



Drugs Policy

Applicable to:	✓	Astley Community High School
	✓	Seaton Sluice Middle School
	✓	Whytrig Middle School
Approval body:	Pupil Support Committee	

Status:

Statutory policy or document	No
Review frequency	Governing Body to determine
Approval by	Governing Body to determine

Publication:

Statutory requirement to publish on school website	No
Agreed to publish on school website	Yes

Review:

Frequency	Next Review Due
Every three years	Spring 2028

Version Control:

Author	Creation Date	Version	Status
Business Manager (BW)	29 July 2020	0.1	Initial draft based on existing federation policy and NCC model policy (2020)
Changed by	Revision Date		
Business Manager (BW)	20 October 2020	1.0	Final approved version for publication
Business Director (BW)	30 March 2022	1.1	Amendment to review frequency only
Business Director (BW)	27 April 2022	2.0	Final approved version for publication
Business Director (BW)	17 February 2025	2.1	Three yearly review; minor changes to reflect change in terminology from exclusion to suspension
Business Director (BW)	9 April 2025	2.2	Updated 5.1 and 6.1 following review by Heads of School
Business Director (BW)	28 April 2025	3.0	Final approved version for publication

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The aim of this policy is to clarify the federation'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 to our schools.
- 1.2 This policy reflects national guidance and priorities as outlined in [DfE Drugs: Guidance for Schools \(2004\)](#), [DfE and ACPO drug advice for schools \(2012\)](#), [HM Government 2017 Drug Strategy](#), and [Screening, searching and confiscation \(2018\)](#).
- 1.3 The policy will be reviewed every three years, but will also be revisited and reviewed at any time the federation has to address an incident involving illegal or illicit drug use.
- 1.4 This policy applies:
 - to all staff, students, parents/carers, governors and visitors to our schools
 - during the normal school day and applies to students travelling to and from school and during break and lunchtimes
 - during the use of school premises after normal school hours
 - at all times when staff are acting in loco parentis, including educational visits in line with the federation's Educational Off-Site Visits Code of Practice

2 Definition - what is a drug?

- 2.1 A drug is any substance, which, when taken into the body, changes the way we feel, the way we see things and the way the body works. This policy covers a range of drugs including alcohol, tobacco, illegal drugs, medicines, new psychoactive substances (NPS) and volatile substances (solvents).

3 Rationale

- 3.1 The federation is committed to the health and safety of all students and will work together with parents/carers and the local community as part of our pastoral responsibilities 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.
- 3.2 The federation recognises the need to have a coherent and consistent approach to drugs education and a common policy for implementing this approach. We believe that our overall drugs strategy should not only focus on illegal drugs, but also on e-cigarettes, tobacco, alcohol, volatile substances (solvents) and other substances whose use or misuse may have harmful effects on health. Only by working together will we maximise our efforts to support our young people in tackling this challenge.
- 3.3 We condone neither the misuse of drugs and alcohol by members of our school nor the illegal supply of those substances. We share the responsibility for the education of young people with parents by keeping them involved and informed.
- 3.4 Drugs misuse is a threat to our young people, their families and their communities. Access to substances, both legal and illegal, now appears to be greater than ever before. The age at which youngsters become vulnerable to these substances has lowered significantly so that even children below the age of ten are at risk. Tragic

examples, both locally and nationally, have provided publicity as to the ultimate consequences of substance abuse.

- 3.5 “Young people are influenced by their parents, youth culture, the media, their peers and others - but education can play a key role in ensuring that young people know the risks of drug-taking and have the knowledge and skills to resist” (DfE Circular 4/95 - Drugs Prevention and School). Schools must work in conjunction with other agencies to formulate an effective programme of drug education.

4 Roles and responsibilities

Executive Headteacher

- 4.1 The Executive Headteacher takes overall responsibility for providing a safe place of work for all staff and pupils and, as such, takes responsibility for this policy, its implementation, and for liaison with the governing body, parents/carers, the local authority, media and appropriate outside agencies in the event of a drug related incident. Students who are suspected of being at risk from drugs will be supported and monitored with assistance from relevant agencies.

Governors

- 4.2 As part of their general responsibilities for the management of the federation, governors play a key role in the implementation and evaluation of this policy.

All Staff

- 4.3 Drug prevention is a whole school issue. All staff, both teaching and support, should be aware of this 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 Executive Headteacher.

Site Staff

- 4.4 Site staff regularly check the school premises - any drugs or drug paraphernalia found will be recorded and reported to the Executive Headteacher and dealt with in accordance with this policy.

Parents/Carers

- 4.5 Parents/carers are encouraged to support the federation’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 Executive Headteacher will consider if there are special circumstances, including any safeguarding concerns, which may temper this right.

5 Drug education

- 5.1 All students participate in PSHE/SMSC lessons relating to drug education from Year 5 to Year 11.

6 Managing a drug related incident - Seaton Sluice and Whytrig Middle Schools

Smoking E-Cigarettes/Tobacco or Drinking Alcohol

- 6.1 Pupils are not allowed to smoke e-cigarettes/tobacco or drink alcohol on school premises. If there is evidence of this happening, the pupil will be suspended and parents/carers will be informed in writing. Their support should, and usually does, ensure there is no recurrence.

Controlled Drugs

- 6.2 If a pupil is found to be in possession of controlled drugs, as detailed in the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, then:
- parents/carers and other appropriate outside agencies would be informed, and the police may also be informed
 - the pupil would be suspended from school for a fixed period
 - the pupil would be re-admitted into school in line with school policy and a support strategy put into place; any re-occurrence of handling controlled substances will result in permanent exclusion of the pupil
- 6.3 If a pupil is found to be supplying, or offering to supply controlled drugs this will automatically lead to permanent exclusion.

7 Managing a drug related incident - Astley Community High School

- 7.1 Although every effort is made to help our pupils understand the dangers of drug misuse, some may fail to heed the advice. All incidents involving drugs will be recorded. The school will consider each substance incident individually and recognise that a variety of responses will be necessary to deal with incidents. The school will seek to balance the safety and security of the school with the individual needs of pupils.
- 7.2 Any incident involving the misuse of drugs will take into account:
- the age and maturity of the pupil
 - the means by which the substance is acquired
 - the intention of the pupil and the circumstances of the incident
 - the method and frequency of use
 - the nature and legal status of the substance involved
 - any previous incidents of drug misuse by the pupil
 - any action being taken through the criminal justice system
 - the availability of support for the pupil and family from other agencies

Advice and Support for Students

- 7.3 Information about local drug and support services will be provided for students and parents/carers, but school staff will not give individual advice to students regarding drug use.

Smoking or Vaping

- 7.4 Students found to be smoking or vaping on site, not least because it is breaking the law, can expect a significant sanction including the use of internal exclusion. In

particular circumstances due to the change in the law, the school reserves the right to involve the police in the disciplinary and re-education process.

- 7.5 Smoking cessation as an issue will be addressed in PSHE lessons.

Drinking of Alcohol

- 7.6 The drinking of alcohol is not permitted on site. Students who breach this rule may face a fixed term exclusion.

Controlled Drugs

- 7.7 The consequence for any pupil found to offer to sell or to supply drugs or solvents clearly intended for misuse will be permanent exclusion and the police will be informed.

- 7.8 The consequence for any pupil found to:

- be in possession of drugs or solvents clearly intended for misuse
- be under the influence of drugs or solvents that have been deliberately misused
- have handled drugs or solvents clearly intended for misuse
- have taken part in any incident connected with drugs or solvents, (including downloading drug related screensavers; overt conversations, in classrooms about drugs and use of drug related graffiti)
- be in possession of paraphernalia for misusing drugs and/or solvents

will be suspension and the police will be informed, although this is not a legal requirement. Pupils would be readmitted into school in line with school policy and a referral will be made to a substance misuse worker. Any re-occurrence of handling controlled substances will result in permanent exclusion of the pupil.

- 7.9 All parents/carers are asked for their support in allowing senior members of staff (the Executive Headteacher, Heads of School, Assistant Headteachers and Student Progress Leaders) to request that students empty their bags, pockets, etc. if required to do so. Two senior members of staff will be present at such times.
- 7.10 The Executive Headteacher reserves the right to invite members of Northumbria Police force into school, with the Passive Alert Narcotics Detection Dog, to reinforce the message that 'drugs and dealing' will not be tolerated in school.

8 Limits of confidentiality

- 8.1 Where a member of staff is questioning a student, no guarantee of confidentiality can be given. This will be made clear to the student at the outset of the conversation.
- 8.2 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 and the Education Support for Looked After Children (ESLAC) Team, and will be shared in line with existing information sharing protocols.