

POLICY ON SMOKING, ALCOHOL AND THE MISUSE OF DRUGS AND SUBSTANCES

This document which applies to the whole college inclusive of boarding is publicly available on the college website and upon request a copy (which can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required) may be obtained from the college office.

Scope: All who work, volunteer or supply services to our college have an equal responsibility to understand and implement this policy and its procedures both within and outside of normal college hours, including activities away from college. All new employees and volunteers are required to state that they have read, understood and will abide by this policy and its procedural documents and confirm this by signing the Policies Register.

This policy applies equally to day and boarding students and to all areas of College premises, including boarding accommodation.

Legal Status: Complies with:

- The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations currently in force
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)
- DfE Searching, Screening and Confiscation guidance
- DfE Drugs: Advice for Schools
- The Equality Act 2010
- UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018

Monitoring and Review: These arrangements are subject to continuous monitoring, refinement, and audit by the Co-Principal, who will undertake a full annual review, inclusive of its implementation and the efficiency with which the related duties have been implemented. This review will be formally documented in writing. Any deficiencies or weaknesses recognised in arrangements or procedures will be remedied immediately and without delay. All staff will be informed of the updated/reviewed arrangements and it will be made available to them in writing or electronically.

Reviewed: February 2026

Next Review: February 2027

Signed

David Game
Founder

John Dalton
Principal

TERMINOLOGY

Alcohol: Means intoxicating liquor of all descriptions (including beer, cider, wine and spirits). This policy covers obtaining, consuming, and supplying alcohol.

Biological Sample: Means a sample of breath, saliva, hair or urine provided by a student in accordance with the procedures set out in this policy.

Drugs and Substances: Means controlled drugs and the paraphernalia of drugs or substances intended to resemble drugs, or "legal" drugs which can be obtained from a chemist shop, performance enhancing drugs, anabolic steroids, glue and other substances held or supplied in each case for purposes of misuse. This policy covers the possession, use and supply of such substances.

For the avoidance of doubt, this definition includes emerging or synthetic substances, psychoactive substances, cannabis-derived products in any form (including edible or inhaled forms), nitrous oxide, misuse of prescribed or over-the-counter medication, unregulated supplements, and any substance—whether legal or illegal—used for intoxicating, psychoactive, mood-altering or performance-enhancing effect.

Tobacco: Means any tobacco related product and paraphernalia including cigarettes, cigars and pipes and any other smoking related products such as nicotine substitutes and electronic cigarettes (including all vapes).

For clarity, this includes vaping devices, refillable or disposable electronic delivery systems, cartridges, pods, liquids or materials of any description, whether containing nicotine, flavourings or other substances.

Smoke Free Policy: The College operates a smoke-free policy within its buildings, grounds and vehicles. The total smoking ban applies to the whole College community including students, employees, volunteers, parents, visitors, members of the public and others working in or using the College's premises or vehicles.

POLICY AIMS

The central aims of this policy are to:

- promote safety, welfare and good physical and mental health
- promote a zero tolerance approach to the use of alcohol
- reduce the risk of alcohol induced misconduct in and out of the college
- prevent smoking in and out of the college
- keep drugs out of the college

The College also recognises that substance misuse may, in some cases, be linked to safeguarding vulnerabilities, exploitation, coercion or mental health concerns. In such circumstances, safeguarding considerations will be prioritised alongside disciplinary measures.

The College recognises that patterns of substance misuse evolve over time, including through new delivery methods, online purchasing, digital communication and products marketed as legal or safe, and this policy is intended to apply to both current and emerging risks.

The College will make reasonable adjustments, where appropriate, in accordance with the Equality Act 2010, particularly where a student has identified SEND, medical conditions, neurodiversity or other vulnerabilities that may impact judgement, impulse control or safeguarding risk.

EDUCATION

The College has extensive health education and personal development programmes that focus upon the potential short-term and long-term risks to health from drug and substance abuse, including alcohol and tobacco. They concentrate on teaching the importance of young people making healthy, informed choices. They also include an ethical dimension, designed to instil an understanding of the importance of complying with the criminal law.

The programmes continue throughout a student's time at the College. They extend across the curriculum, involving personal development, science and Drama lessons. We also have assemblies on the topic, talks from the police, and speakers and presentations to cover the serious risks from abuse of mind and body altering substances, including alcohol and tobacco.

PASTORAL CARE

We encourage students to discuss in confidence any anxieties they may have about the use of tobacco, alcohol or drugs and substance abuse with a member of staff or the counsellor.

Matters brought into counselling by a student or his/her parents, in circumstances which are genuine, will be "ring fenced" from disciplinary sanctions. However, a student who contravenes this policy will face disciplinary sanctions.

For example, a student who comes forward and voluntarily identifies him/herself as a drug user and asks for help may be given the opportunity to reform his/her behaviour with counselling and a supportive testing regime (see Appendix 3). Similarly, students who smoke may be given the opportunity to undertake a smoking cessation programme.

The Principal is not obliged to offer a supportive regime; however, decisions will be made proportionately and with due regard to safeguarding, welfare and individual circumstances.

COLLEGE RULES

The rules forbid a student from:

- smoking inside or outside College premises, being in possession of tobacco while in the care of the College or supplying tobacco to other students
- any possession, use or supply of drugs and substances, including vaping material
- bringing alcohol onto College premises
- being in unsupervised possession of alcohol or obtaining or supplying alcohol to another, or being impaired by alcohol while on College premises or in the care of the College
- bringing the College into disrepute for any reason associated with tobacco, alcohol or drugs and substances, whether or not the student is in the care of the College at the time

This includes the storage or delivery of prohibited substances to College premises or boarding accommodation, and the arrangement of supply through digital or social platforms.

Possession of drug-related paraphernalia, equipment or items reasonably suspected of being intended for the consumption, preparation, storage or supply of prohibited substances is also prohibited.

The College also prohibits intent to supply, being concerned in the supply of, storing on behalf of another person, or facilitating the distribution of prohibited substances.

Action will be taken when the welfare of any member of the College community or the reputation of the College is affected.

DETECTION

Every complaint, report or observation in relation to tobacco or alcohol or involvement with drugs and substances will be followed up and investigated. A student suspected of such involvement may be suspended pending the outcome of an investigation.

Investigations will be conducted fairly, proportionately and in accordance with the College's Behaviour and Discipline Policy.

SANCTIONS

Tobacco and Alcohol: Sanctions will be applied in accordance with the College's Behaviour and Discipline Policy. For a serious breach or persistent minor breaches, a student may be required to leave the College permanently.

Drugs: Anyone supplying drugs must expect to be excluded immediately even if he/she is about to sit public examinations. Anyone possessing or using drugs must also expect to be expelled but in exceptional cases, a supportive regime may be offered as an alternative to exclusion.

In determining sanction, the Principal will consider:

- safeguarding vulnerabilities
- evidence of coercion or exploitation
- the student's age and maturity
- previous conduct record
- level of cooperation
- proportionality

STAFF TRAINING

Staff will be trained on how to recognise and manage issues involving tobacco, alcohol, drugs and substances, including safeguarding indicators and contextual risk.

PARENTS

If parents attending College premises appear to be under the influence of drugs, substances or alcohol, they will be asked to leave. The member of staff making the request should refer the matter to the College's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

If a member of staff suspects that a parent has driven or will drive whilst under the influence of drugs or alcohol, the matter must be reported to the DSL or a member of the senior management team who may telephone the police.

If the Safeguarding Lead reasonably believes that a child is at immediate risk of harm from a parent who is under the influence of alcohol or drugs, the child will not be released into the care of the parent and the College's child protection procedures will be followed.

SEARCHES

Searches will be conducted in accordance with DfE Searching, Screening and Confiscation guidance and relevant statutory powers.

Searches with consent: College staff may search a student or a student's possessions with the student's consent. The member of staff will take into account the student's age, maturity and understanding when determining whether valid consent can be given.

Searches without consent: The Principal and staff authorised by the Principal may search a student or a student's possessions without consent where there are reasonable grounds for suspecting that the student is in possession of prohibited items, including tobacco, alcohol, drugs, substances or related paraphernalia.

Boarding accommodation may be searched where reasonable suspicion exists, in accordance with safeguarding and boarding procedures.

Where appropriate and lawful, reasonable force may be used to conduct a search in accordance with statutory guidance. Any use of force will be proportionate, reasonable and recorded.

All searches will be conducted with due regard to dignity, privacy, safeguarding and equality considerations.

CONFISCATION AND STORAGE

The College may confiscate prohibited substances, paraphernalia, vaping devices, alcohol, tobacco or related items discovered during a lawful search or investigation.

Seized items will be stored securely and appropriately pending disposal, destruction or transfer to the police in accordance with statutory guidance.

Controlled drugs will be delivered to the police as soon as reasonably practicable unless there is lawful authority to destroy them.

A written record will be made of confiscated items, including the date, nature of the item and action taken.

POLICE INVOLVEMENT

If the College seizes a controlled drug, the drug may be destroyed if there is good reason to do so. Otherwise the College will deliver it to the police as soon as reasonably practicable.

The College may request the involvement of the police from the outset. If the police suspect that a student possesses or has stored drugs, substances or related paraphernalia, the police may elect to investigate using their own procedures or may pass the matter back to the College to investigate.

TESTING

Biological Sample

A student suspected of unauthorised consumption of alcohol or involvement with drugs or substances may be asked to provide a biological sample.

Testing will only be undertaken where there are reasonable grounds for suspicion and where it is considered proportionate, necessary and in the interests of safeguarding, welfare and the integrity of College discipline.

The purposes of testing are to:

- deter breaches of College discipline
- identify use where there are reasonable grounds for concern
- protect the welfare of the student and others
- provide clarity where allegations or suspicions have arisen
- absolve those who have been wrongly suspected

Reason to suspect alcohol consumption or use of drugs or substances may arise as a result of:

- information or a complaint received
- staff observations
- physical symptoms or demeanour
- possession of paraphernalia
- safeguarding intelligence or contextual concerns

Testing will not be conducted arbitrarily or as a matter of routine.

Informed Consent

The relevant consent to testing is that of the student rather than the parents, even if the student is under 16 years of age, provided he/she demonstrates sufficient maturity and understanding to give informed consent (in accordance with established legal principles regarding capacity and competence).

Consent must:

- be informed

- be freely given
- be recorded in writing
- follow an explanation of the reasons for testing, the process involved and the possible consequences of the result

The member of staff leading the investigation will determine whether the student is able to provide valid informed consent, taking into account age, maturity, understanding and welfare considerations. Where appropriate, the opinion of a medically qualified member of staff may be sought.

Reasonable endeavours will be made to inform parents or guardians before testing takes place, unless doing so would place the student at risk or compromise safeguarding.

A student who refuses to provide a biological sample will not be physically compelled to do so. However, the College may draw reasonable inferences from such refusal when determining subsequent action, in accordance with the Behaviour and Discipline Policy.

Safeguarding and Proportionality

Where substance misuse is suspected, consideration will always be given to whether the matter should be addressed primarily through safeguarding procedures, disciplinary procedures, or both.

Testing decisions will be proportionate and will take into account:

- the student's age and vulnerability
- any safeguarding or exploitation concerns
- medical conditions
- the seriousness of the suspected breach
- the reliability of the information received

A written record will be kept of the grounds for suspicion, the decision to test, the consent process, the outcome of testing, and any refusal to provide a sample.

MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

Where a student appears to be unwell, unconscious or otherwise in medical distress due to suspected substance misuse, the College will treat the matter as a medical emergency. Emergency services will be contacted where necessary and safeguarding procedures will be followed. Disciplinary considerations will not override immediate medical welfare.

DATA PROTECTION

Biological samples and testing outcomes constitute sensitive personal data under UK GDPR. Such data will:

- be processed lawfully and proportionately
- be retained only for as long as necessary
- be stored securely
- be shared only on a strict need-to-know basis

Test results will not form part of the student's permanent medical record unless required for safeguarding purposes.

Records relating to searches, confiscation, testing decisions and outcomes will be retained securely in accordance with data protection requirements and College retention schedules.

RECORD KEEPING

The College will maintain accurate written records of:

- complaints and reports received
- searches conducted
- items confiscated
- testing decisions and outcomes (where applicable)
- safeguarding referrals
- sanctions imposed