

P8 Drugs and Alcohol Policy

Drug use and misuse have become increasingly common in society, and the pressure on students to be involved is now substantial. As part of our responsibility to the students and to society, the school recognises the need to:

- prepare and equip students for life in a drug-using society;
- deal with a broad range of drug related situations and incidents which may occur in the life of our students and others involved in the life of the school;
- teach students how to use legal drugs such as alcohol responsibly.

The aim of this policy is to outline the school's approach to all drugs, namely:

- Illegal drugs;
- legal drugs, including alcohol, tobacco, over-the-counter and prescription drugs.

1. Illegal Drugs

a) Policy

[The School's policy is that The Purcell School should be free from illegal drugs.](#) We believe that involvement with illegal drugs is always wrong for the following reasons:

- It is illegal. Using drugs can lead to a criminal conviction which will affect employment prospects, for example by making it impossible to visit certain countries including the USA. This could have serious implications for any career, but particularly in music.
- Drugs have harmful physical side-effects. Some of these are unpredictable and fairly immediate and account for a number of premature deaths amongst young people each year; all are now associated with longer term health problems.
- A small number of young people quickly develop some form of dependency on drugs.
- Involvement in drug culture tends to draw young people away from more worthwhile activities and often results in a falling away of academic and musical performance.
- Involvement with illegal drugs is damaging to the school community as a whole.

b) Dealing with Drug-Related Incidents

A drug-related incident may include any of the following:

- a student who is suspected of being under the influence of a drug by reason of their behaviour;
- the discovery of drugs or related paraphernalia on school premises;
- possession of drugs by an individual, whether or not on school premises;
- use of drugs by a student, on school premises or while under school jurisdiction;
- supply of drugs on school premises or to other students;
- individuals disclosing information about their drug use;
- rumours or reports of drug possession, supply or drug use.

Any drug-related incident (as defined above) will be investigated by a member of SLT, who may interview students and, if necessary, search their room and belongings (see 3. below). Students suspected of involvement may also be asked to take a drugs test.

Any student found to be involved with illegal or other harmful drugs while under school jurisdiction either on or off school premises can expect to be suspended from school and may

subsequently be expelled depending on the circumstances. The school reserves the right to inform the police.

However, we consider each drug related incident individually and recognise that a variety of responses is necessary to deal with incidents. We consider carefully the implication of any action we take, and seek to balance the interests of the student(s) involved, other members of the school and the local community.

- Sanctions may include withdrawal of privileges, gating, suspension or expulsion - see the [Behaviour and Sanctions Policy](#) for further details.
- Any student found to be involved in drug use can expect to have to agree to periodic drug testing and room searches as a condition of remaining at the school. Failure of a second drugs test will lead to immediate expulsion.
- The school will provide support by way of in-school counselling or referral to outside agencies.
- If a student comes forward and voluntarily identifies himself/herself as a drugs user and asks for help, we may (depending on the circumstances) offer him/her the opportunity to reform his/her habit with the support of a drugs testing programme and counselling (at parents' expense).

Students who are worried about a friend who may have taken drugs and is unwell must get immediate help from a member of staff, at any time of the day or night.

2. Legal Drugs

a) Tobacco

The school operates a 'no smoking' policy at all times throughout the buildings and grounds. This policy applies to students, employees, parents and visitors.

Students are not permitted to bring tobacco to school or to smoke at any time in school or when under the care of the school, even if outside the school grounds, e.g. when allowed out of houses in the evening, attending concerts or on school trips. Sanctions for smoking may include gating, letters to parents, detentions or suspension - see the [Behaviour and Students Policy](#) for further details.

The Purcell School is an unsuitable institution for those with an established smoking habit. However, help is available to give up smoking from the School Nurse, local GP and the Counsellor.

E-cigarettes are also banned, as research shows that they can lead to children developing a smoking habit, and many have been found to contain other harmful contaminants.

b) Alcohol

Students are not permitted to be in possession of alcohol or under the influence of alcohol on school premises or when under the jurisdiction of the school (e.g. on school trips). No student may enter licensed premises (including off-licences) during term time, except for those of legal age, who may be allowed to visit licensed restaurants with the permission of their Houseparent.

Where the school has reason to suspect that a student is under the influence of alcohol, the student may be required to undergo a breathalyser test. The school reserves the right to search students' rooms or belongings for alcohol where there is good reason to do so.

At the discretion of the Principal, alcohol (beer, wine or similar) may be offered to Sixth Form students at school functions. No alcohol will be served to students below the Sixth Form on any occasion. Alcohol may not be consumed in School without permission from the Principal and drink may be taken only in the presence of a member of staff.

Sanctions for breaking the school's alcohol rules will include gating, letters to parents, detentions or suspension. Supplying alcohol to other students, or a serious incident involving alcohol, will lead to "acceleration" through the disciplinary procedures and may lead to expulsion; see the [Behaviour and Sanctions Policy](#) for further details.

Any student involved in a situation where a friend may be vomiting or becomes unconscious should get immediate help from a member of staff, at any time of the day or night.

c) Solvents

Misuse of solvents will be treated as illegal drugs above.

Some ordinary substances lend themselves to misuse and therefore need to be carefully stored or managed. Solvent substances in classrooms and labs are stored securely in line with COSHH regulations.

d) "Legal Highs"

'Legal highs' (i.e. substances which produce similar effects to illegal drugs but that are not illegal under the Misuse of Drugs Act) will be treated as illegal drugs above since they carry the same risks, if not more. Some legal highs have been directly linked to emergency hospital admissions and, in some cases, deaths.

e) Medication

- Asthma inhalers are kept by students for easy and immediate access. Spare inhalers are kept in the Staff Room.
- Medicines that need to be taken by students during the school day are kept with the School Nurse in the Health Centre or by prior arrangement with the appropriate Houseparent/Matron.
- Special arrangements are made for students who suffer from serious medical conditions which require urgent or specialist care.
- Epipens: these are kept by students for immediate access, with spares in designated places. Staff are routinely made aware of these places, and about the students who possess epipens.

3. Search and Confiscation

The school reserves the right to search students' belongings, in order to keep the school free from substances which break these rules. Clear guidelines are laid down for the proper conduct of searches, and staff are required to follow them. If drugs, alcohol or other substances are found, the school reserves the right to confiscate them and pass them on to the police or destroy them. Further details may be found in the [Searching A Student Policy](#).

4. Drug Education

The aim of our drug education is to equip students with the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes to enable them to be in a position to make informed choices and to prevent or reduce the harmful consequences of drug misuse.

Objectives:

- To provide accurate information about drugs and the law relating to them.
- To increase understanding about the implications and possible consequences of use and misuse of drugs.
- To provide the opportunity to examine attitudes and values towards drug use.
- To identify of sources of appropriate personal support.

This education is provided through the school's PSHEE programme, and also through the science curriculum. Further details of the programme are available from the PSHEE coordinator.

<i>Policy author</i>	<i>Policy date/review date:</i>	<i>Next review due:</i>
Chris Rayfield	January 2020	January 2021