

SUBSTANCE USE AND MISUSE (EDUCATION) POLICY

Aims

The purpose of this policy is to support effective education around substance use and misuse, including the use and misuse of legal and illegal drugs. It provides a structure within which responsible, lawful decision-making is encouraged and supported. It also aims to promote the general wellbeing of all Whitgift School students and the wider School community by:

- Maintaining an atmosphere in which substance use and misuse is considered to be unacceptable;
- Enabling students to make healthy, informed, lawful choices, by increasing knowledge, challenging attitudes and developing personal and social skills to deal with peer pressure and stress;
- Increasing understanding about the possible consequences of substance use and misuse;
- Widening understanding about related health and social issues, e.g. crime, welfare, community;
- Seeking to minimise the risks faced by potential users;
- Enabling students to identify sources of appropriate support, including the relevant counselling and help agencies;
- Striving constantly to ensure we have a safe and healthy environment for all our students at Whitgift.

The effectiveness of the School's approach to these issues relies on the fair enforcement of its policies. Accordingly, the position of any student who fails to respect the policies will be considered under the School's Substance Use and Misuse (Discipline) Policy which should be read in conjunction with this Substance Use and Misuse (Education) Policy.

Terminology

Substance is a term encompassing all potentially mind-altering substances, e.g. those commonly referred to as "drugs", and includes but is not limited to:

- All controlled Class A, B and C drugs defined by the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971
- New psychoactive substances (often referred to as 'Legal Highs')
- Prescription drugs
- Over-the-counter drugs (OTC)
- Alcohol
- Tobacco and vapes
- Nicotine and other chemicals
- Tobacco and nicotine pouches
- Solvents including Nitrous Oxide and 'Poppers'
- Any other substance which might lead to harmful addiction or similar effect.

Paraphernalia includes but is not limited to lighters, roaches, clips, grinders, sharps and pouches.

Sharps mean any needles, scalpels, or other articles that could cause wounds or punctures to people handling them.

If a student or member of staff or any other person finds a sharp or other paraphernalia on site, they should immediately report this to the Senior Deputy, or in his absence, a senior member of staff. They should not touch or attempt to move the item but make sure it is not a danger to others. Sharps will be recovered by the School's medical team and secured safely in the sharps' box in the Medical Centre. It will then be reported to the police as necessary.

UK Laws

Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 - it is illegal to possess, supply, offer to supply, possess with intent to supply, cultivate, produce (or be 'concerned' in any of these activities) any drug covered by the Act unless authorised (e.g. when prescribed for personal medical use). A person also commits an offence by allowing premises they occupy to be used for the production or supply or any controlled drug or the consumption of certain controlled drugs.

Intoxicating Substances (Supply) Act 1985 - 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

The Psychoactive Substances Act 2016 - it is an offence to produce, supply, offer to supply, possess with intent to supply, import or export psychoactive substances.

Other relevant offences include the buying of alcohol, or attempting to, when under the age of 18 – **Children and Young Persons Act 1933**

1. Education and instruction

At Whitgift School, we consider it essential that students are given opportunities to:

- consider the harmful effects of substances such as tobacco, alcohol and other drugs on themselves and others and
- to make informed decisions about the substance use and misuse

The education of students about substance use and misuse forms part of the School's programme of Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHEE, known as Ideatum at Whitgift), within the framework of the overall pastoral care policy. It includes classroom teaching, group discussions, assemblies and talks by experts from outside the school. Relevant members of staff also receive training about substance use and misuse so that they are alert to the warning signs of misuse and can respond appropriately when students seek advice or assistance.

Below is more detailed information on specific areas:

- 1.1 Tobacco and vaping:** Smoking is the single most preventable cause of premature death and ill-health in our society. The School policy on smoking aims to give students the message that the habit creates health problems for smokers and non-smokers alike, and that the School and staff support non-smoking as representing the norm in society.

Therefore, the principal School aims in this context are:

- to maintain a non-smoking environment and where students are not exposed to adult smoking;
- to educate students as to the risks and dangers of smoking;
- to encourage those students who do smoke to cease the habit.

With that in mind, smoking, or being in possession of cigarettes, tobacco, electronic cigarettes and any other 'smoking' devices (e.g. Shisha cigarettes and other flavoured chemical devices (vapes)) is prohibited:

- in the School buildings and grounds;
- anywhere whilst in School uniform;
- when representing the School or on School outings and trips;
- at any time whilst under School supervision or discipline; and
- whenever prohibited by law.

This approach also extends to the use of tobacco and nicotine pouches.

- 1.2 Alcohol:** Alcohol is a depressant drug, particularly when taken in large quantities. If consumed in sensible amounts, alcohol may produce feelings of relaxation and the health risks are considerably reduced if drinkers keep within the recommended levels. However, even at low levels, the potential for serious accidents is increased.

Therefore, the principal School aims in this context are:

- to maintain an alcohol-free environment where students are not exposed to alcohol (except on formal occasions sanctioned by the School);
- to develop knowledge and understanding about alcohol as a drug and its effect on the mind and the body;
- to encourage sensible, appropriate and safe drinking behaviour;
- to provide opportunities for students to practise personal and social skills and the strategies needed to deal with situations where alcohol is present;
- to promote an individual student's self-confidence, self-esteem and self-worth;
- to provide or signpost to external counselling for students and their families, where this is needed;
- to provide information about other helping agencies, regarding their presence, location and function;
- to educate students as to the place of alcohol in the political, social and economic environment.

Drinking, or being in possession of alcohol, is prohibited:

- in the School buildings and grounds (except for formal occasions sanctioned by the School);

- anywhere whilst in school uniform;
- whenever prohibited by law;
- while on School outings and trips or at any other time whilst under School supervision or discipline (except for formal occasions sanctioned by the School).

1.3 Drugs: Health harms arising from the use or misuse of legal and illegal substances are wide-ranging and represent a major public health burden, with studies suggesting that young adults aged 16 to 24 being more likely to be tempted to use illegal drugs than older age groups. Serious risks to health can include blood borne viral infections and an increased risk of dependence and overdose.

Therefore, the principal School aims in this context are:

- to develop students' knowledge and understanding of the difference between controlled and illegal drugs;
- to educate students on the effects of drugs on the mind and body;
- to provide opportunities for students to practise the personal and social skills and the strategies needed to deal with situations involving drugs;
- to promote an individual student's self-confidence, self-esteem and self-worth;
- to explain the legal situation with regard to the use and misuse of drugs;
- to provide or signpost to external counselling for students and their families, where this is needed;
- to provide information about other helping agencies, regarding their presence, location and function;
- to educate students on procedures for dealing with any discovery of sharps and paraphernalia.

Any direct or indirect involvement in substance use and misuse anywhere, and whether in the School buildings and grounds or elsewhere, is prohibited including:

- the possession, supply, cultivation or production of any drug covered by the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 unless authorized (e.g. when prescribed for personal medical use);
- the supply or offer to supply of a substance where it is known or believed that the substances will be inhaled by a person under 18 for the purposes of intoxication;
- the production, supply, offer to supply or possession of psychoactive substances.

2. Advice and assistance

2.1 Students are encouraged to discuss their anxieties about any aspect of substance use and misuse with a member of staff or another responsible adult. They also have access to information about outside agencies that are able to provide advice, support and assistance (see 3 below).

2.2 Parents and guardians are asked to inform the Headmaster or a senior member of staff if they have any reason to think that their child or ward may be or have been involved with tobacco, alcohol or other substance use or misuse so that suitable

advice, support and assistance may be given. In isolated cases, such a program of advice and support may be consistent with the student's continued education at the School (perhaps accompanied by counselling, re-education and testing at frequencies determined by the Headmaster). **However, informing the School in this way, or where a student volunteers information about their own substance use or misuse, does not preclude the possibility of disciplinary action (including suspension or exclusion) which the School may nevertheless decide to be appropriate after careful consideration of the individual circumstances. Responsibility for this decision rests with the Headmaster whose decision is final.**

2.3 Where the Headmaster considers the circumstances of the case to warrant it, the police will be informed.

3. Helplines/Support

3.1 Telephone numbers of, and information about, the Samaritans, Childline, Frank, and approved agencies are published in the School at appropriate places.

3.2 Accredited counselling services are recommended by the School to individual students in appropriate circumstances, after consultation with the parents or guardians. The services are also recommended upon request for situations which cause stress and difficulties for the individual.

Reviewed by The Deputy Head (Pastoral): February 2024

Next review: February 2025