



St Philip Howard
CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Drugs And Substance Misuse Policy

This Policy has been approved and adopted by the Governors of the Standards committee

Approved	Review
October 2025	October 2026



Bosco Catholic Education Trust Mission Statement

The Bosco Catholic Education Trust is a Christ-centred family of Catholic academies, within the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton, working together as one body to provide an outstanding education for all. As Catholic schools, we endeavor to develop confident, compassionate and faithful young people. Through partnership, collaboration and mutual support, we seek to enable all those entrusted to our care to become the person God called them to be.

“Serve the Lord joyfully”

Definition

Drugs are defined as alcohol, tobacco or harmful or addictive substances (many of which are illegal). St Philip Howard Catholic School stands firm against the use, possession and sale of illegal drugs and has a no-smoking policy which includes vapes and other smoking/nicotine -related paraphernalia. We are committed to ensuring that all students are provided with information appropriate to their age, and we aim to enable them to make reasoned, informed and responsible decisions about their behaviour including use and abuse of drugs.

Policy statement: drug education/drug abuse

In keeping with the ethos of a Catholic Christian school and as part of its care for the welfare of its pupils, the school has a duty to inform and educate young people on the consequences of drug use and misuse. Care of our bodies as temples of the Holy Spirit is a vital part of Christian education. The school takes a proactive stance on this matter, believing that health education is a vital part of the personal and social education of every pupil.

The school believes and supports the following educational aims in respect of substance use and misuse:

1. To enable pupils to make healthy, informed choices by increasing knowledge, challenging attitudes and developing and practising skills.
2. To increase understanding about the implications and possible consequences of use and misuse.
3. To widen understanding about related health and social issues, e.g., crime, damage to family life, effects of drugs and why people take them.

4. To enable any pupils who are misusing substances or who have concerns about the misuse of substances to seek help and appropriate support and to persuade them to stop.

Counselling and Guidance

There are many staff at the school who can offer support to students - the Headteacher, Deputy Headteachers, Assistant Headteachers, Heads of Year, Tutors, Wellbeing/Welfare and Go2. If necessary, they will contact expert counselling services such as the National Drugs helpline (0800-776600). Anyone seeking help will be treated sympathetically. The school will involve parents/carers if there is a concern about a student.

Parents/Carers will always be contacted if a student is found in possession of or dealing in or under the influence of harmful or illegal drugs whilst on school premises, or any venue where students represent the school, e.g., work experience, school visits, community service.

Guidelines

1. These aims are fulfilled through aspects of the pupils' experience in the taught curriculum mainly in RE, Citizenship and Science. Other opportunities to reinforce learning will occur in other parts of the teaching and pastoral programme. The school actively co-operates with other agencies such as Community Police, Social Services and Health and Drug Agencies to fulfil its commitment to drugs education and to deal with incidents of substance use and misuse.
2. If a pupil is found to be involved in substance misuse or supply **on the premises**, the Headteacher will be informed. The parents/carers will be contacted at the earliest possible opportunity. The police liaison officer will be contacted for advice and support.
3. If a young person is involved with the misuse or supply of substances **off the premises** the Headteacher or Senior Member of staff will be informed as such behaviours relate to the safeguarding of young people. Parents/carers will be contacted, and the police liaison officer may be contacted for advice and support where available.
4. The school will consider any substances incident individually and recognises that a variety of responses will be necessary to deal with incidents in the most appropriate

way. In each case, it will seek to balance the interests of the pupil involved, the other school members and the local community.

5. Regular searches of student bags and belongings can be carried out by Heads of Year and the Leadership team where a teacher suspects students of holding prohibited items. This will be undertaken in the presence of the student and another member of staff. Spot checks of toilets and other areas of the school will also be undertaken where there have been any alleged infringements.
6. Where appropriate a student may have an individual safety plan put in place.

Disciplinary Action

1. Alcohol
2. Vaping
3. Tobacco/Nicotine products
4. Solvents
5. Illegal Drugs

The school reserves the right to speak to any student about drugs if there is any suspicion of involvement or promotion and has the right to search students when investigating any possible drug related suspicions. Any student suspected of involvement with drugs will be interviewed by a senior member of staff. As broad guidance, the following action will be taken:

1. Alcohol

If students use alcohol in school or whilst representing the school, parents/carers will be contacted and told to collect the students. There will be a fixed term suspension or close supervision. In cases of supplying or selling, parents/carers will be contacted and the student will be given a fixed term suspension for a number of days depending on the particular circumstances.

2. Vaping & Tobacco based products

St Philip Howard Catholic School operates a no smoking policy which applies to students, staff, visitors and contractors; this includes vapes / e-cigarettes. Any tobacco/nicotine and associated equipment, including items associated with vaping/e-cigarettes, found in school will be confiscated and disposed of. The student in possession of the tobacco and/or associated equipment will then be subject to close supervision, 2 x 2-hour detentions and 5 x days of break and lunchtime detentions. For subsequent offences and those who consistently disregard, there will be further close supervision or fixed term suspension.

3. Solvents

If students abuse solvents in school, parents/carers will be contacted, sanctions applied and counselling will be offered. In cases of supplying or selling, parents/carers will be contacted and the students may be suspended from lessons for a number of days and risk permanent exclusion depending on the particular circumstances.

4. Illegal Drugs

Possession, use, or supply of illegal drugs will result in permanent exclusion. Associative involvement or behaviours by other students will be thoroughly investigated and appropriately sanctioned, which may include a period of fixed suspension or permanent exclusion.

The school also has the right to contact the police.

The Headteacher or his representative has the right to search students if there are concerns of drug use, misuse or possession; should a search be deemed necessary there will always be two members of staff present. Only outer clothing will be asked to be removed, e.g. hats, shoes, blazers, pockets emptied and bags searched. At least one member of staff will be of the same gender as the student being searched unless this is not possible. Parents/carers will be contacted if a student refuses to be searched and if necessary, police intervention called for.

On May 26, 2016, legislation came into force regarding New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) often referred to as 'legal highs'. Psychoactive substances are any substances intended for human consumption that are capable of producing a psychoactive effect excluding legitimate substances, such as food, alcohol, tobacco, nicotine, caffeine and medical products.

The legislation has been introduced because legal highs pose a significant threat to public health, comparable to the more 'traditional' controlled drugs and are similarly linked to crime, disorder, health problems and deaths. It is a criminal offence to produce, supply, offer to supply, possess, import or export a psychoactive substance.

Searching a pupil

Searches will only be carried out by a member of staff who has been authorised to do so by the Headteacher, or by the Headteacher themselves.

Subject to the exception below, the authorised member of staff carrying out the search will be of the same sex as the pupil, and there will be another member of staff present as a witness to the search.

An authorised member of staff of a different sex to the pupil can carry out a search without another member of staff as a witness if:

- The authorised member of staff carrying out the search reasonably believes there is risk that serious harm will be caused to a person if the search is not carried out as a matter of urgency; **and**
- In the time available, it is not reasonably practicable for the search to be carried out by a member of staff who is the same sex as the pupil; **or**
- It is not reasonably practicable for the search to be carried out in the presence of another member of staff

When an authorised member of staff conducts a search without a witness, they should immediately report this to another member of staff, and make sure a written record of the search is kept.

If the authorised member of staff considers a search to be necessary, but not required urgently, they will seek the advice of the Headteacher, designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) or pastoral member of staff who may have more information about the pupil. During this time the pupil will be supervised and kept away from other pupils.

A search can be carried out if the authorised member of staff has reasonable grounds for suspecting that the pupil is in possession of a prohibited item or any item identified in the school rules for which a search can be made, or if the pupil has agreed.

An appropriate location for the search will be found. Where possible, this will be away from other pupils. The search will only take place on the school premises or where the member of staff has lawful control or charge of the pupil, for example on a school trip.

Before carrying out a search the authorised member of staff will:

- Assess whether there is an urgent need for a search
- Assess whether not doing the search would put other pupils or staff at risk
- Consider whether the search would pose a safeguarding risk to the pupil
- Explain to the pupil why they are being searched
- Explain to the pupil what a search entails – e.g. “I will ask you to turn out your pockets and remove your scarf”
- Explain how and where the search will be carried out
- Give the pupil the opportunity to ask questions
- Seek the pupil’s co-operation

If the pupil refuses to agree to a search, the member of staff can give an appropriate behaviour sanction.

If they still refuse to co-operate, the member of staff will contact the Headteacher / designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) / pastoral lead, to try to determine why the pupil is refusing to comply. Parents/carers will be contacted at this point and possibly the police.

This decision will be made on a case-by-case basis, taking into consideration whether conducting the search will prevent the pupil harming themselves or others, damaging property or causing disorder.

The authorised member of staff can use reasonable force to search for any prohibited items identified in section 3, but not to search for items that are only identified in the school rules.

The authorised member of staff may use a metal detector to assist with the search.

An authorised member of staff may search a pupil's outer clothing, pockets, possessions, desk or locker. It is a non-intrusive search..

'Outer clothing' includes:

- Any item of clothing that isn't worn wholly next to the skin or immediately over underwear (e.g. a jumper or jacket being worn over a t-shirt)
- Hats, scarves, gloves, shoes or boots

Searching pupils' possessions

Possessions means any items that the pupil has or appears to have control of, including:

- Desks
- Lockers
- Bags

A pupil's possessions can be searched for any item if the pupil agrees to the search. If the pupil does not agree to the search, staff can still carry out a search for prohibited items (listed in section 3) and items identified in the school rules.

An authorised member of staff can search a pupil's possessions when the pupil and another member of staff are present.

If there is a serious risk of harm if the search is not conducted immediately, or it is not reasonably practicable to summon another member of staff, the search can be carried out by a single authorised member of staff.

Informing the designated safeguarding lead (DSL)

The staff member who carried out the search should inform the DSL without delay:

- Of any incidents where the member of staff had reasonable grounds to suspect a pupil was in possession of a prohibited item as listed in section 3
- If they believe that a search has revealed a safeguarding risk

All searches for prohibited items (listed in section 3), including incidents where no items were found, will be recorded in the school's safeguarding system.

Informing parents/carers

Parents/carers will always be informed of any search for a prohibited item (listed in section 3). A member of staff will tell the parents/carers as soon as is reasonably practicable:

- What happened
- What was found, if anything
- What has been confiscated, if anything
- What action the school has taken, including any sanctions that have been applied to their child

Support after a search

Irrespective of whether any items are found as the result of any search, the school will consider whether the pupil may be suffering or likely to suffer harm and whether any specific support is needed (due to the reasons for the search, the search itself, or the outcome of the search).

If this is the case, staff will follow the school's safeguarding policy and speak to the designated safeguarding lead (DSL). The DSL will consider whether pastoral support, an early help intervention or a referral to children's social care is appropriate.

The pupil's parents/carers will always be informed by a staff member once a search has taken place. The school will keep records of searches that have been conducted on school premises and monitor them for any trends that emerge.

Who will be present

There will be at least 2 people present other than the pupil, except in urgent cases where there is risk of serious harm to the pupil or others.

One of these must be the appropriate adult, except if:

- The pupil explicitly states in the presence of an appropriate adult that they do not want an appropriate adult to be present during the search, **and**
- The appropriate adult agrees

If this is the case, a record will be made of the pupil's decision and it will be signed by the appropriate adult.

No more than 2 people other than the pupil and appropriate adult will be present, except in the most exceptional circumstances.

The appropriate adult will:

- Act to safeguard the rights, entitlements and welfare of the pupil
- Not be a police officer or otherwise associated with the police
- Not be the Headteacher
- Be of the same sex as the pupil, unless the pupil specifically requests an adult who is not of the same sex

Except for an appropriate adult of a different sex if the pupil specifically requests it, no one of a different sex will be permitted to be present and the search will not be carried out anywhere where the pupil could be seen by anyone else.

Guidance on recognising the signs of drug and solvent misuse:

Warning signs

Early detection of drug misuse is extremely important. Teachers and support staff need to be vigilant. The signs listed below may indicate that individuals or groups of individuals are misusing drugs. Their presence alone is not conclusive proof of drug or solvent

misuse; many of them are a normal part of adolescence, but the presence of several signs together may point to a need for greater vigilance.

Warning signs in individuals

- Change in attendance and being unwilling to take part in school activities.
- Decline in performance in school work.
- Unusual outbreaks of temper, marked swings in mood, restlessness or irritability.
- Reports from parents/carers that more time is being spent away from home, possibly with new friends or with friends in older age groups.
- Excessive tiredness without obvious cause.
- No interest in physical appearance.
- Sores or rashes especially on the mouth or nose.
- Lack of appetite.
- Access to and use of more than one mobile phone.
- Heavy use of scents, colognes etc to disguise the smell of drugs.
- Wearing sunglasses at inappropriate times (to hide dilated or constricted pupils).

Warning signs in groups

- Regular absence on certain days e.g., the day young people receive state benefit. Keeping at a distance from other pupils, away from supervision points.
- Being the subject of rumour about drug taking.
- Talking to strangers on or near school premises.
- Stealing which appears to be the work of several individuals rather than one person, e.g., perhaps to shoplift solvents.
- Use of drug takers' slang.
- Exchanging money or other objects in unusual circumstances.
- Associating briefly with one person who is much older and not normally part of the peer group.