

St Richard's Catholic College

Drugs, Alcohol and Tobacco Policy



The Policy was approved by the Governing Body: March 2023

Chair of Governors:

The Governing Body will review the policy in March 2025

Drugs, Alcohol and Tobacco Policy

For St Richard's Catholic College

This policy was adopted in March 2023

This policy is due for review in March 2025

Contextual statement

St Richard's Catholic College is an 11-16 secondary school. As a Catholic school, it serves a wide geographical area, including, Hastings, Bexhill and Eastbourne. Most pupils travel to school by train or bus.

Problematic substance and alcohol use is a growing concern both nationally and locally. Our school recognises this problem and works collectively with the Local Authority, with other schools, with relevant agencies and with the local community in order to tackle these problems.

While some local data indicates that the use of illegal/banned substances, tobacco and alcohol by most 14 and 15 year olds in East Sussex is lower than for the country nationally, the numbers of young people presenting at Accident and Emergency departments with alcohol poisoning is worryingly high and alcohol use by young offenders is significant. We therefore recognise the need to decrease levels of unacceptable use.

It is an offence for any person to bring illegal/banned substances onto our premises and consequence for this can be seen on the school's Consequence Sheet - shared with pupils, parents/carers. Please note that rules relating to prescribed medicines are covered within this policy. Our school is a smoke free site, including our outside areas.

Aims and objectives of this policy

Our policy is designed to ensure the well-being and safety of all members of our community. We have adopted a range of consequences and support when addressing the misuse of alcohol or banned substances. The policy has been written to reflect the values outlined above and in accordance with the DfE (Department for Education) document "Drugs: Guidance for Schools" (2012), the Home Office National Drug Strategy, and National Alcohol Strategies and East Sussex Drugs and Alcohol Protocol for Schools October 2017.

In the context of St Richard's, we aim to alert our pupils to the dangers of misuse by offering a rounded and informative curriculum. We also aim to create an open environment, within a supportive pastoral system, and encourage pupils to develop personal skills enabling them to enhance their self-image and counteract peer pressure. Within the local area, the factors encouraging or discouraging our pupils in substance misuse need to be recognised. Of primary concern in managing drugs is the health and safety of the school's community and meeting the pastoral needs of pupils.

This policy further sets out the school's approach to our teaching and learning about drugs (including alcohol, tobacco and medicines), our rules relating to their use and how we will manage any drug related incident, either on or off school premises, including school visits and pupils attending authorised alternative educational provisions. Our rules apply to all members of our community. These include:

- Staff
- Pupils
- Parents/Carers
- Volunteers
- Governors
- Contracted staff
- Extended services deliverers
- Visitors

Staff expectations for ensuring they are aware of their responsibilities in upholding professional behaviour standards in school hours and on school trips are outlined within the school's Staff Code of Conduct. Staff are required to read and sign to state they have understood the document as part of the school's safeguarding procedures.

Staff are not to be present in school, including whilst on school trips and attending alternative provisions, under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

Definitions

A drug is any substance which, when taken into the body affects the chemical composition of the body and how it functions. It therefore includes:

- Legally controlled substances such as caffeine, alcohol, tobacco (including vapes and e-cigarettes), volatile substances and solvents
- Substances sold over the counter or prescribed for specific purposes such as painkillers, tranquillisers and steroids
- Illegal substances such as cannabis, ecstasy, amphetamines and heroin
- Other psychoactive and unauthorised substances

NB. These are just some examples and some drugs will fit into more than one category.

A drug-related situation is one where there is suspicion, disclosure or observation of the use of unauthorised drugs or the discovery of unauthorised drugs or drug-related paraphernalia.

Our partners

Our school has a good working relationship with:

Early Help Team
The School Health Team
Education Behaviour and Support Service (ESBAS)
SPOA (Single Point of Access) Team
Early Help Key Working Service

We also particularly value the support and guidance of:

Sussex Police
Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)
Emotional Well Being Team
Youth Offending Team
Under 25's Substance Misuse Team
iRock

Responsibilities

The prevention of drug and alcohol misuse is a shared responsibility. St Richard's Catholic College is clear that illegal and other unauthorised drugs are not acceptable within the boundaries identified within this policy.

The Principal and the Governors are responsible for ensuring that this policy complies with all relevant legislation and for its successful implementation, evaluation, monitoring and review.

The Leadership and Management Team will support the Principal in all aspects of implementation, evaluation, monitoring and review and in ensuring appropriate staff training.

All staff will familiarise themselves with the policy, support its aims, comply with its rules and ensure that the correct procedures are followed in the event of a drug related situation.

The PSHE Education Co-ordinators (Ms Vanvuchelen – PSHE) will be responsible for establishing an inclusive drug education programme using local guidance to deliver PSHE Education (including DATE) to all pupils.

Parents and carers are responsible for supporting the aims of this policy and for supporting school staff with its implementation.

Pupils are responsible for supporting the aims of this policy and using it to inform their behaviour.

School visits and social events

This policy applies to all school activities including those which occur outside of normal school hours and whether on school premises (either inside or outside) or on any external school visit, alternative educational provision or residential trip. This includes activities run by non-school staff or adults other than teachers.

On school visits and residential trips, staff and pupils will be briefed in advance about procedures and responsibilities. For overseas visits this briefing will include any difference in local laws regarding alcohol, smoking and drugs. Any member of staff who may smoke, will not do so in front of pupils or in any area which pupils may frequent. On residential visits, staff will not consume alcohol or be under its influence while they have responsibility for pupils. Where the rules of this policy are breached, this will be managed either as a school disciplinary matter and/or by the local police, depending on the severity of the incident.

At school social events, where pupils are in attendance, this policy will apply to all those who attend.

Any individual causing or permitting nuisance or disturbance on our school premises will be asked to leave and police assistance will be called for if necessary. This includes those displaying signs of intoxication.

Inclusion and diversity

We recognise and value the diversity of our school and of our wider community and the various and differing ideas and beliefs found within each. This DATE policy reflects our diversity and is informed by it.

Our drug education programmes incorporate a range of different teaching styles and learning opportunities in order to meet the needs of all individuals and groups. In responding to any drug related incident we will be sensitive to cultural difference and to other background influences (including medical needs) while prioritising our central commitment to the health, safety and wellbeing of all.

Vulnerable groups

Research identifies that particular groups of young people may be at greater risk of developing serious drug and alcohol related problems and we are committed to developing a range of appropriate interventions and support for these pupils.

Our staff know their pupils well and are skilled at, and trained in, identifying problems. In particular, we maintain a strong relationship with the Under 25's Substance Misuse Team who can provide specialist support and we are able to refer pupils via SPOA for interventions.

We recognise that certain risk and protective factors can make pupils more or less vulnerable in certain situations. Staff use observation and anecdotal evidence to assess pupils and certain behaviours or changes in behaviour may indicate developing problematic drug use, for example:

- A decline in achievement (attainment in relation to potential)
- Falling rate of attendance
- Decline in punctuality
- Behavioural changes such as altered mood swings and demeanour
- Change with regard to relationships
- Altered attitudes to staff, family and peers
- Changing friendship groups
- A decline in appropriate cleanliness

To address identified problems, we are able to offer a range of support services:

- Support from Early Help Team
- School Counsellor
- Referral to School Health Team
- Referral to Mental Health Support Team
- The Hive – wellness hub in school
- Small group work led by Pastoral Manager and pastoral staff
- SPECTRUM Programme
- Teacher Mentors
- Mental Health First Aiders
- ESBAS/CLASS intervention

Child protection, safeguarding and confidentiality

Our Safeguarding and Child Protection policy ensures that all staff are alert to signs that a pupil's health or safety is under threat and have responsibility for referring any concerns to the designated senior person responsible for child protection. The DSL is Deborah Bligh (Vice-Principal) and Deputy DSLs are Doreen Cronin (Principal), James Campbell (Assistant Principal), Jamie Bligh (Pastoral Leader Year 7), Emma Dann (Pastoral Support Manager), Sarah Ellis (Pastoral Teaching Assistant), Abi Hills (Pastoral Leader Year 9), Ian Smith (SENCO), John Steele (Pastoral Leader Year 8), Liz Taylor-Singfield (Pastoral Teaching Assistant) and Alison Horan (Safeguarding Governor). Concerns may be triggered by disclosure or by other information suggesting a pupil's misuse of drugs or misuse by others in the family home. Where child protection procedures are invoked, action will be taken through the appropriate system.

Our wider safeguarding responsibilities take account of the right of every child to be healthy and stay safe. Our approach to safeguarding includes developing resilience amongst young people, empowering them to make positive, healthy decisions and to know and understand how and where to seek support.

The health, safety and well-being of our pupils are paramount. We encourage trust between teachers, pupils and parents. However, the boundaries of confidentiality will be made clear to pupils who will not be promised confidentiality where they (or another's) best interests may be compromised. Our child protection procedures are clear; where they are not appropriate we will work with the pupil to share information with an appropriate adult, who will, most usually, be the parent/carer.

Medicines

We recognise individual medical needs (both long and short term) and will be inclusive of and supportive to those individuals.

Staff are responsible for the safe and secure storage of their own medicines and we provide safe and secure storage for pupils' medicines. Named members of staff take this responsibility (Mrs O'Brien, Mrs Britt, Mrs Ralph and Mrs Forte). The school is not responsible for providing any form of medication and will not do so.

We encourage self-administration by pupils where possible and appropriate, within a supportive environment. Staff may administer medicines where there is a written agreement between the school, the responsible member of staff and the parents/carers. This policy applies both within the school day and on school trips and residential visits.

Staff administering medication will complete a record of all medicines administered which will be updated at the time of each administration.

See the school's 'Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy' for further information (available on the school website).

Health and safety

Hazardous substances and equipment (for example solvents) may have a legitimate use on our school site for a variety of reasons. Where this is the case, they are stored securely, managed in a way which prevents illegitimate access, and used carefully and appropriately.

Illicit drug related paraphernalia or suspected paraphernalia found on the school site will be handled by a member of staff within existing health and safety procedures using appropriate safety equipment. Pupils are advised not to touch any suspect items found but to alert a member of staff.

Where any individual on school premises is believed to be under the influence of any substance which is affecting their behaviour inappropriately, our primary concern will be the health and safety of all in the vicinity. First aid will be administered when necessary and always in the case of a child or young person in our care who is thought to be intoxicated. We have trained first-aiders within the school and first aid equipment. Emergency medical services will be contacted as appropriate.

Drug related situations

A drug related situation is one where there is suspicion, disclosure or observation of the use of unauthorised drugs or the discovery of unauthorised drugs or drug-related paraphernalia.

In all cases, the senior member of staff (Mrs Bligh/Miss Cronin) with responsibility for drug related situations will be notified.

Our response to any drug related situation reflects the messages pupils receive within their DATE and we have developed a range of immediate and longer term responses, which prioritise the safety and well-being of our pupils and our whole school community. It includes both consequences and support for those involved. Where appropriate we will involve partner agencies, with whom we have very positive working relationships, in order to tackle drug related situations and we have clear procedures regarding their involvement, most particularly with Sussex Police and with the Under 25's Substance Misuse Team. Our prioritised actions within any situation will be as follows:

Emergency action

In order to ensure the safety of pupils and others, first aid will be administered or an ambulance called, where necessary.

Initial investigation

An initial investigation will be led by a senior member of staff who will facilitate an assessment of how best to manage the situation, whether the police should be involved and, if so, in what capacity. A written report on MyConcern will be kept detailing any incident.

In all but the most unusual circumstances, (and where this is the case, the reasons will be logged), parents/carers will be informed about the situation and invited to the school to discuss it. Contact with parents/carers will be maintained throughout the management of the incident.

The Governors will be informed about all suspected drug-related situations.

The Children's Services Authority may be informed (depending on the severity of the situation). They will be able to contribute to an assessment of the situation and provide support and guidance to the school.

Following this initial investigation, a decision will be made about whether any immediate actions should be taken. However, most incidents will benefit from a further period of investigation.

Removal and security of a suspected unauthorised substance

Advice issued in January 2012 (DfE and ACPO Drug Advice for Schools) recommends that:

- Schools' general power to discipline, as set out in Section 91 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, enables a member of staff to confiscate, retain or dispose of a pupil's property as a disciplinary penalty, where reasonable to do so.
- Where there are reasonable grounds for suspecting that a pupil is in possession of a prohibited item (Section 550ZA of the Education Act 1996), including knives, alcohol, illegal drugs and stolen items, authorised school staff may search a pupil without their consent. The school staff must be the same sex as the pupil being searched and a witness to the search (also a school member of staff) should also be present. If the need to search is not urgent, advice should be taken from the DSL / Principal before a search is carried out.
- The DSL must be informed without delay whenever a search is conducted, to assess the safeguarding risk for a referral to Children's Social Care.
- Searches without consent can only be carried out on the school premises or, if elsewhere, where the member of staff has lawful control or charge of the pupil, for example on school trips in England or in training settings (the powers only apply in England).
- The power to search without consent enables a personal search, involving the removal of outer clothing and searching of pockets; but not an intimate search going further than that, which only a person with more extensive powers (e.g. a police officer) can do. If a pupil does not co-operate, the staff member will need to assess

whether it is appropriate to use reasonable force to conduct the search and if so, do so in line with the DfE's Use of Reasonable Force guidance.

- A person carrying out a search can seize anything they have reasonable grounds for suspecting is a prohibited item or is evidence relating to an offence. Where a person finds alcohol it will be disposed of. Where they find controlled drugs, these must be delivered to the police as soon as possible.
- Schools are not required to inform parents before a search takes place or to seek consent to search their child.
- We do not use drug testing or sniffer dogs in school. National guidance (DFE Drug: Guidance for Schools, 2012) discourages the use of sniffer dogs solely as a deterrent, where there are no reasonable grounds for suspicion and where prior consent has not been sought. Further, the police guidance document Joining Forces states that schools considering the use of sniffer dogs without the authority of a police warrant should exercise extreme caution with regard to pastoral responsibility, cultural sensitivity, feasibility and the labelling of pupils. We consider that the complex ethical, technical and organisational issues, the potential impact on the school-pupil relationship, and the costs would not be offset by any potential gains.
- Alcohol and tobacco products will be confiscated and disposed of by the school. E-cigarettes will be confiscated by the school and will only be returned directly to the parent/carer.
- Further information on searching and confiscation can be found in the Department for Education's Searching, Screening and Confiscation issued in 2022.

Further police involvement

Any decision to request a police investigation will be informed by the findings of the internal initial investigation and will take account of the quantity and nature of the substance and whether it was held for personal use or to supply others, as well as a range of other factors. If supply is suspected the names of pupils will be passed to the Police together with a full report detailing the incident and we will co-operate fully with the police investigation.

Our School Police Support Officer will also be kept updated on all police reports made.

Sanctions and support

In cases where a police investigation is not considered appropriate we have a range of sanctions and support available for use. These include:

- Referral for appropriate support
- Internal exclusion
- School to School placements with local secondary schools
- Suspension
- Permanent exclusion

Our primary source of support in any instance where substance misuse is identified or suspected, and is impacting negatively upon a pupil's behaviour, is SPOA. Suspicions may be prompted by attendance or behaviour problems, by deterioration in academic performance/interest or by a range of other changes in a pupil's behaviour. Following an initial assessment, we may refer the pupil to another service, particularly where co-existing difficulties are prioritised above the substance misuse issue.

Our pastoral team will consider what further interventions and support should be put in place. These may include the involvement of our School Health Team, ESBAS or our Pastoral Care team. Pupils may be invited, or required to attend individual or group sessions.

We will review our DATE programme to ensure relevant learning opportunities are made available.

In the most serious situations exclusion (and, ultimately, a permanent exclusion for supplying drugs) will be considered. If exclusions are implemented, the school will ensure that appropriate support is in place. Where appropriate, we will consider consequences which withdraw certain privileges and freedoms.

Family issues

Where problems with family substance misuse are identified, the school will work with the family and appropriate agencies including Children's Services, SWIFT and Young Carers as appropriate to ensure that the family and therefore the pupil has support.

Where a parent/carer presents on school premises and appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol, a senior member of staff will be informed to manage the immediate situation. A report will also be made immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Mrs Bligh, the Principal, Miss Cronin or another of the Deputy Safeguarding Leads, so that appropriate action can be taken to safeguard the family.

Staff issues

All our staff are responsible for adherence to and implementation of this policy. Staff requirements are further contained within their own professional and employment terms and conditions. In order to support them, we will make available a range of training and personal development opportunities including:

- Basic drug awareness training
- First aid and emergency procedure training
- Confidentiality, child protection and safeguarding training

In addition, the specific development needs of those delivering the DATE programme are incorporated into any relevant PSHEe development plans. Specific training will be cascaded to the PSHEe teaching teams through the Lead of PSHE, Ms Vanvuchelen.

In any case involving suspected criminal action at work, the Children's Services Team must be informed of any alleged offence which could lead to Police proceedings. Non-criminal offences will be handled through either an informal line management action or a formal disciplinary hearing.

Support available to staff includes our Employee Assistance Programme.

Curriculum

DATE is delivered within our PSHE programme and also forms part of the statutory science curriculum.

Content and delivery are informed by national guidance and statutory requirements as well as local guidance. Adopting a normative approach, we seek to refute misinformation, particularly that which describes an inflated prevalence of drug use. The curriculum also reflects our school's ethos and the identified needs of our community. Information informing our curriculum includes in-school needs assessments (including surveys and questionnaires) and the 2017 Health Related Behaviour Survey.

The goal of DATE is for pupils to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes to appreciate the benefits of a healthy lifestyle, promote responsibility towards the use of drugs and relate these to their own actions, both now and in their future lives.

Our DATE programme incorporates a range of teaching and learning opportunities which are appropriate to the age, understanding and ability of pupils. This is supported by tutor time activities and our assembly programme.

To have an impact, alcohol and drug education must:

- Enable young people to think about their personal attitudes and values which will underline their decisions about drug use.
- Develop young people's skills to manage the sort of situations they will face (for example making decisions, negotiating and communicating effectively) and to cope with stress or anxiety without resorting to alcohol or drugs.
- Challenge young people's misconceptions of how normal and acceptable substance use is among their peers and among older teenagers.

The Co-ordinator for PSHEe in consultation with Pastoral Leaders plan a spiral, inclusive curriculum delivered throughout Years 7 to 11; this programme complements what is delivered through Science, Religious Education and Physical Education. Personal Tutors and relevant Pastoral Leaders and Subject Leaders will monitor and assess the units of work.

In relation to drugs and alcohol, the Programme of Study states that KS3 and KS4 pupils should be taught "how to make informed choices about health and wellbeing matters including drugs, alcohol and tobacco" and that pupils should have the opportunity to learn:

- "the positive and negative roles played by drugs in society (including alcohol)"
- "the personal and social risks and consequences of substance use and misuse, including the benefits of not drinking alcohol (or delaying the age at which to start)

and the benefits of not smoking including not harming others with second-hand smoke

- “to recognise the impact of drugs and alcohol on choices and sexual behaviour”
- “to understand the feelings and pressure that the need for peer approval, including in relation to the purchase and use of tobacco and alcohol (including cheap/illicit alcohol and cigarettes), drugs and other risky behaviours, can generate”.

We recognise and value the contributions towards our DATE programme by visitors, especially the Sussex Police, the School Nurse service and other local service providers. When they are made, these contributions form a part of our planned programme and we adhere to local guidance about how visitors make their contribution.

Key staff within the school also contribute to the dissemination of information and training to parents/carers via the Parent/Carer Focus Groups, the school website and other events.

Implementation and dissemination

The Principal and Governors are responsible for the dissemination and implementation of this policy, supported by the Leadership and Management Team.

Governors will receive appropriate training and information to support their role in safeguarding pupils, led by the designated Safeguarding Lead.

The policy (which has been widely shared and consulted on during its developmental process) will be available to all our stakeholders. The policy will be available as a paper copy on request, and is also available on our school website.

Monitoring, evaluation and review

Should a drug related situation occur, we will consider the need to amend our policy or to add work to our action plan.

This policy will be reviewed at least every two years.

Other relevant school policies

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
Health and Safety
Pastoral Care & Behaviour Management Policy
Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
Staff Code of Conduct
Whistleblowing Policy - Raising Concerns

Policies can be accessed as a paper copy on request, or on the school website.