

P8 Drugs and Alcohol Policy

As part of our responsibility to the students and to society, the school recognises the need to:

- prepare and equip students for managing behaviour and making safe decisions in societies where misuse of drugs is increasingly prevalent;
- deal with a broad range of drug related situations related to risk, equipping them with skills that will serve them beyond school;
- educate students about the dangers and risks of legal drugs such as alcohol.

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.

Definition of Drugs

The definition of a drug given by the United Nations office on Drugs and Crime is: "A substance people take to change the way they feel, think or behave". Here, "drugs" and "drug education" is used to refer to:

- all illegal drugs (those controlled by the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971)
- all legal drugs, including alcohol, tobacco, volatile substances (those giving off a gas or vapour which can be inhaled), ketamine, khat, alkyl nitrites (known as poppers) and new psychoactive drugs ('legal highs')
- all over-the-counter and prescription medicines.

Students who are worried about a friend in relation with drugs and alcohol can talk to members of staff in confidence at any time. Students who are aware that peers are unwell as a result of drugs or alcohol must get immediate help from a member of staff, at any time of the day or night.

1. Illegal Drugs

a) Policy

The school believes that involvement with illegal drugs is always wrong and carries the risk of significant harm. The possession, use or supply of illegal and other unauthorised drugs in The Purcell School is not acceptable. The school is committed to safeguarding the health, safety and wellbeing of all members of the school community. In providing drugs education and responding to incidents involving drugs, our first concern is the pastoral care and health and safety of students.

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 involve the police and other external agencies.

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 will follow the [Behaviour and Sanctions Policy \(P4\)](#).
- Any student who is permitted to remain at the school following a drugs incident must agree to regular, periodic drugs testing.
- The school may provide support by way of in-school counselling or referral to outside agencies as a condition to a student remaining at the school.
- 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).

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 whilst under school jurisdiction. Sanctions for smoking will follow the [Behaviour and Sanctions Policy \(P4\)](#)

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, under the influence of alcohol on school premises or when under the jurisdiction of the school (e.g. on school trips). No student may drink alcohol in 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. Supply of alcohol to other students is a serious offence.

At the discretion of the Principal, alcohol (beer, wine or similar) may be offered to Sixth Form students at specific school functions under the supervision of members of staff. No alcohol will be served to students below the Sixth Form on any occasion.

Sanctions for breaking the school's alcohol rules will be in line with the [Behaviour and Sanctions Policy \(P4\)](#).

c) 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.
- Auto injectors: 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 auto injectors.

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 \(P15\)](#).

4. Drug Education

As stated at the start of the policy, 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.

Policy author	Policy date/review date:	Next review due:
T.Burns	September 2021	September 2022
T.Burns	September 2022	September 2023
K. Cayley / T. Burns	September 2023	September 2024
J.Mitchell/T.Burns	September 2024	September 2025
T.Burns / J.Mitchell	September 2025	September 2026