



St. Joseph's Catholic Academy

In our School, may there be prayer,
learning and humour, hard work,
faith and friendship.



Drug & Alcohol Policy

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Bishop Chadwick
Catholic Education Trust

Policy details

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St Joseph's Academy Drugs, Alcohol and Substance Misuse Policy

Purpose of the Policy

This policy is aimed at all staff, pupils, parents/carers, governors and agencies working with St Joseph's Academy and has been developed in consultation with relevant stakeholders.

St Joseph's Academy will not tolerate the misuse of drugs, alcohol or other substances within its grounds, by pupils representing the Academy, travelling to or from school, or whilst participating in any Academy-organised activity, trip or visit.

This policy also applies to any adult who attends the Academy site and is intoxicated and/or in possession of illegal drugs or substances.

St Joseph's Academy is a smoke-free and vape-free environment. Smoking, vaping and the use of tobacco products are prohibited by all members of the Academy community on Academy premises and, where applicable, during Academy activities off-site. This expectation also applies to groups using Academy facilities outside normal school hours.

At St Joseph's Academy, we recognise that some pupils require prescribed or non-prescribed medication. Appropriate arrangements are made to enable medicines to be administered safely and in accordance with the Academy's Supporting Pupils with Medical Needs procedures.

This policy forms part of the Academy's wider commitment to safeguarding health, wellbeing and personal development.

Drug education plays a key role in equipping young people with the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to make informed and healthy choices. Through our Personal Development curriculum, including PSHE, Religious Education, Science, assemblies and wider pastoral provision, pupils are taught about the risks associated with substance misuse and how to seek support when needed.

The Academy aims to ensure that pupils understand the importance of healthy lifestyles and the impact that substances can have on physical health, mental health, relationships, education and future opportunities.

The Academy recognises that substance misuse, possession of drugs, drug-related paraphernalia or vaping devices may be indicative of wider safeguarding concerns including child criminal exploitation, county lines activity, coercion, peer pressure, neglect, mental health concerns or other vulnerabilities. All incidents will therefore be considered through both a behaviour and safeguarding lens.

The Academy takes a firm stance against illegal drugs whilst recognising that support, education and intervention may form an important part of the response to incidents involving pupils.

Definition of Drugs

For the purpose of this policy, "drugs" includes:

- All illegal drugs controlled under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971
- Alcohol
- Tobacco products
- Nicotine products
- Vape and e-cigarette products
- Volatile substances that can be inhaled
- GHB and similar substances
- Ketamine
- Mephedrone (MCAT)
- Alkyl nitrites ("poppers")
- New psychoactive substances
- Prescription medicines
- Over-the-counter medicines
- Any substance which has the capacity to intoxicate, alter behaviour, impair judgement or affect physical or mental functioning

Aims of the Policy

This policy aims to:

- Increase pupils' knowledge and understanding of drugs and substance misuse.
- Enable pupils to understand the risks associated with substance misuse.
- Challenge misconceptions around drugs, alcohol and vaping.
- Develop understanding of laws, rules and personal responsibility.
- Provide a consistent Academy response to drug-related incidents.
- Signpost pupils and families to support services where appropriate.
- Minimise the likelihood of substance misuse amongst young people.
- Ensure the safety of staff, pupils and visitors.
- Maintain a safe and supportive learning environment.
- Take a clear and robust stance against the possession, use and supply of illegal substances.

Parents/carers should be aware that any concerns or information suggesting that a pupil is using, supplying or bringing illegal substances, drug-related paraphernalia or suspected drug-containing vape devices onto the premises may be shared with the Police and other appropriate agencies where necessary to safeguard pupils and the wider school community.

Role of the School

As part of its statutory safeguarding and pastoral responsibilities, St Joseph's Academy will:

- Provide accurate information regarding drugs, alcohol and vaping.
- Deliver effective drug education through the curriculum.
- Promote healthy lifestyles.
- Support pupils who may be vulnerable to substance misuse.
- Work closely with parents/carers, health services, Police and other agencies.
- Use search, screening and confiscation powers appropriately.
- Respond consistently and proportionately to substance-related incidents.
- Safeguard pupils affected by substance misuse.

Searches, Screening and Confiscation

The Academy reserves the right to screen, search and confiscate items where there are reasonable grounds to suspect that a pupil may be in possession of prohibited items, drugs, alcohol, tobacco products, vaping devices, drug paraphernalia or any item which may place themselves or others at risk.

Searches and confiscation will be conducted in accordance with the Academy Behaviour Policy and current Department for Education guidance on Searching, Screening and Confiscation.

To help maintain a safe environment, the school may use hand-held metal detector wands and other screening measures where appropriate.

Metal detector screening may be used:

- As part of routine safeguarding procedures.
- Where information has been received from staff, pupils, parents/carers or external agencies.
- Where there are reasonable grounds to suspect possession of prohibited items.
- To support the safety of pupils, staff and visitors.

Refusal to cooperate with screening or searches may result in disciplinary action and may also be considered a safeguarding concern.

Where prohibited items are identified, they may be:

- Confiscated.
- Destroyed.
- Retained as evidence.
- Handed to the Police.

Management of Drug-Related Incidents

The Academy has a duty to:

- Promote a drug-free environment.
- Minimise the impact of substance misuse on learning and wellbeing.
- Act upon concerns regarding substance misuse.
- Apply appropriate sanctions where necessary.

- Provide support and intervention where appropriate.

Drug-related incidents may involve:

- Possession of known or unknown substances.
- Possession of alcohol.
- Possession of tobacco or vaping products.
- Possession of drug-related paraphernalia.
- Use of drugs or alcohol in school.
- Use of substances outside school affecting education or welfare.
- Supply or suspected supply of substances.
- Discovery of substances on Academy premises.
- Information received from pupils, parents, Police or external agencies.
- Self-referral by a pupil seeking support.

All incidents must be recorded on CPOMS.

Drugs on Academy Premises

Drug use on Academy premises is strictly prohibited except where prescribed medication has been approved in accordance with Academy procedures.

Parents/carers must inform the Pastoral Team and complete the appropriate medical needs documentation with the Academy First Aid Team before medication is brought onto the Academy site.

Incidents may include:

- Smoking on Academy premises.
- Vaping on Academy premises.
- Possession of tobacco or vape products.
- Possession or use of alcohol.
- Possession or use of illegal substances.
- Possession of suspected drug paraphernalia.
- Individuals attending the Academy under the influence of substances.
- Supply or suspected supply of substances.

Staff should immediately notify the Headteacher, Designated Safeguarding Lead or a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Appropriate actions may include:

- Approaching the individual.
- Searching or screening.
- Isolation from other pupils.
- Contacting parents/carers.
- Contacting the Police.
- Seeking medical assistance.
- Securing evidence.

Where illegal substances are found:

- The substance should be confiscated by a member of the Senior Leadership Team or Pastoral Team where safe to do so.
- The substance should be sealed securely.
- The date, time and circumstances should be recorded.
- The Police should be contacted.
- The item should be securely stored until collected by the Police.

Staff handling unidentified substances should wear protective gloves and wash their hands thoroughly afterwards.

Vaping and Drug-Related Vapes

The Academy recognises the increasing prevalence of vaping amongst young people and the growing risks associated with illicit vaping devices.

For the purposes of this policy, vaping devices include:

- Disposable vapes.
- Refillable vape devices.
- E-cigarettes.
- Vape liquids.
- Vape cartridges.
- THC or cannabis vapes.
- Synthetic cannabinoid vapes.
- Any device intended to inhale nicotine, vapour or psychoactive substances.

The possession, use, supply or distribution of vaping products by pupils is prohibited.

The Academy recognises that some vape devices may contain:

- Nicotine.
- Cannabis (THC).
- Synthetic cannabinoids.
- Psychoactive substances.
- Unknown or unregulated substances.

Any vape found in a pupil's possession will be confiscated and will not be returned.

Confiscated vaping devices may be destroyed or retained and sent for testing where there are concerns regarding their contents.

Where there is suspicion that a vape contains an illegal substance:

- The vape will be confiscated immediately.
- Parents/carers will be informed.
- Mrs Tubman, Designated Safeguarding Lead, will be informed immediately.
- The Police will be contacted.

- The incident will be recorded on CPOMS.
- Appropriate safeguarding enquiries will be undertaken.

Any pupil found supplying vaping products, vape liquids or drug-related vaping devices will be treated in the same manner as pupils supplying controlled substances.

Alcohol, Tobacco and Vape Possession by Pupils

Where pupils are found in possession of:

- Alcohol.
- Tobacco products.
- Vaping products.
- Associated paraphernalia.

The items will be confiscated and destroyed.

Parents/carers will be informed.

All incidents must be reported to the Headteacher, Designated Safeguarding Lead or a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Possible Outcomes Following a Drug or Vape Related Incident

The Academy will consider each incident individually.

Factors considered will include:

- Nature of the incident.
- Substance involved.
- Whether supply is suspected.
- Previous incidents.
- Age of the pupil.
- Vulnerability and safeguarding concerns.
- Advice from external agencies.

Possible outcomes include:

- Education and intervention.
- Restorative conversations.
- Pastoral support.
- Referral to internal or external services.

- Early Help involvement.
- Targeted safeguarding support.
- Risk assessment.
- Pupil Support Plan.
- Internal Isolation.
- Fixed-Term Suspension (FTS).
- Police involvement.
- Permanent Exclusion where appropriate.

The Academy adopts a graduated approach where appropriate. However, serious incidents involving the possession, use or supply of illegal substances or drug-containing vape products may result in immediate suspension and consideration of permanent exclusion.

A meeting involving the pupil, parents/carers, pastoral staff and relevant agencies may be arranged.

The purpose of this meeting will be to:

- Establish facts.
- Hear the pupil's views.
- Share relevant information.
- Agree support and intervention.
- Implement monitoring arrangements.
- Determine next steps.

Drugs on Educational Visits and Residential

Where drugs, alcohol, vaping products or related paraphernalia are discovered during an educational visit or residential trip, procedures will broadly follow those outlined in this policy.

The Academy reserves the right to require parents/carers to collect their child immediately or as soon as reasonably practicable.

Visit leaders must contact the Headteacher, Designated Safeguarding Lead or a member of the Senior Leadership Team immediately.

Staff must ensure that no promise of confidentiality is made to pupils.

All incidents must be fully documented and recorded on CPOMS.

Emergency Procedures

If a pupil appears to be suffering the effects of drugs, alcohol or other substances, staff should:

1. Remain calm.
2. Send immediately for a First Aider.
3. Contact Reception who will summon emergency assistance if required.
4. If the pupil is unconscious or semi-conscious, place them in the recovery position.
5. Call 999 immediately where appropriate.
6. Reassure the pupil.
7. Retain any containers, packaging, pills or substances for medical professionals.
8. Gather information where possible regarding what may have been consumed.
9. Stay with the pupil until assistance arrives.

Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Pupils should be informed that staff cannot guarantee confidentiality where there are safeguarding concerns.

Information will only be shared with those who need to know in order to safeguard and support the pupil.

All incidents will be managed in accordance with the Academy's safeguarding procedures, information-sharing protocols and Keeping Children Safe in Education requirements.

Role of Parents and Carers

Parents/carers play a crucial role in preventing substance misuse.

Young people are less likely to misuse drugs where:

- Positive family relationships exist.
- Expectations and boundaries are clear.
- Parents/carers actively monitor and support their children.
- Open communication is encouraged.

Parents/carers will be:

- Informed of the Academy's approach to drugs education.
- Informed of Academy rules relating to drugs, alcohol and vaping.
- Supported in accessing help and guidance where required.
- Expected to work in partnership with the Academy where concerns arise.

Relevant Legislation and Guidance

This policy should be read alongside:

- Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 (as amended).
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.
- Education Act 1996.
- Education and Inspections Act 2006.
- Equality Act 2010.
- Children and Young Persons (Protection from Tobacco) Act 1991.
- Human Medicines Regulations 2012.
- Supporting Pupils at School with Medical Conditions (DfE, 2015).
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation: Advice for Schools (DfE, July 2023).
- Behaviour in Schools: Advice for Headteachers and School Staff.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (or the current version in force at the time of implementation of this policy).



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