

St Mary's Catholic Primary School



Managing Drug-Related Incidents Policy

**Date policy adopted: Summer 2026
Review date: Summer 2028**

Mission Statement

"Learning together in Faith and Love"

St. Mary's Catholic Primary School exists to serve the Roman Catholic families of the Parish of Our Lady of the Holy Souls, Kensal New Town and other local parishes. The aims of our school are:

- To promote Christian values where children live, learn and celebrate the teaching of Christ.
- To provide a curriculum which is broad, balanced and meaningful and where children can experience enjoyment and fulfilment.
- To promote the highest standards of teaching and learning within the framework of the National Curriculum.
- To develop in each child a sense of achievement, value and self-worth and to achieve the standards of which they are capable.
- To help our children acquire the skills of independent learning and make sufficiently rapid progress.
- To provide a safe and secure environment where children feel valued, and where they respect, help and care for each other.
- To involve parents in all aspects of their child's education and promote good home/school partnership.
- To develop in our children awareness and respect for the different cultures and religions represented in society and their responsibility to the wider community.
- To foster the continuing development of staff, parents and governors in serving the community.

1. Purpose of this Statement

At St Mary's Catholic Primary School, we are committed to promoting the health, safety and wellbeing of all members of our school community. We recognise that drug-related incidents, including those involving alcohol, tobacco, vaping, medicines or other substances, must be managed calmly, consistently and with the welfare of pupils at the centre of our response.

This statement provides clear guidance for staff, governors, parents/carers, pupils and visitors about how the school will respond to drug-related incidents. It supports a consistent and proportionate approach, while ensuring that safeguarding, health and wellbeing remain our priority.

We also recognise the importance of education. Through our PSHE/RSHE curriculum, pupils are supported to develop the knowledge, understanding, attitudes and skills they need to make safe and healthy choices, seek help when needed and understand risks in an age-appropriate way.

2. Definition of Drugs

For the purpose of this statement, the term "drugs" includes:

- Alcohol
- Tobacco
- Vapes and vaping products
- Illegal drugs
- Prescription medicines
- Over-the-counter medicines
- Solvents
- Other substances that may affect the way a person feels, thinks or behaves

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Drug-related incidents may involve use, possession, supply, disclosure, concerns about family substance misuse, inappropriate use of medicines, or adults attending school under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

3. Links to Other School Policies

This statement should be read alongside the following school policies:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- PSHE/RSHE Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Attendance Policy, where relevant

4. National Guidance and Curriculum Links

The school responds to drug-related incidents in line with relevant statutory guidance and departmental advice, including:

- DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education
- DfE and Association of Chief Police Officers Drug Advice for Schools
- DfE Guidance on Searching, Screening and Confiscation
- DfE statutory guidance for Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education

Drug, alcohol, tobacco and vaping education is taught through our planned PSHE/RSHE curriculum. This supports pupils to understand risk, make informed choices, know how to seek help and recognise the importance of keeping themselves and others safe.

5. Our Approach

At St Mary's, our response to drug-related incidents will always be guided by care, safeguarding and proportionality.

We will:

- Respond calmly and consistently
- Consider each situation individually
- Prioritise the health, safety and wellbeing of pupils and staff
- Follow safeguarding procedures where there are concerns about a child's welfare
- Work in partnership with parents/carers unless doing so would increase risk to the child
- Seek advice from relevant external agencies where appropriate
- Provide education and support following an incident
- Use sanctions proportionately and in line with the school's Behaviour Policy

We recognise that a drug-related incident may be a sign that a pupil or family needs help. Our aim is to respond in a way that protects the school community, supports those involved and helps pupils learn from the situation.

Exclusion remains an option in serious cases, but it will be considered only as a last resort and in line with school policy and statutory guidance.

6. Medical Emergencies

If a drug-related incident leads to a medical emergency, staff will follow the school's emergency aid procedures immediately.

This may include:

- Calling 999

- Seeking support from a first aider
- Informing the Headteacher, Head of School or Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Contacting parents/carers, unless safeguarding advice indicates this should not happen immediately
- Recording the incident in line with school procedures

The health and safety of the pupil or adult involved will always be the immediate priority.

7. Procedures for Managing Drug-Related Incidents

Any member of staff who becomes aware of a drug-related incident or concern must report this to the Headteacher, Head of School or Designated Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible.

This may include situations where:

- A pupil is suspected of being under the influence of alcohol, drugs or another substance
- A pupil has used or brought a vape, tobacco, alcohol, medicine or other substance onto the school site
- Drugs, vaping products, tobacco, alcohol, medicines or related items are found on school premises
- A pupil discloses concern about their own substance use
- A pupil discloses concern about substance misuse within their family or home environment
- A parent/carer or visitor appears to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs on school premises
- There is concern that a substance has been supplied to, by or near pupils

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The Headteacher, Head of School or Designated Safeguarding Lead will assess the situation and decide the appropriate next steps. These may include:

- Ensuring immediate safety
- Seeking medical support if needed
- Following safeguarding procedures
- Contacting parents/carers, where appropriate
- Seeking advice from the police or local safeguarding partners
- Recording the incident clearly and accurately
- Providing support for the pupil or pupils involved
- Considering any behaviour response in line with school policy

8. If a Pupil Is Suspected of Being Under the Influence

If a pupil is suspected of being under the influence of alcohol, drugs or another substance on school premises or during a school activity, staff will act quickly to keep the pupil safe.

Staff will:

- Inform the Headteacher, Head of School or Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Seek medical advice or emergency support if needed
- Move the pupil to a safe, supervised place if there is no immediate medical emergency
- Avoid leaving the pupil alone
- Contact parents/carers where appropriate
- Consider whether safeguarding procedures need to be followed
- Record the incident in line with school procedures

If tobacco or vaping is involved, the school will respond in line with this statement, the Behaviour Policy and safeguarding procedures where relevant.

9. If Substances or Related Items Are Found

If a substance, vape, tobacco product, alcohol, medicine or related item is found on school premises, staff must inform the Headteacher, Head of School or Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Staff should not investigate alone or put themselves at risk.

Where a substance is suspected to be illegal or harmful, it will be handled carefully and safely. The item will be placed in a suitable container or bag where possible, labelled with the date, time and location, and witnessed by another member of staff. The school will seek advice from the police about safe disposal or next steps.

Staff should not taste, smell or closely handle any unknown substance.

Where appropriate, parents/carers will be informed, and safeguarding procedures will be followed.

10. Managing Medicines on the School Site

Some pupils may require medicines that have been prescribed for a medical condition during the school day. Medicines will be managed in line with the school's Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy.

Pupils must not bring medicines into school or take medicines independently unless this has been agreed through the school's medical procedures.

If a pupil is found to be using medicine inappropriately, the school will:

- Ensure the pupil is safe

- Seek medical advice if needed
- Inform the Headteacher, Head of School or Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Contact parents/carers where appropriate
- Follow safeguarding procedures if there are concerns about risk or harm
- Review the pupil's medical needs and support arrangements

11. Disclosure by a Pupil

If a pupil discloses concern about their own substance use, or the substance use of a parent, carer, family member or another person, staff must respond calmly and sensitively.

Staff should:

- Listen carefully
- Reassure the pupil that they have done the right thing by speaking to an adult
- Avoid asking leading questions
- Explain that information may need to be shared to keep them or others safe
- Report the concern to the Designated Safeguarding Lead without delay
- Record the concern accurately, using the pupil's own words where possible

Parents/carers will usually be involved where appropriate. However, they should not be contacted before advice has been sought from the Designated Safeguarding Lead if doing so may place the child at greater risk.

12. Drug-Related Situations Involving Adults

All staff, parents/carers, visitors and other adults are expected to help keep the school site safe.

Staff must not consume alcohol, illegal drugs or other substances before coming onto the premises or while on the school site if this may affect their ability to carry out their role safely and professionally. Any concerns will be managed in line with the Staff Code of Conduct and relevant employment procedures. Support and signposting will be offered where appropriate.

If a parent/carer or visitor appears to be under the influence of alcohol, drugs or another substance on school premises, the matter will be referred to the Headteacher, Head of School or Designated Safeguarding Lead.

The school will take appropriate action to maintain the safety of pupils and staff. This may include:

- Asking the adult to leave the premises
- Contacting another responsible adult to collect a child
- Following safeguarding procedures
- Contacting the police if there is a risk of harm, disorder or unsafe driving

If it is suspected that a parent/carer has driven, or intends to drive, while under the influence of alcohol or drugs, the Headteacher, Head of School or Designated Safeguarding Lead may contact the police.

13. Smoke and Vape-Free Site

St Mary's Catholic Primary School is a smoke and vape-free site.

Smoking and vaping are not permitted anywhere on the school site. This applies to pupils, staff, parents/carers, visitors and contractors.

This includes:

- Cigarettes
- E-cigarettes
- Vapes
- Tobacco products
- Any related smoking or vaping equipment

This expectation also applies during school events, visits and activities where appropriate.

14. Searching, Screening and Confiscation

Where there are concerns that a pupil may have brought a prohibited item onto the school site, the school will act in line with DfE guidance on searching, screening and confiscation.

Only authorised staff will carry out searches, and this will be done in line with current guidance and school procedures.

Any prohibited or harmful items found will be managed safely and recorded appropriately. The school may seek advice from the police where an item is suspected to be illegal or poses a risk.

15. Support Following an Incident

Following a drug-related incident, the school will consider what support is needed for the pupil or pupils involved.

Support may include:

- A meeting with parents/carers
- Pastoral support in school
- Targeted one-to-one support
- Further age-appropriate education through PSHE/RSHE
- Referral to Early Help

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- Referral to health or safeguarding services
- Advice from local police or youth support services
- Support for affected peers where appropriate

The school will consider the wider circumstances of the pupil's life and will not view the incident in isolation. Our aim is to support pupils to stay safe, understand risks and make positive choices.

16. Staff Training

All staff receive information and guidance about managing drug-related incidents as part of safeguarding training and induction.

Training and updates may include:

- Recognising signs of concern
- Responding to disclosures
- Following safeguarding procedures
- Managing medicines safely
- Responding to vaping, tobacco, alcohol or substance-related concerns
- Understanding when to seek advice from external agencies

Designated staff who lead on responding to incidents or managing medicines will receive appropriate additional training where needed.

17. Recording and Confidentiality

All drug-related incidents and concerns must be recorded clearly and accurately in line with school procedures.

Records should include:

- Date and time
- Names of those involved

- What happened
- Actions taken
- Who was informed
- Any safeguarding decisions
- Any support offered
- Next steps

Information will be shared only with those who need to know in order to safeguard pupils, support those involved and manage the incident appropriately.

Staff must never promise confidentiality to a pupil. Where there is a safeguarding concern or risk of harm, information must be shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead without delay.

18. Dissemination

This statement will be shared with staff and governors and will be made available to parents/carers on request.

A copy will be available on the school website.

Relevant information from this statement will be shared with pupils in an age-appropriate way through the curriculum and school expectations.

19. Useful Organisations and Signposting

The school may seek advice or signpost families to appropriate support services, depending on the circumstances.

Useful organisations and sources of support may include:

- Local safeguarding partners
- Early Help services
- School nursing service

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- Local police or safer schools team
- Local drug and alcohol support services
- NHS advice services
- FRANK drug advice service
- Childline
- NSPCC

School leaders will ensure that signposting is appropriate to the needs and age of the pupil and family.

20. Policy Review

This statement was reviewed in July 2026 and will be reviewed again in July 2028, or sooner if guidance or school provision changes.

