



THE ALTUS SCHOOL

DRUGS POLICY

Date Approved: February 2023

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School Drugs and Banned Items Policy

This policy is intended to ensure that there is a clear understanding of our approach to Drugs Education and the management of drugs incidents, planning and delivery within the wider PHSE curriculum and across the school. Although this policy refers to students, the principle also covers staff, as detailed in the staff conduct policy.

The policy for drugs, together with the general policy for PSHE and alongside the Sex and Relationships Policy, will enhance the children's learning and personal development through developing:

- a respect for themselves and other people
- an awareness of others and create a feeling of self-worth
- an understanding of how to keep safe and be fit and healthy
- an understanding of the values of others
- acceptance of individuals and groups who make up our rich and diverse culture
- an understanding that to have rights, you have to have responsibilities
- a sense of independence and the ability to make informed choices
- interacting and building positive relationships with others.

In particular reference to drugs education, we aim to:

- promote consistent messages about substance use and misuse and the underlying values and principles that support it
- understand what the law says about substances and when the police should be notified
- be aware of the effects, dangers and risks of the misuse of different substances
- develop skills and attitudes to reduce harm
- recognise the dangers relating to alcohol misuse
- provide information and access to support services
- help people make informed choices about keeping healthy.

This policy has been written following local and national guidance including the DfE publication 'DfE and ACPO drug advice for schools' (Sep 2012), DfE Screening, Searching and Confiscation and Psychoactive Substances Act (July 2022)

Definition of Drugs

The definition of a drug given by the United Nations office on Drugs and Crime is: "A substance people take to change the way they feel, think or behave".

Here, "drugs" and "drug education" is used to refer to:

- all illegal drugs (those controlled by the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971)

- all legal drugs, including alcohol, tobacco, volatile substances (those giving off a gas or vapour which can be inhaled), ketamine, khat, alkyl nitrites (known as poppers) and new psychoactive drugs ('legal highs')
- all over-the-counter and prescription medicines.

The school's stance towards drugs, health and the needs of students

The possession, use or supply of illegal and other unauthorised drugs in The Altus School is not acceptable. The school is committed to safeguarding the health, safety and wellbeing of all members of the school community. In providing drugs education and responding to incidents involving drugs, our first concern is the pastoral care and health and safety of students. The Altus School is a non-smoking school.

Drugs Education and interventions at The Altus School is based upon developing age and key stage appropriate knowledge, skills, and attitudes about drugs; learning about keeping yourself safe; respecting yourself and others; an appreciation of drugs as medicines; the harmful effects of tobacco, vaping and alcohol; the issues related to drug misuse.

Terminology

The term 'drugs' is used throughout this policy to refer to all unauthorised drugs, all illegal drugs (those controlled by the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971; all legal drugs, including alcohol and tobacco, and also volatile substances (those giving off a gas or vapour which can be inhaled), the use of legal highs, all medicines, whether over the counter or on prescription.

Drugs Education

The Centre Manager, in conversation with the DSL and with the support of the whole staff, is responsible for ensuring the delivery of drugs education, as part of the PSHE curriculum. PSHE lessons and interventions can take place across The Altus School and play an important part of the school's timetable. Class teachers, often with support from Teaching Assistants and Pastoral staff, deliver the drugs education lessons to all children. Individual pupils will receive intervention as required.

Managing Drug-related Incidences

We want our school to be a safe place for us all to learn and work, and the presence of unauthorised drugs represents a threat to our health and safety.

Disclosure

If a student makes a disclosure that they have been using drugs or misusing substances—confidentiality must never be promised. All disclosures should be reported to the DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead) or DDSL, on purple Sleuth, who will decide what action is required in line with the school's Safeguarding Policy.

A disclosure can indicate a need for help and the young person will be directed to appropriate agencies.

Suspicious

All staff are kept up to date with signs and indicators of possible drug use, possession and supply through training courses, staff briefings and discussions. Staff should report suspicions to the DSL/DDSL. The DSL will consult with the Centre Manager and other staff to determine appropriate action. This may require further discussion with the Headteacher. It is important that no accusations are made that cannot be substantiated.

Intoxication

If staff observe a student taking unauthorised/illegal substances during school hours, parents/carers will be contacted immediately. The student may be suspended, following contact with parents. A referral to social care and the police may also be made.

If staff have a strong suspicion that a pupil is under the influence of an unauthorised/illegal substance during school hours, staff must inform the DSL who will speak to parents/carers with immediate effect; a referral to social care might be made. If the student is open to social care their Social Worker will be made aware of a concern. If there is no current social care involvement, the DSL may seek consent from parents/carers to submit an Early Help referral of a MARF (Multi Agency Referral form).

If students are repeatedly under the influence of unauthorised/illegal substances during school hours, staff must inform the DSL/DDSL who will, in discussion with the Centre Manager and Headteacher, determine appropriate action. This may include a targeted intervention, referral to other agencies and, or a suspension.

If a child is due to carry out a hazardous activity as part of the curriculum and staff suspect they are under the influence of an unauthorised/illegal substance, they are able to withdraw the student from the activity as they have a duty of care to keep students safe.

Pupils suspected of being intoxicated from inhaling a volatile substance will be kept calm as chasing students can place intolerable strain on their heart, this could cause sudden death. Parents will be informed, and medical advice will be sought immediately.

Discovery of illegal substance

The discovery of an illegal substance should be reported immediately to the DSL who will take the necessary course of action.

Possession

If a student is found to be in possession of an illegal drug on the The Altus School premises, or whilst engaged in a Centre activity, the substance will be confiscated with immediate effect and the police will be notified. The DSL, in conversation with the Headteacher and will determine appropriate next steps and action.

Supplying illegal substances

The supply of an illegal substance on The Altus School premises is treated with the upmost severity and the young person will be suspended whilst an investigation is conducted. The incident will be reported to the police and a meeting set up to discuss next steps with the student and their parents/carers and other involved professionals as appropriate.

Drug and Alcohol related incidents involving people other than pupils.

If a member of staff becomes aware, or suspects, that an individual, staff/visitors/parents/carers other than a pupil may have taken, be under the influence or somehow involved in substance misuse, is under the influence or somehow involved in substance misuse, then again, the Headteacher must be informed immediately and will act as appropriate. Clearly every incident should be judged on its own merits and where immediate assistance is required The Altus School should dial 999 and ask for the police and follow all safeguarding procedures, as set out in our policy.

Screening, Searching and Confiscation

As detailed in our behaviour and relationships policy, The Headteacher, DSL, Centre Manager have a statutory power to search pupils, or their possessions, without consent, where there are reasonable grounds for suspecting that the pupil may have a prohibited item (knives or weapons, alcohol, illegal drugs, vapes, stolen items, tobacco and cigarette papers, fireworks, pornographic material, any article where there is reasonable suspicion that it has been or is likely to be used to commit an offence or to cause personal injury to, or damage to the property of any person)

School staff can search a pupil if the pupil agrees. Under Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights, pupils have a right to respect for their private life. Any interference with this right by the school must therefore be justified and proportionate.

However, if a pupil refuses to have a search performed, or is not prepared to relinquish banned items (see appendix A for list of banned items) then they must be made aware that the police may be summoned to perform a 'Section 23 search'.

For detailed advice about conducting a search, refer to DfE publication 'Screening, Searching and Confiscation – Advice for Headteachers, School Staff and Governing Bodies (July 22)

The law permits school staff to confiscate, retain or dispose of a pupil's property as a disciplinary penalty, where reasonable to do so. This includes other substances which are not believed to be controlled drugs but are believed to be harmful or detrimental to good order and discipline (also refer, in this instance to the 'Banned Items' list).

When searching, staff are advised to:

- ensure that a second witness is present throughout
- seal the sample in a plastic bag and include details of the date and time of seizure/find and witness present
- store it in a secure location – usually by the Centre Manager and in the school
- notify the police without delay if an illegal substance is found
- record full details of the incident, including the police incident number
- inform parents, unless this would jeopardise the safety of the pupil
- identify any safeguarding concerns and develop a support and disciplinary response

Drug-related incidents are likely to involve suspicions, observations, disclosures, or discoveries of situations involving illegal or other unauthorised drugs fitting into these categories:

- Drugs or associated paraphernalia are found on the school premises
- A pupil demonstrates, perhaps through actions or play, an inappropriate level of knowledge of drugs for their age
- Suspicions of a pupil's involvement in county lines
- A pupil is found in possession of drugs or associated paraphernalia
- A pupil is found to be supplying drugs on school premises
- A pupil, parent or staff member is thought to be under the influence of drugs
- A staff member has information that the illegitimate sale or supply of drugs is taking place in the local area
- A pupil discloses that they or a family member/friend are misusing drugs

In establishing the nature of the incident, members of staff are advised to ensure that a second adult witness is present and to involve the DSL.

Possible responses to a drug-related incident may include early intervention and targeted prevention; referral to an external agency; counselling; behaviour support plans; inter-agency programmes, fixed-period exclusion; pastoral support programmes, a managed move; permanent exclusion.

Responses and sanctions will take into account:

- the seriousness of the incident
- the short and long-term welfare of the student(s) concerned

- the short and long-term welfare of other students
- guidance in DfE and ACPO drug advice for schools (DfE-00001-2012) consistency with published school rules, codes and expectations
- consistency with disciplinary action for other drug related incidents
- consistency with disciplinary action for other misdemeanours.

Staff should attempt to maintain a calm manner when dealing with any person under the influence of drugs on the school premises.

If a member of staff has concerns about discharging a pupil into the care of the parent/carer, then they should discuss with them if alternative arrangements could be made. The child's welfare is paramount.

Where a parent/carers behaviour under the influence of drugs repeatedly places a child at risk or the parent becomes abusive or violent, staff should consider whether to invoke child protection procedures in accordance with the school's Safeguarding policy (either by going directly to the designated Safeguarding Lead or contacting MASH (Multi Agency safeguarding Hub and/or involving the police).

When reporting an incident to the police, a record should be made and stored securely on the student's safeguarding file and the incident recorded on Sleuth (purple concern), according to the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulations 2018.

The school aims to work in partnership with the police. The school will manage all drug-related incidents initially and, where illegal or unauthorised drugs have been brought onto the school premises or when decided by the DSL, then the police should be informed immediately.

Sharps Disposal

Hazardous waste such as syringes, diabetic needles and lancets pose a significant health risk and need to be disposed of safely. Do not place diabetic needles, syringes or lancets in any general refuse sacks or bins - you may not only be risking your own health but that of others who collect up the waste.

Using a special sharps box is the safest way to dispose of hypodermic needles. These are available in the Centre reception offices, or from the Altus School Operations Manager.

Further guidance

Further support from charities and national organisations can be found by contacting:

- Addaction – specialist drug and alcohol treatment charity
www.addaction.org.uk

- ADFAM – information service for families of drug and alcohol users
www.adfam.org.uk
- Alcohol Concern – support for persons with alcohol-related problems
www.alcoholconcern.org.uk
- ASH – helping to reduce the health problems caused by tobacco
www.ash.org.uk
- Children’s Legal Centre – information service which covers all aspects of law and policy affecting children www.childrenslegalcentre.com
- Children’s Rights Alliance for England – supporting children through the fullest implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
www.crae.org.uk
- Drinkaware – promotion of responsible drinking, helping to reduce alcohol misuse alcohol related harm www.drinkaware.co.uk
- Drinkline – helpline for people concerned about their own or another’s drinking
0800 917 8282
- FRANK – drugs awareness campaign aimed at young people providing parent support www.talktofrank.com
- Mentor UK – helping to protect the health and well-being of children to reduce the damage that drugs can do to their lives www.mentoruk.org.uk
- National Children’s Bureau – promotes the interests and well-being of all children www.ncb.org.uk
- Family Lives – support for anyone parenting a child www.familylives.org.uk
- Re-Solv – information for teachers, parents and young people www.re-solv.org
- Smokefree – NHS smoking helpline 0800 169 0 169
- Stars National initiative – support for anyone working with children and families affected by parental drug and alcohol misuse
www.starsnationalinitiative.org.uk
- Youth Offending Teams – helping to prevent offending by young people
www.gov.uk/youth-offending-team

APENDIX A – Banned Items

In the interests of the health and safety of students, staff, other members of the school community and visitors to the school, the school asks parents, carers and students to ensure that any inappropriate and dangerous items, or any inappropriate and harmful substances, are not brought in to school. In the majority of cases the application of common sense will easily determine what should not be brought in to school. The list below is not exhaustive but is intended as a guide.

The specified items on the list, and any item that would fall into the first 3 categories, should not be brought in to school.

Sanctions under the Behaviour Policy may be applied to any student found in possession of any banned item or any item that the school deems to be unsuitable and dangerous. The school reserves the right to exclude students in extreme cases, or when students or parents have received warnings about banned items.

FIRE LIGHTING EQUIPMENT

- Matches, lighters, etc

DRUGS and SMOKING EQUIPMENT

- Cigarettes (including roll-ups)
- E-cigarettes, vapes and puff bars
- Tobacco
- Cigarette papers
- Alcohol
- Solvents
- Any form of illegal drug (including New Psychoactive Substances, once known as 'Legal Highs', including drug paraphernalia (cannabis, grinders, NOS cannisters/ crackers) etc.
- Any other drugs except prescribed medicines

WEAPONS and OTHER DANGEROUS IMPLEMENTS or SUBSTANCES

- Knives, including pen knives and craft knives
- Razors
- Catapults
- Guns of any kind, including replicas and BB guns
- Laser pens
- Knuckle dusters and studded arm bands, bracelets, etc
- Whips or similar items such as long chains
- Pepper sprays and gas canisters (e.g. CS gas)
- Fireworks or explosives of any kind
- Dangerous chemicals (e.g. strong acids and alkalis, bleaches, hair dyes, etc)

OTHER ITEMS

- Any form of liquid based correction fluid Note: students may use correction tape and correction tape devices
- Offensive material (pornographic, homophobic, transphobic, racist etc)
- Cameras Note: the school reserves the right to confiscate cameras or mobile phones and to delete any unauthorised pictures or video recordings of students or staff.