



The Fernwood School

High Achievement with Care & Discipline for All"

DRUGS POLICY

This policy will be monitored regularly and evaluated so that it remains responsive to current issues. This will be co-ordinated by the Deputy Headteacher - Pastoral

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Introduction

This policy encompasses all drugs as listed below. Please note this list is not exhaustive as new substances continue to emerge each year.

- ❁ Alcohol
- ❁ Tobacco
- ❁ Illegal drugs
- ❁ 'Edibles' - food or drink products infused with cannabis extracts such as THC or CBD
- ❁ Medicines
- ❁ Vapes and other electronic cigarette
- ❁ LDS legal highs – a designer drug and chemical derivative of LSD
- ❁ Volatile substances (for example acetone or alcohol found in paints, glues and sealants)
- ❁ Novel psychoactive substances (synthetic, psychoactive drugs that are generally not under international regulatory control. They are frequently sold as alternatives to 'street drugs' such a cannabis, cocaine, MDMA).

The term 'drugs' will be used throughout the policy to refer to all of the drugs mentioned above, unless specified. It may also encompass substances *alleged to be drugs*. A drug can be defined as a substance which, when taken into the body, changes the way we perceive things and the way our body works.

The Fernwood School endeavours to fulfil its commitment to 'High Achievement with Care and Discipline for All' as stated in the school motto. It is essential therefore, that we accept our responsibility and maintain a vested interest in keeping the school a safe place.

The implementation of this policy ensures that:

- ❁ Students feel safe, happy and motivated
- ❁ Students, parents and all members of staff know what to do if drug related incidents were to occur
- ❁ Sanctions for those involved in drug related incidents are clear and consistently followed
- ❁ Support is promptly given to those who use or misuse drugs

There are many opportunities in school to address the issues related to the use and misuse of drugs and for our students to become aware of the effects and consequences of such behaviour. Drug Education is a vital part of our Personal Development curriculum, delivered on timetable from Year 7 through to Year 11. We recognise and prepare our students for the choices and decisions required in a society where the use of drugs is present.

The Drugs Co-ordinators in our school are the Assistant Headteachers for KS3 and KS4 and the Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral).

The nominated Trustee with responsibility for drugs issues is the Chair of Trustees.



Boundaries of this Policy

The policy will be applied to the immediate vicinity of the school. In addition, it will also apply out of school, when this behaviour impacts on the life of the school. Drugs can affect an individual's health, body or mind, and if misused, can be harmful or indeed fatal. Our Drugs Policy, in line with all other school rules and expectations of behaviour, applies not only within the school boundaries but also on all school visits and trips, including those made outside of normal school hours.

Curriculum

Effective drug education requires students to develop their understanding of drugs issues and appropriate skills and attitudes to assist them in making informed decisions.

This provision will be supported by the school's commitment to a healthy environment, in which neither the misuse of drugs (including legal substances i.e., tobacco and alcohol) by students, staff or visitors, nor the illegal supply of these substances is condoned.

Drug education is a compulsory part of Science in the National Curriculum and is also taught at an appropriate level through each key stage in Personal Development lessons as part of RSHE statutory requirements.

Drug-related incidents

All students associated with the misuse of drugs will be held to account for their behaviour and clear sanctions applied. We acknowledge that some incidents are more serious than others and should be treated as such: important factors to be considered are the type of drugs used, individual levels of involvement and the encouragement of others to participate, which could include the passing, selling of substances alleged to be drugs, use of drugs on site or being under the influence of drugs on the school site.

As stated in the Behaviour for Learning Policy:

Certain kinds of behaviour are so serious that they carry a risk of fixed term suspension or permanent exclusion. These are usually matters which threaten the health and safety, security, and/or well-being of all or part of the whole school community.

One of the examples given for such a breach is in relation to drugs/alcohol/tobacco (see below for excerpt from the Behaviour Policy).

Involvement with all drugs or substances alleged to be drugs (see Drugs Policy for definition of drugs), which include for example:

- 🦁 Bringing a substance onto the premises
- 🦁 Using a substance on the premises
- 🦁 Being under the influence of a substance on the premises
- 🦁 Supplying, offering or arranging to supply a substance for another student
- 🦁 One student asking another to procure a substance for another student, for example: vape pens/vape oils



- ✿ Bringing alcohol, vapes, cigarettes, matches, fire lighters or fireworks onto school premises (smoking/vaping in any part of the school building/premises is against the law)

The school will carefully consider the implications of any action taken and will always seek to balance the interests of the persons involved with the wider issue of the health and safety of the whole school community. Any sanctions will reflect the seriousness of the incident and be consistent with existing school rules relating to behaviour in cases such as these.

After immediate medical needs have been addressed, the nature and circumstances of any incident will be established, and an assessment made of the needs of the students involved.

We recognise that any student misusing drugs may be in need of our support for an extended period and may also require support from an appropriate outside agency.

Vapes and Electronic cigarettes

The use of vape pens and electronic cigarettes has grown in recent years and there are concerns that young people do not fully understand the dangers associated with this growing trend. Disposable vape sales saw a rapid surge in popularity from 2021, with a huge growth in experimentation among children. There has since been a ban (June 2025) on single use vapes. Parents have been informed that the school takes a very firm stance on possession of or use of vapes (or similar) in school. In all but exceptional circumstances this would lead to a fixed term suspension from school. There is a section on the school's website that draws attention to this issue and offers advice to parents.

The following advice for schools has come directly from the police:

- ✿ Vape pens should not be sold to anyone under the age of 18 - selling vape pens to anyone under the age of 18 is breaking the law
- ✿ Single use vape pens are illegal
- ✿ Some vape pens contain CBD oil (cannabis) - vape pens containing CBD oil need to be treated in the same way as cannabis (an illegal drug)
- ✿ Some vape pens are being 'laced' with other illegal and highly potent drugs (spice/cocaine) so without testing the vape substance, there is no way of knowing/checking exactly what is in the vape pen. This is clearly extremely dangerous and could endanger someone's life.
- ✿ No student will know what they are taking and therefore what their body's reaction might be, or what help might be needed in a medical emergency
- ✿ No students should be promoting/using/selling/trying to obtain vape pens either in or out of school with the intention of bringing them onto the school site

Sanctions for those that use drugs or alcohol

The Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 states:

'It is an offence for the occupier or someone concerned in the management of any premises knowingly to permit or suffer on those premises the smoking of cannabis; or the production, attempted production, supply, attempted supply, or offering to supply of any controlled drug.'



All students associated with the misuse of drugs will be held to account for their behaviour using the sanctions below:

For tobacco related incidents:

- ✿ The immediate people involved and any witnesses will be interviewed
- ✿ All parents/carers of students involved will be informed
- ✿ A minimum sanction of a school detention will be issued

For the use of illegal drugs and alcohol, in addition to the above:

- ✿ Students will be placed in the Internal Exclusion Room during the investigation
- ✿ The parents of the main offenders will be invited into school for a meeting
- ✿ The Police will be invited in to collect any illegal items
- ✿ The Police will be informed for any dealing (selling or sharing) of drugs
- ✿ The Police will be informed of any relevant intelligence
- ✿ A referral to Children's Services may be made, depending on individual circumstances

Individual levels of involvement and encouragement of others to participate will influence the sanction set by the school. It must be emphasised however, that those involved in illegal drug related incidents risk permanent exclusion from the school.

Support for those that use drugs or alcohol

Any student linked to a drugs incident will need support to ensure that there is not a repeat of the incident. Establishing why they have behaved or are behaving in such a way is essential; this will almost always require work with the student and their parent/carers. In addition, time should be taken to ensure that the student realises the impact of their actions on themselves, other students and staff as well as their parents/carers.

As part of our commitment to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all students, we will provide students with opportunities to gain appropriate support and information if they have worries or concerns about drugs issues, in relation to their own or another's drug-use. This support may include:

- ✿ Support from the Community Public Health Nurse
- ✿ A referral to a trained support worker from CGL (Change, Grow, Live) to provide the opportunity to discuss individual needs in relation to addiction and to assess if further support is needed
- ✿ Support from the Head of Year, Assistant Head of Year, one of the school's Well-being Mentors or a member of the Senior Leadership Team

Students who ask for support before any known offence has been committed will be supported and not excluded. This support, however, will not prevent the following of school sanctions for any subsequent offences.



Advice for students

When asked how to keep the use of drugs, alcohol, tobacco or vapes out of our school our students are advised:

- ✿ To go straight to any adult in the school, if you know that drugs, alcohol, vaping or smoking are taking place in this school
- ✿ Not to promote drugs or brag about drug use, either verbally or via any other communication e.g. social media.
- ✿ To act quickly – to report what they have seen as soon as possible without discussion with friends

Students who ask for support before any known offence has been committed will be supported and not suspended. We aim to offer early support to students in relation to their own or others' drug use. Students are therefore advised that if they are using drugs, alcohol, vapes or tobacco and would welcome advice, they can see a member of staff who will inform the safeguarding team. They will then organise either a referral to CGL for specialist support or an appointment with the school nurse. Services and support are also signposted in Personal Development lessons as well as being available on the school website.

If a referral to CGL is made:

- ✿ Parents/carers will be informed unless this would place the student at risk of significant harm
- ✿ The school will support the student to receive intervention in school where possible
- ✿ This support will not prevent the following of school sanctions for any subsequent offences

Guidance for staff

It takes a lot of courage for students to inform on drug use. Please praise students for the giving of information.

Any suspicion of drug use or being in possession of drugs must be reported to the Assistant Headteachers with responsibility for KS3/4 or to the Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral) who will then co-ordinate the appropriate action.

Searching, Screening and Confiscation

An investigation to clarify the use of drugs will almost always be necessary.

We adhere to the DfE Guidance Document '**Searching, Screening and Confiscation: Advice for schools July 2022**'.

Headteachers and staff they authorise have a statutory power to search a student or their possessions where they have reasonable grounds to suspect that the student may have a prohibited item listed below or any other item that the school rules identify as an item which may be searched for.



The list of prohibited items is:

- ✿ Knives and weapons
- ✿ Alcohol
- ✿ Illegal drugs
- ✿ Stolen items
- ✿ Any article that the member of staff reasonably suspects has been or is likely to be used to commit an offence, or to cause personal injury to, or damage to property of; any person (including the student)
- ✿ Tobacco and cigarette papers
- ✿ Drugs paraphernalia
- ✿ Fireworks
- ✿ Pornographic images

NB: As per the Behaviour Policy, mobile phones are not allowed at Fernwood and therefore are considered a prohibited item.

At The Fernwood School, a search may also be carried out if we have reason to believe that a child is in possession of a vape.

A search would only be carried out by the Headteacher or a member of the Senior Leadership Team/Pastoral Team at his request.

A record will be kept of any search, detailing the following information:

- ✿ The date, time and location of the search
- ✿ Which student was searched
- ✿ Who conducted the search and any other adults or students present
- ✿ What was being searched for
- ✿ The reason for searching
- ✿ What items, if any, were found; and
- ✿ What follow-up action was taken as a consequence of the search

Screening, which is the use of a hand-held metal detector (wand) may also be used. Schools 'have a statutory power to make rules on pupil behaviour and their duties as employers in relation to the safety of staff, pupils or visitors enables them to impose a requirement that pupils undergo screening.' (DfE Guidance Document 'Searching, Screening and Confiscation: Advice for schools July 2022'). If this is deemed necessary by the Headteacher, the guidance will be followed.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a Deputy DSL will be informed of any search where the member of staff had reasonable grounds to suspect a child was in possession of a prohibited item.



Confidentiality:

As with any safeguarding or child protection issue, it is important to restrict the sharing of information about an incident to the minimum, as necessary ('need to know' basis). It is important that students are made aware that complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. This will help in retaining the trust of students and parents/carers and will ensure that the sharing of appropriate information is kept to a minimum.

Other policies which relate to the implementation of this policy:

- ✿ Behaviour Policy
- ✿ Health and Safety Policy
- ✿ Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Further sources of Information

Talk to Frank: <http://www.talktofrank.com>

NHS: <http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/drugs/Pages/Drugsandyourkids.aspx>

CGL (Change, Grow, Live) (for drugs and alcohol advice and support) – 0115 9484314

Recovery: <http://www.recoveryinnottingham.co.uk/> - 0300 300 2200