



Student Drug, Alcohol and Substance Misuse Policy

Student Substance Misuse Policy		Author	J Cutler
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Statement of intent

Queen's Park High School is committed to keeping students safe from drugs and alcohol, both on our premises and in the wider community. This policy has been developed in conjunction with DfE guidance to ensure that everyone is aware of the risks posed by the misuse of drugs and alcohol. It outlines the school's approach to supporting students struggling with drugs and alcohol misuse.

The school maintains the view that alcohol and drug use on school premises is entirely unacceptable; however, we recognise that zero-tolerance policies have a disproportionately negative impact on some students, e.g. victims of child criminal exploitation (CCE). For this reason, we aim to foster an approach of supportive discipline, whereby students who are facing issues with drugs and alcohol are aided through both internal and external support, as well as disciplinary measures where appropriate, to make more healthy and positive choices and to reframe their attitudes towards drugs and alcohol.

For the purposes of this policy, a **“drug”** is defined as any substance which, when ingested, alters perception and the way the body works. This definition includes but is not limited to:

- All illegal substances
- Alcohol
- Tobacco
- Solvents
- Medicines
- Legal highs

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Children and Families Act 2014
- Education Act 2011
- Health Act 2006
- DfE (2012) 'DfE and ACPO drug advice for schools'
- DfE (2023) 'Keeping children safe in education 2023'
- DfE (2018) 'Mental health and behaviour in schools'
- DfE (2022) 'Searching, Screening and Confiscation: Advice for schools'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Searching, Screening and Confiscation Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Administering Medication Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Suspension and Exclusion Policy
- Secondary Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) Policy

2. Roles and responsibilities

The governing board will be responsible for:

- Ensuring that effective policies and procedures are in place to make sure that students are kept safe from alcohol and drugs at school.
- Ensuring that this policy is maintained and disseminated to all relevant stakeholders.
- Ensuring that students experiencing difficulties with alcohol and/or drugs can access the support they need.
- Working with the headteacher, and in liaison with staff, parents, students, health and other professionals, to ensure that the relevant curricula, e.g. RSHE and PSHE, addresses the needs of students and the local community, and reflects current trends.
- Ensuring that the designated safeguarding governor submits an annual written report to the governing board concerning drug- and alcohol-related incidents and concerns.

The headteacher will be responsible for:

- The day-to-day management of this policy.
- Working with governors to ensure compliance with relevant legislation.
- Informing the governing board of any issues and developments concerning drugs and alcohol.
- Acting on any concerns arising from students' use of drugs and alcohol.
- Informing parents of any drug- and alcohol-related incidents concerning their child, where appropriate and where doing so will not place the child at risk.
- Inviting the local police and drugs team into school to raise awareness of the risks and issues associated with drugs.

- Informing the police of any drug- or alcohol-related decision, where they deem it appropriate to do so.
- Ensuring a consistent approach to managing drug and alcohol incidents.

The DSL will be responsible for:

- Ensuring that staff have the skills to teach and discuss issues relating to drugs and alcohol.
- Ensuring that students experiencing difficulties with drugs or alcohol are provided with appropriate internal support and referred to external support agencies as appropriate.
- Consulting with students to inform provision around drugs and alcohol education.
- Accessing appropriate training to enable them to successfully advise the school on drug and alcohol matters.
- Liaising with local services as necessary to provide support for students.
- Assisting with the monitoring and review of this policy.

Staff will be responsible for:

- Attending scheduled training concerning drugs and alcohol, including how to spot the signs and symptoms of use and dependency, identifying paraphernalia, and how to respond to a drug related incident.
- Reporting concerns regarding students' use of drugs and alcohol to the DSL.

The site manager will be responsible for:

- Regularly checking the school premises for signs of drug and alcohol use and reporting any concerns to the DSL.
- Adhering to the Health and Safety Policy when handling needles found on school premises.

Students will be responsible for:

- Ensuring they do not bring illegal or prohibited drugs or alcohol onto school premises or whilst engaged in any off-site activity representing the school.
- Ensuring they do not take drugs or consume alcohol whilst travelling to or from school.
- Contributing to the development of this policy by providing feedback on the effectiveness of the drugs and alcohol education provided, and on how incidents are managed.

3. Staff training

The school recognises that early intervention can prevent drug misuse. As such, all staff will receive child protection and safeguarding training in identifying the signs that a student may be at risk, experiencing harm or is struggling upon induction and this will be refreshed annually. Staff will also receive regular and ongoing training as part of their professional development.

All staff will be particularly alert to the potential need for early help for a student who is misusing alcohol and other drugs themselves, or is in a family circumstance presenting challenges that includes drug and alcohol misuse.

4. The curriculum

All students will receive regular guidance on drugs and alcohol as part of the RSHE curriculum, in line with the Secondary Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) Policy.

Lessons will be delivered as appropriate to the age and phase of the students and will be differentiated according to individual learning styles.

Information about drugs and alcohol will feature regularly as part of pastoral education in the form of classes and assemblies. Where appropriate, expert visitors and external speakers will be sought to provide classes on drug and alcohol misuse.

5. Specific types of legal drugs

Cigarettes and vaping

In accordance with part 1 of the Health Act 2006 and the school's Smoke-free Policy, the school is a smoke-free environment – this includes vaping.

Prescribed medicines

The school recognises that some students may require medications that have been prescribed by a doctor or other health professional. Parents have the primary responsibility for their child's health and the school will request all relevant information about students' medical conditions from parents.

Medicines will only be permitted to be brought onto the premises if it would be detrimental to the child's health if medicines were not administered during their time at the school.

The school will only accept medicines which have been prescribed by a doctor, dentist, nurse or pharmacist, with the exception of non-prescription medicines, e.g. paracetamol, which may be taken in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

The school will only accept medicines which are provided in the original container as dispensed and include the prescriber's instructions for administration and dosage.

Further guidance can be found in the school's Administering Medication Policy.

Solvents

Students will not be permitted to bring solvent-based products onto the premises including, but not limited to, aerosol deodorants, compressed air and aerosol hairspray.

The school will ensure that potentially hazardous solvents are stored safely, and students will be supervised if they are required to come into contact with them.

6. Students found to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol

Unless it is a medical emergency, or where there is aggressive or threatening behaviour, students found to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol whilst on school premises will be escorted to the headteacher's office, where they will be assessed.

The school will decide whether it is appropriate to notify the student's parent – parents will generally be informed unless the school feels there is a safeguarding concern which means that telling the student's parent may put them at risk. Where the school determines parents should be notified, they will be contacted and asked to remove the student from the premises. The student will remain in the headteacher's office until their parent arrives. In the event the school chooses not to inform the student's parents, the student will be taken to the student reception where they will be provided with the appropriate support.

If necessary, a search will be conducted in line with the Searching, Screening and Confiscation Policy.

7. Medical emergencies

In drug- or alcohol-related medical emergencies, trained first aiders will be summoned and care will be provided in line with the First Aid Policy. An ambulance will be called immediately if the casualty is seriously ill or it is believed their life is at risk. A staff member will remain with the casualty until the trained first aider arrives. Other students will be removed from the immediate area as soon as is reasonably practicable.

Following assessment by the first aider, a decision will be made as to whether an ambulance will be called if the emergency services have not already been contacted. The student's parent will be telephoned and told about the incident.

An [Unauthorised Drug Use Reporting Form](#) will be completed (see below in policy).

If the student is felt to be at risk, the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed and social services will be contacted.

All accidents and incidents, including near misses or dangerous occurrences, will be reported to the HSE as soon as possible following the school's Health and Safety Policy.

8. Threatening behaviour

Aggressive and threatening behaviour by students under the influence of drugs or alcohol will be taken very seriously. Where aggressive and/or threatening behaviour is displayed, the school will contact the police where necessary.

Any student displaying aggressive and/or threatening behaviour will be removed from the premises. If a student displays this kind of behaviour, their parents will be contacted, and sanctions will be implemented in line with the school's Behaviour Policy.

9. Searching

Under part 2, section 2 of the Education Act 2011, teachers are authorised by the headteacher to search for any prohibited item including, but not limited to, tobacco, cigarette papers, illegal drugs and alcohol, without the consent of the student, if they have reasonable grounds for suspecting that the student is in possession of a prohibited item. Staff members may use common law to search students for any item with their consent.

A staff member carrying out the search can confiscate anything they have reasonable grounds for suspecting is a prohibited item under legislation or school rules. This includes "legal highs"

and other potentially harmful materials which cannot immediately be identified. Any staff member, except for security staff, may refuse to conduct a search.

All searches will be conducted in line with the Searching, Screening and Confiscation Policy, and the Physical Intervention Policy where physical contact with a student is required.

10. Controlled substances

Where the school is unable to identify the legal status of a drug, it will be treated as a controlled substance. Where a legal drug is identified, the school will consider if it is appropriate to inform trading standards or the police about the inappropriate sale or supply of such substances to students in the area.

Following the identification and confiscation of a controlled substance, a staff member will seal the sample in a plastic bag and include details of the date and time of the confiscation or find alongside the name of any witness(es) present. The staff member will store the sample in a secure location with access limited to senior staff.

The incident will be reported immediately to the police, who will collect the sample and then deal with it in line with agreed protocols.

The school is not legally required to give the name of a student from whom drugs have been taken to the police. The school will consider, on a case-by-case basis, whether it is appropriate under the student's specific circumstances to do so. All decisions will be taken with the best interests of the student(s) involved in mind. Generally, names will not be given to the police where the school cannot be certain beyond reasonable doubt that the student in question was the one in possession of the drugs.

A full incident report will be completed and submitted to the headteacher via a pastoral log in School Synergy.

Any further measures will be undertaken in line with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Where controlled substances are found on school trips away from the school premises, the parents of the student, as well as local police, will be notified.

11. Safeguarding

The school understands that the misuse of drugs and alcohol can often be a sign of underlying issues.

Staff members will be aware of the fact that alcohol and drug misuse can be an indicator of a safeguarding concern and is often an indicator of both child criminal and sexual exploitation.

All staff are aware that behaviours linked to issues such as drug and alcohol misuse put students in danger. Staff will be particularly alert to the potential need for early help for a student who is misusing drugs or alcohol, or where it is observed or suspected that their parents or family members misuse drugs.

Students experiencing difficulties with drugs or alcohol will be provided with appropriate internal support and referred to external support agencies as appropriate. Support will be arranged and offered to students in line with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy.

12. Child criminal exploitation (CCE)

CCE is where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child into any criminal activity in exchange for something the victim needs or wants and/or for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or through violence or threats of violence. CCE can include children being coerced into moving, storing and selling drugs across the country (known as county lines).

Staff will be aware of the indicators that may suggest a student is being criminally exploited through involvement in county lines, including where students:

- Have gone missing and are subsequently found in areas away from their harm.
- Have been a victim or perpetrator of serious violence, e.g. knife crime.
- Have been involved in receiving requests for drugs via a phone line, moving drugs, handing over and collecting money for drugs.
- Are exposed to techniques such as 'plugging', where drugs are concealed internally to avoid detection.
- Are found in accommodation that they have no connection with.
- Owe a 'debt bond' to their exploiters.
- Have their bank accounts used to facilitate drug dealing.

Staff will be made aware of the following potential indicators of CCE for students:

- Appearing with unexplained gifts or new possessions
- Associating with other young people involved in exploitation
- Suffering from changes in emotional wellbeing
- Misusing drugs and alcohol
- Going missing for periods of time or regularly coming home late
- Regularly missing school or education or not taking part in education

Staff members will be aware that illegal drug use or possession by students may indicate that they are victims of exploitation, even if it appears that illegal activity regarding drugs is something to which they have consented. The DSL will use their professional judgement to consider CCE as an explanation for a student's drug-related behaviour before pursuing other support and disciplinary procedures, rather than making assumptions about the student's intentions.

Staff will be alert to the indicators above and all concerns relating to CCE will be managed in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

13. Managing incidents

Instances of students being involved in drug and/or alcohol incidents will be managed in line with the relevant school policies, including the Behaviour Policy, Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Following an incident, the headteacher will work with key members of staff, including the DSL, to assess the student's welfare and support needs and decide on the most appropriate course of action to take. Referrals will be considered to local youth, family or health services, and voluntary organisations, to provide support.

The headteacher will also be responsible for deciding if it would be appropriate to suspend or exclude the student, following the provisions outlined in the school's Suspension and Exclusion Policy; however, every effort will be taken to support students to adopt more healthy behaviours and choices before resorting to suspension or exclusion. Suspension or exclusion will be avoided wherever possible for students whose parents or carers are known to the school to misuse alcohol and drugs.

Support will be arranged for students involved in any alcohol- or drug-related incidents, in line with relevant school policies.

14. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the headteacher in liaison with the DSL.

Any changes to this policy will be communicated to staff and all relevant stakeholders. The next scheduled review date is November 2025.

Unauthorised drug use reporting form

Guidance on completing this form:

- Do not identify the student involved
- Copy the form once completed
- Send a copy of the form to the headteacher within 24 hours of the incident taking place
- Record the student's name and form on the original form and store it securely as a pastoral log in School Synergy

What type of incident are you reporting? (Tick as appropriate)

- Student in possession of unauthorised drugs Drug paraphernalia found on school premises
- Student supplying unauthorised drugs on school premises Disclosure of parental drug misuse
- Student disclosure of drug use Parent expressing concern over potential drug misuse
- Emergency intoxication Incident occurring outside school premises

General details		Student information	
Date of incident:		Form:	
Time of incident:			
Has the student been involved in previous incidents?		Age:	
Incident details			
Drug(s) involved (if known):			
Staff involved:			
Details of incident:			
Has any further action been taken (e.g. contacting the police, students and staff informed, other agencies involved)?			
Police incident reference number (if applicable)			
First aid details			
Was first aid given?			
If yes, who gave the first aid?			
Was an ambulance or doctor called?			
Who called them?			

What time were they called?	
Drug details	
Were any drugs found/removed?	
Where were they found/seized?	
Name of witness:	
Signature of witness:	
Disposal arrangements:	
Police incident number (where applicable):	
Parental details	
Were parents informed?	
Reason for deciding not to inform parents, where applicable:	
Name of parent informed, where applicable:	
Who informed them of the incident?	
At what time were they informed?	
Administrative details	
Form completed by:	
Job role:	
Signature:	
Follow-up action taken	

