



Sandbach High School

and Sixth Form College

Our Academy, Our Future

SUBSTANCE MISUSE POLICY relating to legal substances such as alcohol, prescribed drugs, smoking and solvents as well as illegal substances such as heroin.

“Use” in the context of this policy covers the possession of /use of/or supply of substances in any manner.

In brief:

Alcohol: Alcohol must not be brought in to school by students. Alcohol must not be consumed by students prior to arrival at school, during school, or at a school function unless specifically authorised by the Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher.

Smoking: Students must not bring cigarettes or electronic cigarettes into school. Smoking is not permitted on the school site **by ANYONE.**

Other substances: Under no circumstances will the use of illegal, legal recreational drugs, legal ‘highs’ or the misuse of solvents be tolerated. Similarly the misuse of prescribed or over the counter medicines will not be tolerated.

Behaviour or conduct that contravenes the above may result in the application of the school’s disciplinary, including the permanent exclusion of any student and/or the involvement of the Police.

Development and Dissemination

Governors, students, staff and parents have been involved in the development of the school’s substance misuse policy. Members of the School’s Leadership Team have spoken about the substance misuse policy during assemblies. All students have had the opportunity to discuss the policy through their school council and Citizenship lessons.

The school’s policy regarding substance misuse has been brought to the attention of all parents via the school’s website with hardcopies available upon request.

Underlying Principles

Whilst recognising the increased use of illegal/legal recreational drugs and other substances among young people, the school will not condone the use among students of such substances, including alcohol, tobacco and electronic cigarettes while they are on the premises or on school trips or on residential visits.

The school is committed to the health and safety of its members and readily recognises its duty to inform and educate young people on the consequences of substance use and misuse. We believe in the principle of shared responsibility for the education of young people with parents and aim to keep them informed and involved.

The school aims to provide all those working with students with a clear framework to enable effective handling of substance misuse-related issues.

Substance Misuse Education Programme

The school's substance misuse education programme is developmental and appropriate to the age, maturity and ability of students. Our educational approach focuses on provision of accurate and balanced information. It accepts that there are different views about substance misuse and encourages young people to explore a range of views, to develop their own opinions and to challenge stereotypes. In terms of skill development an educational approach helps young people develop a range of relevant personal and social skills so that they can make their own informed decisions about their own drug, and other people's, drug use.

It is about:

providing information about substances, both legal and illegal, and health that gives accurate and up-to-date coverage of the effects of substance misuse, effects, risks and legal aspects of and recent data on substance misuse;

- providing opportunities for students to develop their abilities to communicate, assert themselves and take responsible decisions, identify risks, and help others, thereby enhancing their competence and self esteem;
- encouraging an understanding of those experiencing or likely to experience substance misuse;
- focusing on substances of particular significance to students such as alcohol, tobacco solvents;
- widening understanding about related health and social issues e.g. HIV and AIDS, crime, sex and sexuality;
- seeking to minimise the risks that users and potential users face; and
- providing information so that our students are able to identify and access sources of appropriate personal support.

Students receive education about substance misuse through the PSHCE programme. They also consider how substance misuse-related incidents affect others in their communities and consider their influence on others through citizenship activities. A wide range of resources are available to support this education including textbooks, information leaflets, videos and Internet sites. The school nurse and our own nurse practitioners offer informal and formal support to students, staff and parents. A range of speakers are invited into school.

In addition, alternative curriculum days are used to deliver sessions on all aspects of substance misuse education.

Managing Substance Misuse-Related Incidents

The school condones neither the misuse of substances nor the illegal supply of substances. Any student who brings an illegal substance into school for the use of a third party will be permanently excluded. Any student found in possession of illegal substances can also expect to be permanently excluded. In addition, the Police may be informed.

Incidents Involving Tobacco and Alcohol

Although the consumption of alcohol and the smoking of tobacco are not illegal, the health risks are well documented. Students found smoking, in possession of tobacco or electronic cigarettes or in possession of alcohol or under the influence of alcohol will be dealt with appropriately and parents will normally be informed. We now have a no-smoking policy on all school premises.

Confidentiality and Disclosure

It should be made clear to students that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. Students should be made aware that information will be passed on through the appropriate channels.

Talking to Students

Staff will respond positively to students wishing to discuss a substance misuse-related problem but the discussion may need to be deferred to a more appropriate time. Ground rules for confidentiality must be clarified from the start. If the member of staff feels uncomfortable s/he could consider with the student the possibility of talking to another member of staff or of another member of staff also being present at the discussion. After the discussion s/he will establish whether the student will need further counselling or support and pass on information through the appropriate channels.

If students are found to be in possession of an illegal substance the school will make a thorough investigation and consider a range of responses that could include permanent exclusion.

If a rumour is heard by a member of staff, the school will make every effort to investigate thoroughly before confronting the student and acting on information. The school may need to check the accuracy of the information, however, even if offence is caused. Members of staff should relay the information through the appropriate channels.

Informing and Involving Parents

If a student is found in possession of illegal substances or is suspected of supplying them, the school will seek to inform parents quickly and invite them into school to discuss the problem except, very exceptionally, where this might put the student at risk. Parents will always be informed in a medical emergency or if the Police are involved.

The school will seek to promote substance misuse awareness by inviting parents to attend information or training sessions.

Confiscation of Illegal Substances and Recording of Incidents

There must be a witness to any hand-over of an illegal substance from a student to a member of staff. The substance will be confiscated and then either destroyed or handed to the Police. When an illegal substance has been confiscated, in the presence of two witnesses the illegal substance must either be destroyed or handed to the Police. Obviously, once substances are destroyed, they cannot be used in evidence in a judicial hearing. All incidents of substance misuse will be recorded and kept centrally.

Incidents Occurring on Non-Residential School Trips

If a student is found in possession of tobacco or electronic cigarettes, alcohol or illegal substances whilst on a school trip, an accompanying member of staff will inform the school as quickly as possible. If the school is closed the member of staff in charge of the group will contact the parents directly. The school will then inform the parents and the parents will be asked to collect the student from the venue. With parental permission, the student may be sent home by public transport. The substance will be confiscated and a full investigation will take place on the next school day. Appropriate sanctions will be imposed.

Incidents Occurring on Residential Trips or En Route

If a student is found in possession of an illegal substance while on or en route to/from a residential trip in this country, an accompanying member of staff will inform the school as quickly as possible. The school will then inform the parents. The parents will be asked to collect the student. Alternatively the student will be sent home by public transport with the agreement of the parents. The substance will be confiscated and destroyed as quickly as possible.

If a student is found in possession of an illegal substance while on a trip abroad or en route, the substance will be confiscated and destroyed at the earliest opportunity. The student will remain with the school party. The Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher will be informed as soon as possible by telephone. The Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher will inform the parents of the action taken. Every effort will be made to ensure that the student returns home immediately. If the Head or Deputy Headteacher are not available in the holidays, then a member of staff accompanying the trip will contact the parents and tell them what has happened and say that the school will be contacting them to discuss the matter as soon as possible after the return of the party. Possession of an illegal substance whilst on a school trip will lead to a permanent exclusion. Any student who becomes intoxicated and endangers themselves and others will also be sent home. The leader of the school trip must make contact with the Headteacher or a Deputy as soon as possible.

Staff Training

The school will include in its training programme training for members of staff in the understanding of substance misuse and in dealing with substance misuse-related incidents and medical emergencies.

Responding to the Media

If approached, members of staff will invite enquiries to be directed to the Headteacher. Staff should not be drawn to comment.