

Drugs and Alcohol Misuse Policy & Guidelines (Students Only)

Responsible Senior Manager: Deputy Principal Curriculum & Quality

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Related Policies: Back on Track Policy

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1. Introduction

The College believes that the misuse of drugs and alcohol is detrimental to the health and well-being of individuals and adversely affects the safe and efficient working of the College, its students, and staff.

The possession onsite of drugs and/or alcohol or any substance with intention to misuse and/or supply is strictly forbidden. Possession of paraphernalia with drugs abuse is also forbidden.

The College's first priority in managing drugs and alcohol is the health and safety of the College community and meeting the pastoral and welfare needs of its students.

The College is committed to the following:

1. Preventing the supply and use of illegal drugs, or alcohol, on the College campus or during any college activity both on and off site.
2. Raising awareness of the consequences of substance misuse
3. Providing opportunities for students to discuss drug-related, psychoactive substances or alcohol problems, in an atmosphere of trust and sympathetic support, and to enlisting the help of expert guidance as appropriate.
4. Working closely with other institutions and agencies to address the problems of drug, psychoactive substances or alcohol misuse through a communitywide partnership.
5. Providing advice and support to those students wishing to seek help with a drugs, alcohol or psychoactive substances problem, but who have not been caught in possession of drugs, psychoactive substances or related equipment, without fear of automatic disciplinary procedures.
6. Providing help and support for any student who has been on Back on Track due to a drugs or psychoactive substances related issue, in order to limit the damage to their education.

2. Definitions

For the purpose of this Policy, the term 'Drugs' refers to:

- All illegal drugs (those controlled by the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 (as amended));
- All psychoactive substances (incorrectly called "legal highs") as described in the Psychoactive Substances Act 2016 (see details below);
- All legal drugs, including alcohol, volatile substances which can be inhaled and alkyl nitrites ("poppers");
- All over the counter medicines and prescribed medicines used or offered for supply in a manner other than as prescribed.

The Psychoactive Substances Act 2016 came into force in May 2016. Under the legislation it is an offence to:

- Produce
- Supply
- Offer to supply
- Possess with the intent to supply
- Possess in a prison
- Import or export psychoactive substances.

"Being in possession of drugs" refers to carrying or holding drugs and will include carrying, holding, or storing drugs for someone else.

"Supplying drugs on college premises" refers to the passing of drugs to others, even where no money has changed hands.

A "Drug related incident" includes, but is not limited to: -

- A student found using, being in the possession of, or supplying drugs;
- A staff member has information that drug related activity may be taking place on college premises (in respect of a specific individual or group);
- A student is suspected of being under the influence of drugs;
- The Police inform the College of a drug related incident involving student(s).

3. Purpose

The Policy aims to facilitate the early identification and help with regard to drug and alcohol problems and to encourage students to seek advice and assistance. The College will provide advice and support on drug and alcohol related issues.

The College will put in place appropriate preventative strategies and take action where rules have been breached, and will report incidents to the Police where appropriate.

All staff and students have responsibility for taking action if they observe and/or are told about drug and alcohol misuse/intoxication.

4. Scope

This policy will apply to all college students whether on college premises, college transport, work experience, residential trips, or other college related activities.

This policy supports college staff in dealing with a drug related incident in an appropriate manner. This policy does not relate to drug misuse by college staff.

5. The Role of the College

5.1 Stance

The College's first priority in managing drugs and alcohol is the health and safety of the College community and meeting the pastoral and welfare needs of its students.

The use of drugs and alcohol on college premises, transport, work experience, residential trips or other College activities, or at any time during the College day is strictly forbidden. Any student found to be in possession of, or using drugs and/or alcohol will be placed under an incident review period with immediate effect and required to leave the College premises (where safe to do so), pending investigation under the Back on Track Policy. Any action taken in relation to unauthorised possession of drugs and/or alcohol does not exclude other separate action in respect of unacceptable behaviour or conduct, even if it occurs at the same time.

Any student found supplying drugs and/or alcohol will be placed under an incident review period with immediate effect and required to leave the College premises, pending investigation under the Back on Track Policy. The College will inform the Police and fully co-operate with any criminal investigation or proceedings.

Any student under the age of 18 found in possession of an alcoholic drink on the College premises can expect the alcohol to be confiscated and destroyed and the Back on Track Policy to be invoked. Any student over the age of 18 found to be consuming alcohol outside the licensed areas or a college authorised event can also expect the alcohol to be confiscated and destroyed and the Back on Track Policy to be invoked. Any action taken in relation to unauthorised possession or consumption of alcohol does not exclude other separate action in respect of unacceptable behaviour or conduct, even if this occurs at the same time.

5.2 Early Intervention

The College recognises that it has a key role in identifying students at risk of drug misuse and the need to distinguish between students who require general information and education, and those who could benefit from targeted prevention and support.

Drugs and alcohol can be a symptom of other problems and the College will strive to provide high quality support and advice on drug and alcohol related safeguarding issues, and as appropriate put in place necessary safeguarding measures.

If a student informs a member of staff of personal substance misuse dependency, or of a friend or relative's problem, they should be referred to Student Progress for support.

5.3 Responding to Drug/Alcohol Related Incidents

If a student is displaying behaviour that suggests they may have consumed drugs or alcohol, assumptions must not be made as this behaviour could be caused by other reasons such as medication. The College must prioritise the safety of the young person and those around them. If necessary, it should be dealt with as a medical emergency, administering first aid, and summoning appropriate support. Dependent upon the circumstances, the student's parent/carer and/or police may need to be contacted. If the student is considered to be at risk of harm or detriment, then the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will come into effect and appropriate member of the Safeguarding Team must be contacted. All incidents of being under the influence, where confirmed by the parent/carer or student, must be reported on the College's student record system with the appropriate steps taken according to the Back on Track Policy commensurate with the severity of the situation.

If a student is found or seen to be in possession of drugs and/or alcohol, the Safeguarding Team or Duty Manager should be contacted. The student should be detained (if safe to do so). In circumstances where the student refuses to be detained, allow them to leave the College premises. If the student refuses to be detained, then the College may exercise its discretion to contact the Police. The student's parent/carer must be informed unless to do so would place the student at significant risk of harm.

If satisfied that the quantities of the suspected drugs are of a quantity which would appear to be for personal use then they should be seized, retained and the student should be placed under an incident review period in accordance with the Back on Track Policy. The College will always seek advice from the Police as to whether their further involvement is required. The student's parent/carer must be informed unless to do so would place the student at significant risk of harm.

If the quantities of the suspected drugs are of a quantity which would suggest intent to supply, or the student is found or seen to be supplying or attempting to supply drugs on college premises they must be placed under an incident review period in accordance with the Back on Track Policy and the relevant professionals informed – MASH, YOT or Police. The student's parent/carer must be informed unless to do so would place the student at significant risk of harm.

If an incident of being in possession or being under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol occurs whilst being on a college trip or excursion, the student's parent/carer will be contacted and asked to collect the student immediately at their own cost, if possible. The priority will be the safety of the young person and those around them. If necessary, it should be dealt with as a medical emergency, administering first aid and summoning appropriate support. If it is not possible for the parent/carer to collect the student, or the student to be returned home, the incident should be dealt with on return to college.

5.4 Searching and Confiscation

The College Principal and members of staff authorised by the Principal, can search students, **with their consent**, for any item. Formal written consent is not required. In every circumstance permission for a search should be given by the Principal (or Deputy Principals if not available) and a Safeguarding Coordinator should be present as a witness when the search takes place. It is recommended the staff leading the search is the same sex, the witness can be any sex. Student searches should be limited to sight of alcohol, drugs or paraphernalia. Searches should not be authorised based on smell or suspicion. If a student is clearly impaired, this must be treated as a first aid incident, with immediate support for the young person required to ascertain the cause.

The College staff member is able to confiscate any drugs and/or associated paraphernalia found as a result of a "with consent" student search, or the search of lockers, desks and storage etc with or without consent.

If a student does not agree to a search, they will need to be asked to leave the premises for the day.

5.5 Procedure for Seized Drugs and/or Alcohol

1. In taking temporary possession of suspected drugs, whether seized or found, a second staff witness should be present throughout.
2. A member of the Safeguarding Team must be contacted. They will arrange for the removal, recording and storage (in labelled evidence bag). The labelled evidence bag and accompanying information shall include the name from whom it has been seized (if applicable), the details of the date and time of the seizure/find and witnesses present, along with any other relevant information such as 'brief description' of item(s) being seized/recovered.
3. Staff are advised that it is not acceptable for them to remain in possession of any such substances for any period of time, as to do so would constitute an offence under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971.
4. A member of the Safeguarding Team shall notify the Police where appropriate who will collect the suspected drugs and then store or dispose of it in line with locally agreed protocols. All local records will show the full continuity and movement or subsequent disposal of any said items.
5. Any drug should be described in terms of appearance as well as any readily identifiable name/nature and should be fully recorded along with the staff member's details.
6. If the student is under 18, the student's Student Progress Mentor shall inform the student's Parent/Carer, unless this is not in the best interests of the student. If the student is over 18, but enrolled on a full-time programme, the student's Student Progress Mentor shall inform the student's Parent/Carer, unless this is not in the best interests of the student. If the student is over 18, and enrolled on an adult programme, the College will deal directly with the student in accordance with the Back on Track Policy.
7. In taking possession of alcohol, whether seized or found, a second staff witness should be present throughout. The Safeguarding Team must be contacted. They will arrange for the removal. The student's Parent/Carer shall be informed, unless this is not in the best interests of the student.

5.6 Discovery and Disposal of Drug Paraphernalia

1. Any member of staff discovering or being advised of drug paraphernalia upon college premises must record full details of such finding. For reasons of health and safety the member of staff should not touch or attempt to deal with the paraphernalia. Staff are to isolate the paraphernalia and report it.
2. Facilities must be contacted who will make arrangements for the disposal in a safe and appropriate manner.
3. In the event of a report or find of any 'sharps', do not touch the item without proper protection. Contact a member of the Safeguarding Team who will liaise with the College's medical staff who will be able to support and advise staff on how to dispose of the sharps. Containers for sharps are kept in the Health and Wellbeing area for their appropriate disposal.

5.7 Drug and Alcohol Awareness Education

The College provides opportunities for a drugs and alcohol education curriculum via activities such as: -

- Tutorial
- External Speakers
- Access to Student Progress Mentors
- Access to information and advice.
- Information offering confidential help and support are available

For further information, please contact the Student Progress Mentors.

5.8 Training

Training will be provided to relevant staff, for example managers, student progress mentors, cleaners and facilities staff on the implementation and application of this policy.

6. Smoking and Vaping

Whilst the College will actively promote healthy lifestyles to all students, a designated shelter is available on each campus. In part this is out of consideration for our neighbours in discouraging students from smoking or vaping at the college entrances. Students should not smoke or vape in any other areas of the campus or at the entrances to the College sites. Where students disregard this Policy the Back on Track Policy will be used.

Vaping is not permitted indoors and should only be used outside in designated spaces.