

St George's School

	Drug and Substance Abuse Policy	
	Committee: Students and Staff Committee	
	Co-ordinator: Mr M Tookey	
	Last Reviewed: Summer 2025	Next Review : Autumn 2027
	Policy links to: • Expectations & Behaviour Policy • Behaviour Management Policy • DfE and ACPO drug advice for schools • DfE Searching, Screening and Confiscation • Health and Well-Being Policy • Suspension & Exclusion Policy	

1. Principles and Aim

At St George's, we believe in the inherent dignity and worth of every individual, created in the image of God. Rooted in our Christian ethos, we are committed to providing an environment where every individual is safe from harm and is able to thrive.

This policy addresses the societal challenge of drug and substance misuse, reflecting a collaborative approach with local schools and aligning with national guidance, including the DfE and ACPO drug advice for schools. St George's does not tolerate the misuse or illegal supply of drugs and is dedicated to safeguarding the safety and integrity of its community.

Through our preventative education and pastoral support, we are committed to fostering a culture where students are equipped with the knowledge, skills, character and confidence to make informed and responsible choices, enabling them to lead lives of purpose and service.

2. Definition

A drug is a substance that affects the way in which the body functions physically, emotionally and/or mentally.

This policy applies to any substance that could reasonably fall under the definition above as well as any item being used with the same intent. A non-exhaustive list:

- Illegal drugs (those controlled by the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971).
- Legal drugs, including alcohol, tobacco products, e-cigarettes and vapes, solvents and volatile substances (those giving off a gas or vapour which can be inhaled).
- Psychoactive drugs ('legal highs').
- Over-the-counter and prescription medicine.
- Drugs paraphernalia - items such as canisters, cannabis grinders, rolling papers, filters, matches, lighters and pipes.

Limited discretion is given to students to carry small quantities of medicine for personal use as outlined in the school's Health and Well-Being Policy.

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3. Definition of school jurisdiction

School jurisdiction is described in the schools *Expectations & Behaviour policy*. In summary, this policy applies:

- At all times on school premises.
- To all members of the school community during school hours.
- Whenever students are the responsibility of the staff.
- Whenever students are travelling to and from school.
- Whenever students are identifiable as St George's students.
- If the misconduct prejudices the good order and welfare of the school or its students.

This policy extends to drug-related activity at off-site, unsupervised events if they are linked to the school. For example, events publicised as school-related or when the attendees are predominantly St George's students.

4. Smoking, Vaping and Nicotine Products

No one is permitted to smoke, vape, or use tobacco products on the school site. Additionally, students must not be in possession of materials which enable these activities while under the jurisdiction of the school. The possession and use of nicotine products, such as snus, snuff and nicotine pouches is also strictly forbidden. In such cases, materials will be seized and destroyed. A sanction ladder applies:

- First offence – a Friday detention and a letter sent home to parents.
- Second offence – an Internal Suspension and a letter sent home to parents.
- Third offence – a Suspension from school.
- Persistent offenders and students found to be supplying or selling smoking or vaping materials will face longer suspensions.

Students who are present with, or offer support to, those using or in possession of these products will typically be sanctioned according to the same tariff.

5. Alcohol

There are specific, approved circumstances under which senior students may consume alcohol under staff supervision. These occasions comply with the school's Premises Licence and the Boarding terms and conditions. Students consuming alcohol on school premises at any other time should expect to be suspended.

Students may only bring alcohol onto the school site in limited situations, such as donating to a PSA event or presenting it as a gift to staff. In these cases, the alcohol must be handed directly to a staff member upon arrival at school. Unauthorised possession of alcohol on school premises is likely to result in suspension, regardless of intent to consume it outside school jurisdiction.

6. Drug Related Activity

Students must not engage in any drug related activity whilst under the jurisdiction of the school. The school cannot legislate for every scenario but applies definitions of terms like "possession" and "supply" consistent with criminal law. Specific offences:

- Possession of drugs: Even if the intent to consume was outside school jurisdiction.
- Solicitation of substances: Asking another student to provide drugs or supporting their purchase.
- Involvement in supply:
 - Includes sharing, facilitating access, or arranging transactions.
 - Does not require monetary gain or direct solicitation.
 - Supplying a substance misrepresented as a drug.

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- Leading another to unwittingly consume a drug.
- Encouragement of drug activity: Supporting or associating with drug-related activity even without direct possession or consumption. E.g. truancy to engage in substance misuse, promotion or encouragement on social media.
- Misuse of legal substances: abuse of commercially available or prescription drugs.

7. Sanctions for Drug-Related Offenses

In relation to illegal substances (including medication only legally available by prescription but obtained by other means), anyone undertaking the following activities must expect to be permanently excluded even if they are about to sit public examinations:

- Possession of illegal substances.
- Supply or intent to supply illegal substances.

All other drug related activity will result in Permanent Exclusion or Suspension. In line with the school *Suspension & Exclusion policy*, the following factors will be considered when determining the appropriate sanction:

- The student's previous conduct and whether similar offences have occurred in the past, with repeat violations considered more serious.
- The class of substance involved, with, for example, the increased seriousness associated with 'Class A' drugs than 'Class B' and so on.
- The involvement of, and impact on, other students implicated, influenced or endangered by the offence.
- The timing and location and whether the activity occurred in aggravated circumstances, including:
 - During or within an hour either side of the school day.
 - Within a short distance of school premises.
 - At a location known to be frequented by significant numbers of students.

8. Responding to Incidents

If a member of staff suspects that a student is under the influence of a drug:

- The immediate priority is to establish whether there is a medical emergency requiring action. The student's health supersedes any school investigation or disciplinary action.
- A senior member of staff must be informed immediately, using the on-call system or direct contact. The senior member of staff will investigate the suspicion and notify the Deputy Head (Pastoral) and the Safeguarding Lead.
- A search, as outlined below, is likely to be necessary on the grounds of 'reasonable suspicion'.

If a member of staff has reason or evidence to suspect possession or involvement in drug activity:

- They should urgently, but discreetly, inform senior staff - ideally the Deputy Head (Pastoral).
- An investigation will be initiated by a senior member of staff.

Any suspicion or concern regarding drug use or promotion will be investigated and documented in line with the school's *Behaviour Management policy*. Additionally:

- Investigations involving drugs must be conducted exclusively by senior staff members.
- A second staff member must be present as a witness during any interviews with students.
- During interviews, students will be offered the opportunity to have an additional staff member present for support and may request a specific individual for this role.

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9. Conducting Searches

Please refer to our *Behaviour Management Policy: "Searching Students and Their Property"*.

If a student refuses to comply with a search related to suspected drug activity, the police will be called, and the student will be observed to prevent disposal of substances.

10. Parental contact

Parents will be contacted:

- Immediately if there is a medical emergency.
- After a search regardless of the outcome (advance notice of the search is not required).
- Or after the police are contacted, if this step is taken.
- Once again at the conclusion of the school's investigation.
- If, based on their professional judgment, staff determine additional contact is required during an investigation.
- Regarding a student's wellbeing, if the school has evidence to suggest drug related activity outside of school jurisdiction.

11. Police Involvement

In addition to refused searches, the police will be called if there is evidence of supply, intent to supply, gang involvement or county lines.

12. Storage and Disposal of Substances

Any substance believed to be a controlled substance, will be placed in a sealed bag, dated and witnessed, and kept in secure storage.

Disposal will only occur after the substance has been definitively identified, as far as possible, to support any disciplinary process.

Illegal substances will be disposed of by the police or a senior staff member with a witness present.

13. Support Services

The school provides support through both Student Services and the pastoral system. Support can be initiated by either students or staff and may follow disciplinary action.

Confidentiality is upheld wherever possible, but it cannot be guaranteed in cases involving disclosures of drug-related activity.

Students who voluntarily seek help for drug-related issues will receive pastoral support and will not face disciplinary action, provided they are not already under investigation and their behaviour has not caused or posed a risk of harm to others.

Students are encouraged to seek help as early as possible. However, if drug involvement continues after support has been offered, disciplinary measures may be applied.

14. Community Impact

After an incident, staff may be informed to help prevent further issues and ensure appropriate support for students. General information may also be shared with parents and students to raise awareness of associated risks and consequences.

Engagement with local media will only occur at the discretion of the Headteacher, ensuring a considered and appropriate response that aligns with the school's values and commitment to the community.