St. Helen's College

Drugs and Alcohol Policy

St Helen's College condones neither the use of illegal substances, alcohol or tobacco nor the misuse of glue, solvents, prescribed and over-the counter medicines. This school acknowledges the importance of its pastoral role in the welfare of young people, and through the general ethos and education of the school, will seek to encourage pupils to make informed decisions to promote a healthy lifestyle.

Whilst it is highly unlikely that any pupil at St Helen's College will become involved in substance abuse during their time with us, especially bearing in mind their age, it is not impossible.

This policy aims to meet the statutory requirements of the PSHE curriculum whilst protecting the health, safety and welfare of all pupils. It aims to provide clear guidance on the prevention, education and management of incidents involving drugs, alcohol, tobacco, volatile substances, and legal or illegal harmful substances whilst supporting pupils in making safe, healthy choices.

DEFINITION

Drugs

In this policy the term 'drug' is used to include:

(i) illegal substances

(ii) substances which are legal but can be misused

Some of these substances would not be acceptable for possession and use by pupils on school premises under any circumstances, e.g. alcohol, tobacco

Other substances, for example, glue, solvents and over-the-counter medicines, would be acceptable for possession and use on school premises, provided this is for their proper, intended purpose and, in the case of over-the-counter medicines, under the supervision of the school's medical department with clear written instructions written by the pupil's parent or carer.

'In school' is taken to mean on school premises, including buildings and grounds. This can extend beyond the school gates when a pupil is wearing school uniform. The school policy also applies to off-site activities, visits and school trips, including those abroad. The policy also relates to possession of illegal drugs by parents/carers and any visitors to the school.

Drugs Education

Education about drugs is delivered to Year 4 and 6 pupils as part of the PSHE programme. The programme aims to provide accurate information about substances; to increase understanding about the implications and possible consequences of use and misuse. In Year

5, children study the useful and harmful effects of legal drugs including alcohol, medicines and tobacco which is part of the science curriculum.

Management of and Response to the Use or Possession of Drugs in School

In dealing with a pupil involved with drugs the school has to consider the good of the whole community as well as that of the individual. If a pupil is found to be in possession of drugs (including legal drugs) at school the head teacher will be informed immediately. The Head teacher will then inform the parents of any child(s) involved in the misuse of drugs. After the initial meeting with parents, child(s) and relevant members of staff, the Head may at their discretion apply the following guidelines:-

a. The child might be sent home for a fixed period of time, after which he or she will have reviews involving detailed discussions/counselling on the misuse of drugs.

b. The child might be excluded permanently from the school.

If a student is found in possession of a substance suspected of being illegal the school will usually inform the police. A member of staff may search a student's school bag, or other school property where (s)he has reasonable cause to believe it contains unlawful items, including illegal drugs. There should be a witness present, the student present and a receipt given for any item removed. When all other reasonable steps have been taken, or depending on the gravity of the situation, it may prove necessary to exclude the child from school, and in extreme cases to make a permanent exclusion as the final sanction. Staff must be alert to signs of substance misuse (behavioural changes, health symptoms, disclosures, possession).

Offences Outside the School

If a pupil is involved in a drugs-related incident outside the school, the Head teacher will assess the implication for the child and the school and then determine the best course of action, bearing in mind the interests of the pupil and the interests of the school and the wider community.

Person(s) Responsible:	Head of Science, Head of PSHE and approved by Head
Date:	September 2025
Review Frequency:	1 year or as required
Next Review Due:	September 2026