

**Bishop Challoner
Catholic College**



Next Review

September 2030

Review Period

4 Year

Ratification

Principal

Reviewed

September 2026

Website Published

September 2026

Current Status

Complete

Staff Owner

J. Jethwa

Government/DfE Requirement

Good Practice

Drug Education Policy

BISHOP CHALLONER CATHOLIC COLLEGE

DRUG EDUCATION POLICY 2026

PURPOSE, ETHOS AND SCOPE

This policy sets out Bishop Challoner Catholic College's approach to drug, alcohol, tobacco, nicotine and substance misuse education, together with the principles that guide prevention, early help, safeguarding and the management of drug-related concerns in school.

At Bishop Challoner Catholic College we believe that every person is made in the image and likeness of God. Our approach therefore promotes human dignity, informed and responsible decision-making, care for the body, compassion for those who need help, and a culture in which pupils can seek support without stigma.

The policy applies to all pupils, including Sixth Form students, and should be read alongside the school's Behaviour Policy, Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy, Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, RSE/RSHE Policy, Online Safety arrangements and relevant search/confiscation procedures.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Mrs Jethwa, as Personal Development Lead, is responsible for coordinating and reviewing the drug education programme and this policy. Miss Chance as Head of PSHE will liaise with all staff to ensure the policy is implemented. Together their responsibilities are:

- ensuring curriculum content reflects statutory Health Education and the school's RSHE curriculum;
- working with Science, RE, PE, pastoral staff and safeguarding leads to maintain coherent progression;
- quality-assuring resources and external contributors;
- using pupil voice, incident patterns, safeguarding information and local intelligence to identify emerging educational needs;
- supporting staff with appropriate resources and professional development;
- reviewing the impact of provision and recommending changes.

All staff share responsibility for maintaining high expectations, reinforcing consistent health and safeguarding messages, recording concerns appropriately and referring safeguarding matters to the DSL in accordance with school procedures.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY 'DRUGS'?

A drug is defined as 'a substance that people take to change the way they feel, think or behave' (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime).

For the purposes of this policy, drug and substance education includes:

- over-the-counter and prescription medicines, including the safe and appropriate use of medicines;
- alcohol;

- tobacco, cigarettes and other nicotine products, including vapes/e-cigarettes and nicotine pouches;
- volatile substances such as glues, gases and aerosol propellants;
- illegal drugs and controlled substances;
- new or emerging psychoactive substances and other substances that may present a health or safeguarding risk.

The school will not assume that all substance-related concerns are the same. Responses will take account of the substance, circumstances, age and vulnerability of the pupil, risk to others, safeguarding information and any need for health or specialist support.

NATIONAL AND EVIDENCE FRAMEWORK

This policy has been reviewed with regard to current Department for Education requirements and guidance, including the revised statutory Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education guidance in force from 1 September 2026; DfE drugs advice for schools; DfE searching, screening and confiscation guidance; and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.

Drug education is not treated as a one-off warning or information exercise. Evidence supports a planned, spiral and skills-based approach in which accurate knowledge is combined with opportunities to practise decision-making, risk assessment, communication, help-seeking and resistance to pressure.

The curriculum will be responsive to pupil need and local context, but will avoid approaches that sensationalise substance use, inadvertently normalise it, or rely on fear alone.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The school aims to:

- provide accurate, age-appropriate and evidence-informed education about legal and illegal substances and associated risks;
- develop pupils' ability to assess risk, make informed choices, manage pressure and seek help;
- challenge myths, misconceptions and inaccurate perceptions about how common substance use is among peers;
- teach the relevant legal, health, social, relational and safeguarding consequences of substance misuse;
- promote positive physical and mental wellbeing and healthy coping strategies;
- support pupils to understand how substance misuse can affect families, friendships, learning, attendance, personal safety and future opportunities;
- ensure pupils know how and where to access trusted support in school and beyond, signposting to agencies and medical services, if required;
- identify and respond to pupils who may be vulnerable because of their own substance use, the substance use of others, exploitation or wider safeguarding concerns;
- work constructively with parents/carers, health services, police and specialist services where appropriate.

CURRICULUM DELIVERY AND PROGRESSION

Drug education is delivered through a coherent whole-school Personal Development and PSHE programme, supported by relevant learning in Science, RE, PE, form time, assemblies and

Personal Development Days. Teaching will be sequenced so that knowledge and skills are revisited and developed with increasing depth.

Key Stage 3

- Year 7: foundations of healthy decision-making, recognising pressure, trusted adults, safe use of medicines, seeking medical guidance and how to respond in difficult situations. Dangers of vaping and nicotine.
- Year 8: physical and mental wellbeing, risk, influence, marketing and strategies for making healthy choices.
- Year 9: deeper drug education including legal context, short- and long-term risks, peer influence, impact on individuals/families/communities, help-seeking and links to exploitation and safeguarding where appropriate. Dangers of nicotine and alcohol and accessing support and medical guidance.

Key Stage 4

At Key Stage 4, pupils revisit and extend learning about substance-related health risks, addiction and dependence, decision-making, pressure, relationships, law, personal safety, mental health, consequences for future study/employment and routes to confidential or specialist support. Science and RE contribute where relevant to biological, ethical and relational understanding.

Key Stage 5

Sixth Form provision is age-appropriate and reflects increased independence. It may include law, risk in social situations, alcohol and drug-related decision-making, safe help-seeking, the impact of substance misuse on relationships, study, driving, employment and wellbeing, and emerging issues identified through pupil voice or safeguarding intelligence.

External speakers and agencies

External agencies may enhance the curriculum but do not replace planned teaching by school staff. Any visitor or resource will be quality-assured in advance, aligned with the school's Catholic ethos and safeguarding expectations, and used within a lesson sequence with preparation and follow-up. For example West Midlands Police and Aquarius attend school for age related workshops. All external visitors attend in line with safeguarding policy such as CES checklist and 'No platform Policy'.

TEACHING PRINCIPLES

- A safe learning environment and clear ground rules will be established.
- Teaching will use medically and legally accurate information from trusted sources.
- Pupils will not be asked to disclose personal or family experiences in front of peers.
- Distancing techniques and fictional scenarios will be used where discussion of sensitive issues is required.
- Teaching will be inclusive and adapted so that pupils with SEND can access key safety messages and support routes.
- Staff will correct misinformation without shaming pupils and will reinforce that seeking help is a responsible action.
- Questions that indicate a safeguarding concern will be handled in line with school safeguarding procedures rather than explored publicly in class.

TOBACCO, VAPING AND NICOTINE

The curriculum will explicitly address tobacco, vaping/e-cigarettes and other nicotine products including tobacco pouches and SNUS. Pupils will be taught that products containing nicotine can be addictive, that vaping is not for children or non-smokers, and that age restrictions and school rules apply. Teaching will address health, influence, marketing, peer pressure, misconceptions and help-seeking in an age-appropriate way.

School responses to possession or use of prohibited nicotine products will be consistent with the Behaviour Policy and safeguarding procedures. Where repeated use, dependence, coercion, supply or exploitation is suspected, the concern will be considered as a pastoral and safeguarding matter as well as a behaviour issue.

SAFEGUARDING, EARLY HELP AND SUPPORT

Substance misuse can be an indicator of vulnerability, exploitation, unmet health needs or wider safeguarding concerns. Staff must act on concerns promptly and follow the school's Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.

- A pupil who asks for help will be listened to and treated with dignity.
- Staff must not promise absolute confidentiality. Information will be shared on a need-to-know basis where necessary to safeguard the pupil or others.
- Concerns about exploitation, coercion, supply, significant changes in behaviour/attendance, or risk within the home/community must be referred to the DSL or deputy without delay.
- Where appropriate, the school will work with parents/carers and relevant health, early-help, police or specialist services.
- Emergency medical concerns will take priority over disciplinary action.

RESPONDING TO DRUG-RELATED INCIDENTS

Any suspected drug-related incident will be managed in a calm, proportionate and child-centred manner. The immediate priorities are safety, first aid/medical assessment where needed, safeguarding, preservation of evidence where relevant, and appropriate senior leadership involvement.

The school will consider:

- the nature and seriousness of the incident;
- the age, needs and vulnerability of the pupil(s);
- whether there is evidence of possession, use, supply, coercion or exploitation;
- whether other pupils or staff are at risk;
- the pupil's previous history and any existing support;
- the appropriate balance of sanction, education, support and safeguarding action.

Police involvement will be considered in line with DfE guidance, the law, the circumstances of the incident and local safeguarding arrangements. The school will not operate an automatic 'police in every case' approach; decisions will be proportionate and recorded.

SEARCHING, CONFISCATION AND PROHIBITED ITEMS

Any search or confiscation relating to drugs, alcohol, tobacco/nicotine products or other prohibited items will be undertaken only in accordance with current Department for Education searching, screening and confiscation guidance and the school's Behaviour Policy.

Staff must follow the school's authorised procedures and should not improvise searches. Parents/carers will be informed where required by guidance and school procedures.

MEDICINES

Legitimate medicines are treated differently from illicit or prohibited substances. Pupils requiring medication will be supported in line with the school's Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions arrangements. Misuse, sharing or unauthorised possession of medication will be considered in terms of both health/safety and safeguarding risk.

PARENTS, CARERS AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

Parents and carers are important partners in preventative education. The school will provide information about relevant curriculum content and, where appropriate, signpost families to trusted sources of advice and support. Individual incidents will be handled in line with safeguarding, behaviour and confidentiality requirements.

MONITORING, IMPACT AND REVIEW

The school will evaluate drug education through curriculum review, pupil voice, staff feedback, assessment of learning, safeguarding/behaviour trends and evaluation of Personal Development Days or external workshops. Evaluation will focus on pupils' knowledge, skills, confidence to seek help and ability to make informed decisions, rather than relying only on satisfaction surveys.

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if there is a significant change in statutory guidance, legislation, local risk or school practice.

KEY GUIDANCE, EVIDENCE AND RESOURCES

- Department for Education – Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education statutory guidance (revised guidance in force from 1 September 2026) – <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education>
- Department for Education / ACPO – Drugs: advice for schools – <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/drugs-advice-for-schools>
- Department for Education – Teacher training: drugs, alcohol and tobacco – <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teacher-training-drugs-alcohol-and-tobacco>
- Department for Education – Searching, screening and confiscation in schools – <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/searching-screening-and-confiscation>
- Department for Education – Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 – <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>
- PSHE Association – Drug and alcohol education evidence review – <https://pshe-association.org.uk/evidence-and-research/ks1-4/drug-and-alcohol-evidence-review>
- UK Government evidence – Prevention of drug and alcohol dependence – <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevention-of-drug-and-alcohol-dependence/prevention-of-drug-and-alcohol-dependence-accessible>