

## **POLICY ON SUBSTANCE ABUSE**

### **The School's Aims**

The School considers 'drugs' to include all potentially harmful substances (both legal and illegal) including: controlled substances, medicines, tobacco, alcohol and volatile substances.

We recognise that though drugs may not always be harmful, all carry the potential for harm. We aim to help pupils to learn this and to take responsible decisions.

The School condones neither the misuse of drugs nor their supply by any member of the School community or visitors to it. It is School policy that any pupil involved with taking or supplying a controlled or an illegal substance (for example cannabis) loses his or her right to continue as a member of the School.

The School's substance abuse policy aims:

1. to safeguard the health and well-being of all pupils and staff
2. to take account of all drugs and other potentially harmful substances (legal, medicinal and illegal) and the issues raised by their availability and use
3. to outline the aims and organisation of the School's education about drugs
4. to outline how the pastoral systems of the School will attempt to work with the young people and their parents to support those in need
5. to provide clear guidance about managing incidents involving drugs and suspected drug misuse
6. to unite all those who use the School behind a policy which is clearly understood by all it affects. The policy is therefore summarised in the pupils' diaries and provided to all parents on admission and via our website.

### **The Drug Education Programme**

The School has a programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE) which, as well as providing information, aims to develop the positive self-esteem of pupils to encourage them to make and stick to positive decisions about their own conduct. On the topic of drugs the programme specifically aims:

- to help pupils develop and practise the skills they need to cope responsibly in a society where there are drugs;
- to provide access to up-to-date and reliable information about medicines and illegal drugs as pupils need it;
- to enable pupils to explore a range of attitudes towards drugs and drug users, including their own and each other's attitudes;
- to explore issues relevant to pupils which are raised by the uses of drugs and by the trade in legal and illegal drugs for producers and consumers ;
- to make readily available to pupils sources of further information and support;
- to invite the support of parents for the School's policy and programme regarding drugs.

This programme has co-ordinators in both the Junior and Senior Schools. The co-ordinators arrange the coverage of relevant topics and issues in different areas of the curriculum including English, Drama, Science, and PE as well as within periods devoted specifically to PSHE. They seek to ensure a broad programme to cover aspects and skills on a repeating and developing basis. They also aim to see that children (and parents) joining the School at different points are provided for appropriately.

All staff, because of their pastoral role, have some training in drug related issues on a regular basis. It is important that staff feel confident to deal with issues spontaneously when they arise. Additional training is provided for staff dealing with issues under the PSHE programme (including class teachers in the Junior School). The permanent staff

of the school are seen as having the main responsibility for the delivery of the programme but, as children get older, increasing use is made of visiting trainers, for example those registered with the Hertfordshire Drug Education Forum. The emphasis is on a facilitative and interactive approach that aims to empower pupils to take responsibility for their own well-based decisions that recognise their obligations to others. Some of the most productive discussions will be those that are unplanned and that arise incidentally.

Parents and all staff are provided annually with the current PSHE programme setting out the timing of topics being covered (attached as Appendix A). Further literature and briefings are provided on a three year cycle.

### **Information, advice and support for individual pupils and parents**

The School doctor and nurse are available to pupils for advice according to the usual rules of medical confidentiality (which include withholding information from parents and from the School where the child, despite advice, wishes this). They are able to refer pupils onwards in cases where this is appropriate.

The contact details of outside agencies in the drugs field are available to pupils and to parents.

Pupils and parents are encouraged to approach the Head or other staff for advice knowing that information and worries they may share will be treated sensitively. The School's terms of admission enable the School to offer confidentiality to pupils and parents providing information which may contribute to the disciplining - including the expelling - of another pupil.

While the School must reserve the ultimate right to deal with an infringement according to its disciplinary rules, it will not generally do so in cases of voluntary self-incrimination, unless the protection of others is a significant issue. In every such case the School's actions will be governed by a sense of pastoral concern.

### **Safeguards for drugs authorised to be used on school premises and school expeditions**

**Prescribed and 'household' medication** (other than that kept by individual pupils able to administer and control their own medication) is kept securely in the medical department, in boarding house medical cabinets with some items in first aid packs in line with National Inspection Framework Standards. A written record is kept of all medication given to pupils.

**Alcohol** may be consumed by senior pupils on a limited number of occasions for which specific advance permission has been given by the Head. Staff are requested not to drink alcohol in the presence of pupils other than on these occasions and when the School has a temporary licence for a social event. The possession, use of alcohol or its purchase is otherwise forbidden to pupils when under the School's auspices.

**Smoking tobacco:** Smoking by pupils, parents or staff is not allowed: either in School, the local environs, on expeditions, or in any other place where that person could be linked to or associated with the School. See the 'Smoking Policy' for more details.

**Pupil under the influence or overdosed:** If anyone is found under the influence of a drug or otherwise thought to be in need of medical help, this must be sought at once. An 'emergency procedures' poster is displayed outside the surgery and in boarding houses. It is very important to establish what drug or drugs have been taken and in what quantity.

### **The Misuse of Drugs**

**The Scope of the School's Concern:** The School is concerned about pupil welfare and behaviour, off as well as on the premises. The School's pastoral concern and

aspects of its disciplinary supervision can thus sometimes extend beyond the school site and also the school day, week and term.

**The finding of unauthorised drugs:** If anyone is found in possession of an unauthorised drug, it must be confiscated and handed to the Head or Deputy. Confiscated cigarettes and alcohol will be destroyed (and not kept for use by others). The Head will decide whether an unknown and possibly illegal substance is sent for analysis, referred to the police, or destroyed.

**Rumours and suspicions:** Some pupils may be particularly vulnerable to becoming chaotic or dependent drug users; this concern is kept in mind at periodic staff reviews of children and, where appropriate, at meetings with parents. There may sometimes be suspicions about recent incidents, about particular individuals or about parties being planned. To help protect and support pupils, such information must be passed to the Head or Deputy who, after consultation, will decide how the matter should be investigated. There may be cases of major concern about the welfare of an individual as a result of a particular incident or an accumulation of evidence and that person denies drug involvement. The Head may then decide that that person be asked to give a urine or other biological sample for analysis at the School's expense, following consultation with his or her parent or guardian. The School has an established procedure for administering such tests.

**Consequences for pupils found to have used unauthorised substances (legal or illegal) or supplied these to others, whether on or off the premises after starting at St Christopher:** As in other areas of School life, we want to enable children, if at all possible, to learn from their mistakes. It remains school policy, however, that any pupil involved with taking or supplying a controlled or an illegal substance (for example cannabis) loses his or her right to continue as a member of the School. Taking into account the rights, needs and safety of others, the pupil may, however, be allowed to continue in the School after a first offence but on a new contract under which both parent and pupil agree to special conditions, including required counselling, supervision by urine testing for as long as the Head decides and required departure after a second offence. A similar contract shall apply from the outset to any pupil known before admission to have been involved in substance abuse.

**Consequences** can involve one or more of the following. Drugs will rarely be the sole focus of an appropriate response.

- Counselling (at the parent's expense, if agreed after a maximum of three required sessions);
- Referral for medical treatment;
- Community work;
- Urine testing from time to time at the Head's discretion (and at the parents' expense);
- Monetary contribution to cancer relief charities for smoking offences;
- Suspension (and always after smoking indoors)
- Agreed withdrawal (and always after a second offence)
- Expulsion – the consequence to be expected by a pupil conducting the supply of illegal drugs to other pupils.

Advice and support is to be made available to parents and also to other pupils affected and to their parents.

**Other guidance and useful information** can be found in pupils' homework diaries and in the policies on discipline, medical provision, the procedure for taking urine samples, guidance for boarding staff (all available from the School Office) and on the Drugscope and 'FRANK' websites ([www.drugscope.org.uk](http://www.drugscope.org.uk) and [www.talktofrank.com](http://www.talktofrank.com)).

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