



ST BENET BISCOP
CATHOLIC ACADEMY

Drug Policy 2024

Document Control
Owner: Mrs L Poulter
Date of last review: September 2024
Date of Governor Approval: 9 October 2024
Review date: September 2026

This policy reflects national guidance and priorities as outlined in:

[DfE and ACPO drug advice for schools \(2012\)](#), [HM Government 2017 Drug Strategy](#),

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/62d1643e8fa8f50bfbe55c/Searching_Screening_and_Confiscation_guidance_July_2022.pdf

This policy relates to the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Behaviour Policy, Health and Safety Policy, Educational Visits Policy, Visitors in School Guidelines and Data Protection Policy.

A copy of this policy is made available for each member of staff (teaching and non-teaching) and each member of the governing body. Reference copies are available from the head teacher for parents/carers and all other persons who come into contact with the students.

The policy will be reviewed every two years. This will include evaluation of teaching and learning activities, resources, staff training requirements and the use of outside visitors. Evaluation tools could include discussion groups and feedback from external inspection.

The policy will also be revisited and reviewed at any time the school has to address an incident involving illegal or illicit drug use.

Definition – What is a drug?

A drug is any substance that affects the way in which the body functions physically, emotionally or mentally. Where this document refers to drugs, this includes alcohol, tobacco/nicotine (including vaping devices), illegal drugs, medicines, new psychoactive substances (NPS) and volatile substances, unless otherwise specified.

The Purpose of the Policy

The aim of this policy is to clarify the school's role in drug education and prevention and to provide information about procedures in response to any drug related incident for all staff, students, parents/carers, governors and visitors on to the school site.

Rationale

“As part of the statutory duty on schools to promote students' wellbeing, we recognise that we have a clear role to play in preventing drug misuse as part of our pastoral responsibilities.” – [DfE and ACPO drug advice for schools 2012](#)

This school is committed to the health and safety of all students and will work together with parents/carers and the local community to enable students to make informed healthy choices and discourage the misuse of drugs by providing a balanced drug education programme, containing accurate and up to date information alongside the development of life-skills.

To Whom Does the Policy Apply?

This policy applies to school students, all staff, governors, parents/carers and all visitors on site.

Where Does the Policy Apply?

This policy applies at all times when staff are acting in loco parentis, this includes educational visits in line with the **School's Educational Visits Policy/[Northumberland County Council Educational Off-site Visits Code of Conduct](#)**. The policy applies to students during break and lunchtimes. It also affects the use of school premises after normal school hours. Organisers of any after school events should be made aware of the policy and their responsibility to implement it.

Roles and Responsibilities

- **Headteacher** – the head teacher takes overall responsibility for providing a safe place of work for all staff and students and as such takes responsibility for this policy, its implementation and for liaison with the governing body, parents/carers, LA, media and appropriate outside agencies in the event of a drug related incident. Students who are suspected of being at risk from drug misuse will be supported with assistance from relevant agencies; including [SORTED the Northumberland Young People's Substance Misuse Service](#)
- **Governors** – as part of their general responsibilities for the management of the school the governors play a key role in the implementation of the school's policy for drug education and prevention (as referenced in [DfE and ACPO drug advice for schools 2012](#)). They will continue their involvement through regular evaluation of the policy.
The named lead Governor with responsibility for this policy is Christine Mills
- **All Staff** – Drug prevention is a whole school issue. All staff, both teaching and non-teaching should be aware of the policy and how it relates to them should they have to deal with a drug related incident. This includes lunchtime supervisors, caretakers and cleaning staff. If they have any queries or training requirements these should be made known to the head teacher/PSHE coordinator. Sorted, Northumberland's Young People's Substance misuse Service, offer bespoke training to staff including pastoral leads around substances and useful resources, please contact Sorted for more information:
<https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Children/Young/SORTED.aspx>
- **Caretaker** – The caretaker regularly checks the school premises - any drugs or drug paraphernalia found will be recorded and reported to the head teacher and dealt with in accordance with this policy
- **Parents/Carers** – Parents and carers are encouraged to support the school's drug education programme and have access to this policy. They are responsible for ensuring that the guidelines relating to medication in schools are followed. Parents/carers have the right to be informed of any incident that could result in potential harm to their child. This can be a very sensitive issue for parents/carers, and therefore, it will be handled with care and consideration. The head teacher will consider if there are any special circumstances, which may temper this right, including any safeguarding concerns.
- **Others within school** – e.g., volunteers, parent helpers etc. - Drug prevention is a whole school issue. Visitors working on the school site should be aware of the policy and how it relates to them

Drug Education

Aims and Objectives

The main aims of our drug education are:

- To help protect children from becoming vulnerable to criminal exploitation
- To enable students to make healthy, informed choices by increasing knowledge, exploring their own and other people's attitudes and developing and practising skills
- To promote positive attitudes towards healthy lifestyles
- To provide accurate information about substances
- To equip students with the knowledge, understanding and skills that enable them to make informed social and moral choices. The programme has the primary objective of helping children to become more confident and responsible young people.
- To increase understanding about the implications and possible consequences of use and misuse
- To raise students' awareness of the world of drugs so that they can make informed decisions in order to reach their full potential
- To enable children to discuss moral questions and share their thoughts in a safe environment
- To let children know what they should do if they come across drugs or are aware of other people using them
- To provide children with knowledge and information about drugs and the harmful effects they can have on people's lives
- To help children become more self-confident so that they are able to make sensible and informed decisions about their lives
- To ensure that all children are taught about drugs in a consistent manner, following guidelines that have been agreed by parents, governors, staff and students
- The school provides a planned drug education curriculum as part of RSHE and through the science curriculum. The programme reflects knowledge and understanding, attitudes and personal and social skills. The programme is responsive to the needs of the students and relevant to their age, experience and maturity. The programme will involve a wide variety of strategies.

The school recognises that all students are likely to know something about drugs, although this knowledge may be inaccurate, incomplete or based on myth. The school will strive to use students existing knowledge, beliefs, experiences and their views on what should be included in their drug education as a baseline for the development of the programme. Inclusion of this information ensures that the content is contextual, credible and relevant and it provides a baseline against which the programme can be evaluated. Existing knowledge and understanding will be identified and assessed through draw and write activities, circle time, graffiti sheets, questionnaires and through discussion in class and school councils.

The school acknowledges that special consideration must be given to particular groups of young people, including students with special educational needs, students whose parents/carers or relatives use drugs, students who have missed substantial amounts of schooling, students vulnerable to drug misuse and those vulnerable to criminal exploitation. The school will ensure an appropriate focus is placed on drug education for these groups and where appropriate will provide targeted interventions that may involve the use of external agencies to enhance delivery.

Methodology and Resources

Drug education within the school shares the features expected in any other subject area delivered within the school, it will be taught within a safe, secure and supportive learning environment and will be delivered using a variety of interactive and participatory teaching methods and a range of opportunities for learning will be provided.

Teachers will always maintain responsibility for the overall drug education programme and external contributors will be used to enhance lessons not as a substitute teacher. When using external contributors, the school will ensure that the sessions are pre planned and that the school will adhere to **their visitor guidelines and the [Keeping children safe in education 2024: part one \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)**

A teacher will be present at all times when external contributors are delivering sessions.

Staff Support and Training

It is essential that all school staff (teaching and non-teaching) have a general drug awareness and a good understanding of the policy, including an understanding of how to manage drug incidents. New staff to the school will also be able to access training as part of their induction.

Drug education is more effective when taught by teachers who have the necessary subject knowledge and the school will strive to provide or access appropriate training for all staff (including NQTs, new staff). The school's senior management team will support access to CPD and any member of staff wishing to attend training should contact the head teacher/PSHE co-ordinator. The school accesses drugs training for staff from: [Sorted; The Northumberland Young People's Substance Misuse Service.](#)

Assessment, Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The elements of drug education delivered as part of the science curriculum will be assessed in accordance with National Curriculum requirements. The learning from other elements of drug education will be assessed as part of overall RSHE provision. The school will use a variety of methods to assess drug education including student evaluation of lessons, and will not concentrate solely on the knowledge gained.

The quality, relevance and effectiveness of the school's drug education programme will be reviewed regularly by the **designated member of staff** and this process will be integral to the planning and development of the PSHE programme.

Managing a Drug Incident in School

This section of the policy provides the framework of procedures for dealing with an incident, in line with the [DfE and ACPO drug advice for schools \(2012\)](#). The primary concern of the school is the care and welfare of the students and, as such will seek to balance the safety and security of the school with the needs of students.

The member of staff responsible for coordinating the school's response to drug incidents is Kevin Shepherd – Headteacher & Lesley Poulter DSL Assistant Headteacher

[Searching and Confiscation](#) – Advice on searching and confiscations can be found in [Searching, Screening and Confiscation \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

Following a search, whether or not anything is found, the school is advised to make a record of the person searched, the reason for the search, the time and the place, who was present and note the outcomes and any follow-up action.

General power to confiscate – 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 student's property as a disciplinary penalty, where reasonable to do so.

Where the person finds other substances which are not believed to be controlled drugs these can be confiscated where a teacher believes them to be harmful or detrimental to good order and discipline. **This may include electronic cigarettes and other vaporising devices.** If staff are unable to identify the legal status of a drug, it should be treated as a controlled drug.

Involving parents/carers and dealing with complaints – Schools are not required to inform parents/carers before a search takes place or to seek their consent to search their child. We would normally inform the individual student's parents/carers where alcohol, illegal drugs or potentially harmful substances are found, though there is no legal requirement to do so.

Complaints about searching should be dealt with through the normal school complaints procedure.

Legal drugs – The police will not normally need to be involved in incidents involving legal drugs, but schools are advised to inform [trading standards](#) or police about the inappropriate sale or supply of age restricted products such as tobacco, alcohol and volatile substances to students in the local area. Trading Standards can be contacted on 01670 623870 and information may be left anonymously.

The NPS Act which came into force on 26th May 2016 has made all Novel Psychoactive Substances (NPS) illegal to produce, supply, offer to supply or possess with intent to supply.

Controlled drugs – In taking temporary possession and disposing of suspected controlled drugs we aim to

- Ensure that a second adult witness is present throughout
- Seal the sample in a plastic bag and include details of the date and time of the seizure/find and witness present
- Store it in a secure location, such as a safe or other lockable container with access limited to senior members of staff
- Notify the police without delay, who will collect it and then store or dispose of it in line with locally agreed protocols – see section entitled A Positive Approach: Northumberland protocols for managing drug related incidents. **The law does not require a school to divulge to the police the name of the student from whom the drugs were taken.**
- Record full details of the incident
- Inform parents/carers, **unless this is deemed not to be in the best interests of the student(s)**
- Identify any safeguarding concerns and develop a support and disciplinary response.

Drug Dogs and Drug Testing – The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) recommends that drug dogs and drug testing should not be used for searches where there is no evidence for the presence of drugs on school premises.

The school rules for the drugs named in this policy are: (these rules also apply to all school visits)

Medicines – see **school policy/guidelines** on the administration of medicines

Tobacco – the school and all its grounds are smoke free. Smoking will not be tolerated anywhere on the school site in line with school's **Smoke Free Policy**.

Alcohol – the possession or consumption of alcohol is banned on school premises during the course of a normal school day.

Solvents – the school will ensure that potentially harmful substances, including aerosols, are stored safely and students supervised carefully in the event of them being used in the course of the school day.

Illegal Substances – no illegal or illicit substances should be brought to school or used on school premises.

Unauthorised Substances – such as e-cigarettes, vaporisers or other ‘vaping’ devices, should not be brought to school or used on school premises.

Northumberland advice for managing drug, alcohol, volatile substance related incidents in schools.

In the event of a drug related incident occurring on school premises, the school will follow the guidelines recommended by Northumberland LA; A Protocol for Managing Drug, Alcohol, and Volatile Substance Related Incidents in School.

Student suspected of involvement in drug incident on school premises (including school grounds): If required telephone appropriate agency to seek advice: SORTED 01670 536400. The school may also contact their Neighbourhood Police Team for advice. Complete Drug Incident Information form. Co-ordinate any in-school follow up, if required, by telephoning appropriate agency to seek further advice.

Students (identified/not identified) suspected/reported of involvement in drugs incidents off school premises but during the school day: If required telephone appropriate agency to seek advice. SORTED 01670 536400. As above, schools may also wish to contact their Neighbourhood Police Team. Complete safeguarding concern for children involved. Co-ordinate any in-school follow up.

Student presenting intoxicated on school premises – alcohol/volatile substances/medicines: Seek medical advice where necessary. Contact parent/carer to remove student on health and safety grounds. If student displays threatening or disorderly behaviour and police support is required urgently, ring 999 and report incident. Complete safeguarding concern for children involved. Take action to offer relevant support e.g., SORTED 01670 536400

Student presenting intoxicated on school premises – drugs classified in the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 and New Psychoactive Substances (NPS): Seek medical advice where necessary. Contact parents/carers to remove student on health and safety grounds. If student displays threatening or disorderly behaviour and police support is required urgently, ring 999 and report incident. Complete safeguarding concern for children involved. Take action to offer relevant support e.g., SORTED 01670 536400. Contact local police to dispose of the substance.

Student found in possession and/or supplying drugs on school premises: Students should be encouraged to hand over drugs in their possession. Where at all possible take possession of the drugs involved and store securely in a drug suitable container. **Police action required due to potential criminal offence.** Contact police on 101 to report incident. **Schools do not have to report the identity of the student.** Seek co-operation from student to remain on school premises. If they refuse, update police on 101 using incident number or call 999 in an emergency. Police will attend incident at school and remove drug from premises (this is unlikely to be require an immediate response from police). Schools should make a referral to SORTED 01670 536400.

Staff member or visitor suspected of involvement in drug incident on school premises: Drug legislation and school policy applies to all school staff, governors and visitors, including parents/carers. In relation to school staff involved in a drug related incident, school can apply the school’s staff code of conduct and [Northumberland County Council Code of Conduct](#). If a visitor presents safeguarding issues, disorder or violent behaviour contact police immediately.

Dealing with parents/carers under the influence of drugs on the school premises: When staff are at all concerned, they should maintain a calm atmosphere whilst attempting to continue discussion with the parent/carer. If they are there to take a student home staff will discuss alternative arrangements to ensure the student will remain safe. **The safety of the student should be the key focus at all times.** Any such incidents must be recorded and if they occur repeatedly or if the parent becomes abusive or violent the school will invoke safeguarding children procedures and may inform the police.

The school acknowledges that any response taken to deal with drug related issues must balance the needs of the individual with those of the wider school community. Information regarding young people's needs in relation to drug use will come from a variety of sources not just as a response to an incident. The school will carefully examine all evidence before proceeding with any action and will take a wide range of responses into consideration.

When considering disciplinary actions for students involved in substance misuse, it is important to recognise that students on fixed term exclusions are more likely to become vulnerable to criminal exploitation including [county lines](#). Northumberland County Council would encourage schools to avoid fixed term exclusions for drug related incidents where possible and consider alternative disciplinary action. Any action taken should support student safeguarding and keep students safe from criminal exploitation.

Schools are a primary safety factor in protecting children and young people from criminal exploitation. Any student involved in a drug related incident, and/or being considered for exclusion due to substance misuse should be referred to [SORTED 536400, the Northumberland young people's substance misuse service](#).

The school's response to drug incidents in school could include the following sanctions:

- Pupils may be suspended for a certain period of time as agreed upon by members of the governing committee.
- Pupils may be permanently excluded from the school.

Pastoral Support

The school acknowledges the importance of its pastoral role and will **support all concerned in ensuring the wellbeing of students and will take into consideration the increased risk of criminal exploitation of students who are excluded from school.** To reinforce this, any actions taken will be in line with the **school's behaviour policy and child protection policy.**

Where appropriate the school will consider the use of an [Early Help Assessment \(EHA\)](#) to assess the needs of the young person and to access multi-agency support where required. In all cases involving drugs, the student and their family will be offered help and support from the school and a [referral will be made to SORTED 01670 536400.](#)

Limits of Confidentiality

Where a member of staff is questioning a student, **no guarantee of confidentiality** can be given. This should be made clear to the student at the outset of the conversation. Information regarding a student's involvement in a drug related incident might be pertinent to other agencies involved in the student's care e.g., Youth Offending Service, Northumberland Children and Young People's Service (CYPS) Northumberland Adolescent Service, Education Support for Looked After Children (ESLAC) Team. Information should be shared in line with existing information sharing protocols

Any disclosures will be dealt with in line with the school's data protection policy.

Dealing with the Media

This policy is made available to the wider school community – parents/carers, students, governors and staff. It is recommended that a statement outlining relevant drug information should be included in the school prospectus, newsletter or website. Any requests by the media for information regarding drug related incidents should be directed via the head teacher to the Northumberland Communications Team – 01670 622428

Reviewing the Policy

The record of incidents will be maintained. This policy will be reviewed when required – as the result of an incident, and also as part of the normal 2-year cycle of review. All groups involved in the initial development and those having an impact on its implementation will be involved in the review process.