



St George's School Harpenden, Academy Trust

Drug Education & Management of Student Incidents Involving Drugs

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Reviewed & Approved:

Expectations of students and procedure for management of student incidents involving drugs

This policy was originally produced under the direction of the Governing Body and remains under their review.

Substances covered by this procedure

The school applies the definition used by the United Nations, defining a drug as a substance people take to change the way they feel, think or behave.

This procedure incorporates:

Solvents and volatile substances

Over the counter and prescription medications

Alcohol

Tobacco

Other legal drugs e.g. alkyl nitrates, nitrous oxide

Illegal drugs (controlled under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971)

but this list is not exhaustive

Definition of school jurisdiction

This procedure applies on school premises at all times, and also applies to any members of the school community during school hours, whilst students are in residence in the Boarding Houses, on visits and trips, at school events or other occasions related to the school, and on any occasions when the pupils are the responsibility of the staff.

The procedure applies when students are off site because study leave or work experience arrangements are in place. When pupils are travelling to and from school they are considered to be representing the school and therefore the school rules apply. This includes sixth form students, who remain subject to school jurisdiction even if off site, for example on lunchtime exeat or when allowed off site if not being taught or in transit to another institution. The remit of the policy extends to being involved in drug-related activity at out of hours social functions which take place off site and out of staff supervision, but which are publicised by the organisers as school events and/or are attended by St George's students.

Consistent with the school discipline procedure, the school reserves the right to take interest in and impose sanctions for any misconduct by any student at any time, beyond the bounds of the school day, week and term, where such misconduct prejudices the good order and welfare of the school or its students.

Forbidden activity

Students must not engage in **any drug related activity** whilst under the jurisdiction of the school. This will obviously include involvement in the purchase, possession, supply, intent to supply, being concerned in supply, or consumption of the substances covered by this procedure.

A period of fixed term exclusion from school would normally be the penalty for involvement in purchase, possession, or consumption of illegal drugs or substance of abuse while under school jurisdiction. Permanent exclusion could be sanctioned for purchase, possession or consumption, depending on the circumstances.

Aggravating factors here might be:

- Repeated offending
- The class of substance possessed, with Class A more serious than B and then C and then prescription medication.
- Seniority of the student in the school in terms of age, with being in senior years of the school more aggravated than being in junior year.
- Involvement of other students
- If activity took place during the school day and/or on school premises. Consistent with criminal law, any activity within an hour either side of the normal school day, or within a short distance of school premises, or at a site known to be frequented by significant numbers of students, would also be seen as aggravated.

A student who is found while under school jurisdiction in possession of a drug or substance for abusive purposes is in breach of the school rule banning possession, even if the student was not planning to consume the drug while under school jurisdiction. A student who attempts to obtain a substance for abusive purposes from another St George's student by whatever means is in serious breach of school procedure, as such behaviour may lead the student who was asked to provide the drug into very serious misconduct. Both offences could be expected to lead to exclusion from school.

Any kind of involvement in supply of drugs is of greater seriousness than involvement in purchase, possession, or consumption.

Involvement in the **supply** of drugs can take many forms. Any of the following, for example, would be seen as involvement in supply of drugs and therefore a most serious offence:

- Sharing a drug with others
- Helping or facilitating another student to gain access to drugs or come into contact with someone willing to sell drugs.
- Making an arrangement for another student to buy drugs, even if the transaction itself were to take place outside school and outside school hours.

Intent to supply or to attempt to supply is a serious offence, even if no supply actually takes place. A student does not have to make a monetary or other gain from passing on a drug to be guilty of involvement in supply. A student does not have to solicit others to take possession of a drug to be guilty of involvement in supply. A student does not have to be introducing or encouraging others who have no previous drug involvement to be guilty of supply. A student who supplies a substance to another as a drug of abuse commits a serious offence even if he/she is passing over a substance which is not an illegal drug and is not harmful. For a student to lead another to unwittingly consume a drug of abuse is a serious offence.

Students who place themselves in such a way as to give support and encouragement to drug related activity (e.g. by joining students who truant from class to smoke a drug of abuse) should expect to face serious sanction for offering that support and encouragement, even if they bought no drug and consumed no drug themselves. One reason for this is to prevent students from starting to associate with drug activity which might lead them into very serious misconduct themselves on later occasions.

Abuse of drugs which can be bought commercially or obtained under prescription is strictly forbidden and a serious offence, again meriting exclusion.

The school is not able to legislate for every eventuality. The above examples demonstrate the type of conduct which would be in breach of school rules and in some cases the criminal law also. All such involvements would be likely to lead to a period of exclusion from school, up to and including permanent exclusion. The school will use definitions of terms such as "possession" and "supply" which are consistent with the current criminal law.

Any involvement in **supply** of drugs is an aggravating factor which would make permanent exclusion more likely than fixed term exclusion.

Limited discretion allowed to students to carry medicines for personal use

Those students who have a long term need to carry personal insulin, inhalers or epipens are permitted to carry their own medication, and are responsible for keeping it secure from other students if they do so. Parents should notify the school of this need. Any student may carry a single dose of their own prescription medication or an over the counter medication during the school day **for their own personal use**, and are responsible for keeping it secure from other students if they do so. Such items can be lodged with the school nurse for safe keeping if preferred. Boarding students must lodge prescription items with the Boarding House. In the unlikely event that a student has been prescribed a controlled drug to be taken during the school day, this must be lodged with the school nurse.

Consumption of alcohol by students at formal school social events

In the case of the most senior students and boarder students in particular, there will be nominated circumstances where the consumption of alcohol is permitted. This will be at social events attended by staff, *under staff supervision as part of the cultural experience of some educational visits*, in other limited circumstances as defined by the Boarding House Handbook, and will be compliant with the school Premises Licence issued to the school by local authorities.

Searching in the context of drugs related incidents

Staff may request a student to empty pockets and remove coats and jackets for search if the student has given reasonable cause for legitimate suspicion that he/she is in possession of a banned substance. Should the student decline, the police may be called, with the student observed in the meantime to prevent disposal of any substance.

The student's bag(s) can be searched. Lockers, drawers, wardrobes etc. are school property and a condition of their use is that they can also be searched with or without student permission; however, staff must always have another adult present as witness. Parents need not be notified ahead of searches, nor ahead of a student being interviewed.

The school can and will enlist the support of police search dog teams to support its efforts to eradicate drugs of abuse from the site.

Disposal

Any disposal of illegal substances will be undertaken by the police or by a senior member of staff with witness. If a disciplinary process is in train, this will only be done once the nature of the substance has been definitively established as far as is possible.

Responding to incidents

Any incident, or even a suspicion/concern expressed about the possible use or promotion of such substances will be investigated and recorded. The immediate priority will be to establish whether there is a medical emergency which needs immediate action. If an individual's behaviour is thought to be irrational and completely out of character, the pupil's Head of House should be informed immediately and the matter investigated sensitively with a witness present. The parents will then be contacted, and students will be told that this is to be done. In the case of boarders out of school hours the Head of Boarding should investigate the matter with a witness present and then the parents should be contacted. In the event of a search being deemed necessary a Deputy Head or Assistant Head Teacher [another member of staff in the case of the Boarding Houses] must be present when this is carried out.

Responding to suspicion of drug involvement

Staff will have to form a judgement as to the point where they might contact a parent to report a suspicion of possible drug involvement by a student. They will not do so unless they believe significant and well-founded evidence has been received or developed.

This “non-blame” route would be taken where the suspicion points to activity beyond school jurisdiction or where, in the judgement of senior staff, the prospects of a successful investigation of a suspected breach of school rules are slim.

All information must be recorded and passed on to the nominated member of staff.

If it is suspected to be a ‘controlled drug’ it is a police matter. The substance concerned is to be sealed in a bag, dated and witnessed, and kept in secure storage. The age of criminal responsibility for these offences is 10 years.

Investigating drug-related incidents

It is important that any member of the school community who reports drug use or suspicions/concerns should be interviewed with a witness present, and that everything is recorded in writing. Where activity is suspected that may be permanently excludable, a member of staff should be present to support the student being interviewed, in addition to the teacher investigating and the person witnessing and recording, and the role of this member of staff will be explained to the student. Parents would normally be contacted at the end of the school's investigation.

All material breaches of the school rules in this area may be expected to lead to a period of exclusion from school. The **Headteacher** has the right to impose a fixed period or permanent exclusion, following the proper procedures, on any student involved in drug-related misconduct. The duration of the exclusion, and whether it is fixed term or permanent, will depend on the circumstances of the case, with involvement in supply of drugs of abuse particularly likely to be met with permanent exclusion.

Immediate fixed term exclusion may be necessary whilst further investigation takes place, or if on the balance of the evidence available, the Headteacher judges that this is an appropriate course of action. In this event, the normal exclusion procedures will be followed. However, immediate exclusion may not be possible, not because the offence is not serious but because such cases may require lengthy and complex investigation and students may be needed in school until this investigation is complete in all its regards. Exclusion may also apply where the substance is not illegal, but thought to pose a danger to the individual or others.

The school provides a **support** service for those involved in or affected by drug related incidents. This can be done through Student Services or through the pastoral system as is appropriate. It can follow disciplinary action, and can be initiated by either the student or school staff. School staff cannot guarantee that disclosures of drug related activity will be kept confidential.

Dealing with student disclosure

Where a student initiates a disclosure about their drug related activity, seeking assistance and pastoral support, the issue will not be dealt with as a disciplinary matter unless the activity described has had or could have had a substantial and harmful impact on other members of the school community. You can ask for help and expect to get it. However, once a disciplinary investigation is under way, or should a student continue to engage in drug activity once support is in place, consequences detailed in this procedure may be enacted.

Impact of an incident on the school community

After an incident has occurred all members of staff should be made aware in order to prevent further issues. In certain cases this information could be used in order to inform pupils about the risks and consequences of drugs. Consideration will be given to whether other parents need to be informed of the incident in general terms.

Monitoring this procedure

Staff from both the day and boarding school, along with parents and senior students, have all been involved in drafting and then revising this procedure. School leadership and representatives of the school community, will review it in the summer of 2020.

Appendix:

In St George's the **designated school 'officer'** for any matter connected with drug abuse is, at present, Mr Patrick Storrie. He should be informed in any instance where drug related activity is suspected. In the event of Mr Storrie being unavailable, Mrs Christine Theakston is also designated as having responsibility.