication, volatile substances and novel psychoactive substances

2. Legislative and Safeguarding Framework

2.1 This policy should be read alongside the school's Safeguarding Policy, Behaviour Policy, Searching, Screening and Confiscation Policy, First Aid Policy and Educational Visits Policy.

2.2 The school recognises that substance misuse may be linked to wider safeguarding concerns including:

- child criminal exploitation;
- county lines activity;
- gang affiliation;
- neglect;
- poor mental health;
- peer-on-peer abuse;
- exploitation through social media.

2.3 Any concerns relating to substance misuse will be considered within the context of the school's safeguarding responsibilities. The welfare of the child will always be the school's paramount consideration.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees is responsible for ensuring that appropriate policies, procedures and oversight arrangements are in place and that leaders fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities.

3.2 Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for implementing this policy, determining disciplinary outcomes and ensuring appropriate liaison with parents, external agencies and the police where necessary.

3.3 Designated Safeguarding Lead

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is responsible for overseeing all safeguarding aspects of substance-related concerns, maintaining accurate records, assessing risk and making referrals to external agencies where appropriate.

3.4 Staff

All members of staff must remain vigilant to indicators of substance misuse and report any concern immediately to the DSL or Headteacher.

4. Prevention and Education

4.1 ArtsEd adopts a preventative approach to substance misuse through a planned programme of PSHE education, science education, assemblies and pastoral provision.

4.2 Pupils are provided with age-appropriate information regarding:

- the physical, psychological and social effects of substance misuse;
- the legal consequences of drug possession and supply;
- the risks associated with alcohol, vaping and nicotine products;
- the links between substance misuse, exploitation and criminal behaviour;
- strategies for seeking support for themselves or others.

4.3 The school may engage external agencies and specialist organisations to support preventative education where appropriate.

5. Prohibited Substances

5.1 Pupils must not possess, use, consume, distribute, sell or supply prohibited substances.

5.2 This prohibition applies:

- on school premises;
- whilst travelling to and from school in uniform;
- during educational visits and residential visits;
- during performances, productions and school events;
- whenever representing the school.

5.3 The school also prohibits the possession or use of vaping devices, e-cigarettes, nicotine pouches and related paraphernalia by pupils.

6. Medication

6.1 Prescribed medication may only be brought into school and administered in accordance with the school's medical and first aid procedures.

6.2 Pupils must never share medication with another pupil.

6.3 The misuse of prescribed medication, including possession of medication prescribed to another person, will be treated as a serious breach of this policy and may constitute a safeguarding concern.

7. Managing Concerns and Incidents

7.1 Any substance-related concern must be reported immediately to the Headteacher and DSL.

7.2 Incidents may include:

- possession of substances;
- suspected use of substances;
- supply or suspected supply;
- disclosure by a pupil;
- concerns regarding substance misuse outside school;
- concerns regarding family substance misuse;
- pupils appearing under the influence of substances.

7.3 The school will investigate all incidents in a proportionate and sensitive manner, taking into account the age, needs and vulnerability of those involved.

7.4 In every case the school will consider:

- whether there is an immediate safeguarding risk;
- whether the pupil may be at risk of exploitation or coercion;
- whether specialist support is required;
- whether external agencies should be involved.

8. Safeguarding and County Lines

8.1 The school recognises that drug activity may be linked to child criminal exploitation and county lines operations.

8.2 A pupil involved in the possession, transportation or supply of drugs may be both a perpetrator and a victim of exploitation.

8.3 Staff should be particularly alert to indicators such as:

- unexplained money, gifts or expensive possessions;
- missing episodes or unexplained absences;
- significant changes in behaviour or friendship groups;
- repeated use of taxis or unexplained travel;
- association with older individuals or known risk groups;
- secrecy regarding activities outside school.

8.4 Where criminal exploitation is suspected, the DSL will consider referral to Children's Services, the police and other relevant safeguarding agencies.

9. Searching, Confiscation and Disposal

9.1 School staff may search pupils and their possessions in accordance with statutory guidance and school procedures. Any suspected illegal substance will be confiscated and secured immediately. Staff must not test, taste or attempt to identify unknown substances. The Headteacher or DSL will determine whether the police should be informed and will ensure a full written record is maintained.

10. Outcomes and Support

10.1 The school's response to substance-related incidents will balance safeguarding, education, support and discipline.

10.2 Responses may include:

- pastoral intervention;
- counselling or wellbeing support;
- referral to specialist services;
- safeguarding referral;
- behaviour sanctions;
- suspension;
- permanent exclusion in the most serious cases, particularly those involving supply.

10.3 Parents will normally be informed unless doing so would place a child at increased risk of harm.

11. Staff Expectations (See Staff Behaviour and Code of Conduct)

11.1 Staff must not consume alcohol or use illegal substances whilst undertaking professional duties or supervising pupils.

11.2 Any member of staff who attends work impaired by alcohol or drugs may be subject to disciplinary procedures.

11.3 The school recognises that substance dependency may be a health issue and will provide support where appropriate through staff welfare procedures.

12. Monitoring and Review

12.1 All incidents will be recorded on the school's safeguarding recording system. The DSL will review substance-related concerns periodically in order to identify patterns, emerging risks and any implications for curriculum provision or safeguarding practice.

12.2 This policy will be reviewed annually.