

Thames View Junior School

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Drugs, Alcohol and Tobacco Policy

September 2026



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Drugs Alcohol and Tobacco Policy

1. Rationale

Thames View Junior School is committed to providing a safe, healthy and supportive environment in which pupils can learn and thrive. Drugs, alcohol, tobacco and vaping products can cause harm to health, wellbeing, safety, relationships and learning. The school therefore has an important role in prevention, education, early help and the safe management of substance-related concerns.

This policy explains how the school teaches pupils to make safe and informed choices, manages medicines and other authorised substances, maintains a smoke-free and vape-free site, and responds to suspected possession, use, supply or exposure. The welfare and safeguarding of pupils will be central to every response.

2. Aims

This policy aims to:

- provide clear, age-appropriate education about medicines, drugs, alcohol, tobacco and vaping
- protect pupils, staff and visitors from harm and maintain a safe school environment
- set out consistent procedures for substance-related concerns and incidents
- ensure that safeguarding, health, pastoral support and behaviour are considered together
- clarify responsibilities for pupils, parents and carers, staff, leaders and governors
- ensure that searches, confiscation, sanctions and information sharing are lawful, reasonable and proportionate
- support pupils and families affected by substance use or misuse without stigma.

3. Scope and definitions

For this policy, the term substance includes controlled and illegal drugs; alcohol; tobacco, cigarettes and cigarette papers; vapes and vaping liquids; solvents and volatile substances; new psychoactive substances; prescribed and over-the-counter medicines; and any other substance that may be intoxicating, harmful or used inappropriately.

Drug use means taking a substance. Drug misuse means use that causes, or is likely to cause, physical, psychological, social, educational or legal harm. A substance-related incident includes suspected or confirmed possession, use, supply, sharing, concealment, exposure, intoxication, disclosure or discovery of drug-taking materials.

The policy applies on school premises, during the school day, while travelling to and from school where the school has a legitimate interest, on educational visits and residential trips, at school-organised events and whenever a pupil represents the school. Relevant expectations also apply to staff, governors, volunteers, visitors, contractors and parents or carers while on the school site or attending a school activity.

4. Legislation and guidance

This policy has been developed with regard to:

- the Education Act 1996 and the Education and Inspections Act 2006
- the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 and associated regulations
- the Psychoactive Substances Act 2016
- the Health Act 2006 and smoke-free legislation
- the Children and Families Act 2014 and statutory guidance Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions
- Department for Education advice Searching screening and confiscation
- Department for Education and ACPO Drug advice for schools
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
- Relationships Education Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education statutory guidance effective from September 2026
- Department for Education statutory guidance on suspension and permanent exclusion effective from July 2026
- the Equality Act 2010 and Human Rights Act 1998.

The school will also follow current local safeguarding partnership procedures, local authority advice and agreed police protocols. Where legislation or statutory guidance changes, the current requirement will take precedence over this policy until it is formally reviewed.

5. Roles and responsibilities

5.1 Governing Body

The governing body will approve and review this policy, ensure that it supports safeguarding and equality duties, and hold leaders to account for its consistent implementation.

5.2 Head of School

The Head of School has overall responsibility for implementation, serious incident decisions, liaison with the police and other agencies, staff support and ensuring that responses follow the Behaviour Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and current statutory guidance.

5.3 Designated Safeguarding Lead

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will assess safeguarding concerns, decide whether a referral or early help response is required, oversee appropriate information sharing and ensure that the pupil's welfare remains central.

5.4 PSHE Lead

The PSHE Lead will coordinate age-appropriate curriculum provision, support staff, review resources and the use of external contributors, and monitor the quality and progression of teaching.

5.5 All staff

All staff must know and follow this policy, report concerns promptly, preserve evidence safely, maintain appropriate confidentiality and avoid investigating beyond their role. Only the Head of School or a member of staff specifically authorised by the Head of School may conduct a search without consent under statutory powers.

6. Drug alcohol tobacco and vaping education

Education is delivered mainly through PSHE and statutory Health Education, including the school's chosen scheme of work. Teaching will be factual, balanced, inclusive, age-appropriate and responsive to local or emerging risks. It will not glamorise or normalise substance use.

Pupils will be supported to:

- understand that medicines and household substances can help or harm and must be used safely
- recognise that legal status does not determine whether a substance is safe
- learn age-appropriate facts about tobacco, vaping, alcohol and drugs and their effects on physical and mental health
- identify risk, pressure, grooming and exploitation and practise ways to seek help or refuse unsafe choices
- make informed decisions, manage peer influence and know how to respond in an emergency
- know which trusted adults and services can provide support.

Teachers will establish ground rules and make clear that personal disclosures are not required in lessons. Questions will be answered honestly and sensitively within the school's curriculum and safeguarding framework. External visitors may enrich teaching but will not replace planned lessons. Their suitability, materials and contribution will be checked in advance, and a teacher will remain responsible for the session.

Teaching will be adapted so that pupils with SEND and other additional needs can access and understand the content. Parents and carers may ask to see curriculum materials through the arrangements set out in the school's Relationships and Health Education Policy.

7. Confidentiality and safeguarding

Staff will listen calmly and without judgement. They must not promise secrecy. Pupils will be told, in age-appropriate language, that information may need to be shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead or another professional to keep them or somebody else safe.

Any disclosure or indication that a pupil may be at risk because of their own substance use, another person's substance use, criminal exploitation, unsafe storage of substances, neglect or impaired caregiving must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead without delay and managed under the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Parents and carers will normally be informed promptly. The school may delay or withhold contact where doing so could increase risk to the pupil, compromise a safeguarding or police enquiry, or conflict with professional advice. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will record the reason.

8. Medicines and authorised substances

8.1 Medicines

Prescription and non-prescription medicines will be managed in accordance with the Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy and First Aid Policy. Medicines must only be brought to school through the agreed procedure, stored safely and administered or self-administered with the required consent and arrangements. Pupils must never share medicines. Emergency medicines must remain readily accessible to the staff and pupils who need them.

8.2 Hazardous chemicals and volatile substances

Cleaning products, laboratory materials, solvents, aerosols and other hazardous substances used legitimately by the school will be risk assessed, stored securely and used under appropriate supervision. Sharps arising from an agreed medical need will be managed in suitable containers under the pupil's healthcare arrangements. Suspected needles or drug-taking equipment must not be handled by pupils.

9. Smoke vape drug and alcohol free premises

Smoking, vaping, possession or use of illegal drugs, misuse of substances and unauthorised alcohol are not permitted anywhere within the school boundary. This applies to pupils, staff, governors, volunteers, parents and carers, visitors and contractors. The restriction includes cigarettes, tobacco, e-cigarettes, disposable or rechargeable vapes, vaping liquids and other nicotine products.

Alcohol may only be present or consumed at a specifically authorised adult event following a risk assessment and compliance with licensing, safeguarding and health and safety requirements. It must never be accessible to pupils. A member of staff must not consume alcohol during the working day or undertake duties while impaired by alcohol, drugs or medication. Staff concerns will be managed under employment procedures and the Staff Code of Conduct.

10. Educational visits and events

This policy applies to all educational visits, residential trips and school-organised events. Risk assessments and staff briefings will cover medicines, smoking, vaping, alcohol, suspected substance use, emergency procedures and local risks. Pupils will be reminded of relevant expectations before the activity.

Pupil medicines will be managed by an appropriately briefed member of staff in line with individual healthcare plans. Adults must store their own medicines securely. Staff must remain fit to supervise and respond to an emergency at all times. Alcohol must not be consumed by staff while they are responsible for pupils.

11. Responding to substance related incidents

The immediate priorities are safety, first aid, safeguarding and preservation of evidence. Staff will:

- remain calm, keep the pupil under appropriate supervision and move others away if necessary
- call a first aider and emergency services where there is any medical concern
- inform the Head of School and Designated Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible
- avoid tasting, smelling closely or unnecessarily handling an unknown substance
- record facts, observations, actions, times and witnesses without speculation
- contact parents or carers unless this would create a safeguarding risk or conflict with professional advice
- consider educational, pastoral, safeguarding and behaviour responses together.

The Head of School will decide the response after considering the substance or item, the pupil's age and understanding, intent, vulnerability, SEND or medical needs, whether supply or exploitation may be involved, the seriousness and frequency of the behaviour, risk to others and any relevant safeguarding information.

The police will be contacted where required to protect life or prevent serious harm, where an offence or supply is suspected and police advice is appropriate, or in accordance with local protocols. Police involvement is not automatic in every case. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will consider referrals to children's social care, early help, health services or specialist support.

11.1 Behaviour response

Any sanction will be reasonable, proportionate and consistent with the Behaviour Policy. Support and education will be considered alongside disciplinary action. Suspension or permanent exclusion will never be automatic. Only the Head of School may suspend or permanently exclude a pupil, and any such decision must follow the current statutory process and take account of relevant circumstances and duties, including SEND and equality duties.

12. Searching confiscation and disposal

Any search will follow current Department for Education advice and the school's Behaviour Policy. The Head of School and staff authorised by the Head of School may search a pupil or their possessions where the legal conditions are met. Alcohol, illegal drugs, tobacco and cigarette papers are statutory prohibited items. Other items, including vapes, vaping liquids, medicines held without authorisation and potentially harmful substances, are identified by the school rules as banned items for which a search may be conducted where lawful.

Before a search, staff will consider the pupil's age, communication needs, SEND, medical needs, safeguarding history, privacy and the proportionality of the action. The pupil will be told why the search is taking place and how it will be conducted. Searches will be carried out with dignity, by an authorised member of staff, with the witness and same-sex requirements in current guidance observed unless a lawful urgent exception applies. School staff will not conduct a strip search.

A search will be recorded in the school's safeguarding system, including the reason, time, place, people present, items found and follow-up action. Parents and carers will be informed as required by current guidance and normally informed where alcohol, drugs, tobacco, vapes or a potentially harmful substance is found.

12.1 Confiscated or found substances

- An item will be handled as little as possible and a second adult should witness its seizure or discovery.
- A suspected controlled drug will be placed in suitable packaging, labelled with the date, time, place and witnesses, and secured with access restricted to senior staff.
- The school will not analyse or test an unknown substance. If its legal status is uncertain, it will be treated as a controlled drug.
- Controlled drugs will normally be passed to the police as soon as practicable. If disposal by the school is judged appropriate under current guidance, it will be witnessed and recorded.
- Alcohol, tobacco, cigarette papers, vapes, medicines and other items will be retained, returned to an appropriate adult or disposed of safely and lawfully according to the item and circumstances.
- Needles or sharps will be isolated and dealt with by trained staff or an appropriate service using safe equipment.

13. Medical emergencies and intoxication

If a pupil is unconscious, has difficulty breathing, has a seizure, is severely confused, has taken an unknown substance or otherwise appears seriously unwell, staff must call 999 immediately, provide first aid within their competence and follow the emergency operator's instructions. The pupil must not be left alone. Any substance, container or relevant information should be made available to emergency services without endangering staff.

A pupil who appears intoxicated will be moved to a quiet, safe place and supervised continuously by suitable staff while medical advice is obtained. Staff will not induce vomiting or give food or drink unless

directed by a medical professional. Parents or carers will be contacted unless safeguarding considerations require a different approach.

14. Support for pupils and families

The school recognises that substance-related concerns may arise from curiosity, accidental exposure, unmet need, peer pressure, family circumstances, grooming or exploitation. Pupils will be treated with dignity and offered appropriate education, pastoral support and referral where needed.

If a parent or carer collecting a pupil appears impaired, staff will not release the pupil where this would place them at risk. The school will seek another safe and authorised adult, consult the Designated Safeguarding Lead and contact children's social care or the police where necessary. An adult who behaves unsafely, aggressively or disruptively may be asked to leave the premises and site-access arrangements may be reviewed.

15. Staff conduct and training

Staff must follow the Staff Code of Conduct and relevant employment policies. Any concern that a member of staff is impaired at work, possesses an unauthorised or illegal substance, or may have harmed or placed a child at risk must be reported immediately to the Head of School. Concerns about the Head of School must be reported through the route set out in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

The school will provide induction and refresher information appropriate to staff roles. Relevant staff will receive support on the curriculum, safeguarding disclosures, medical emergencies, searches, confiscation, recording and local referral pathways.

16. Recording information sharing and complaints

Substance-related incidents, searches, confiscations, medical actions, decisions and referrals will be recorded promptly and stored securely. Safeguarding records will be kept on the school's safeguarding system. Information will be shared only where there is a lawful and relevant reason, in accordance with safeguarding duties and the school's Data Protection Policy.

Concerns should first be raised with the class teacher or relevant member of staff so that they can be resolved promptly. If a parent or carer remains dissatisfied, the concern should be escalated to the Head of School. If the matter remains unresolved following the Head of School's response, the parent or carer may follow the school's Complaints Procedure. Complaints about a search will be considered under that procedure.

17. Monitoring and review

The Head of School and PSHE Lead will monitor implementation, curriculum provision, incident patterns, safeguarding responses and staff training. Information will be reviewed without identifying pupils unnecessarily and will be used to improve prevention, teaching and support.

The governing body will review this policy annually, or sooner following a serious incident or a change in legislation, statutory guidance, safeguarding procedures or local risk.

18. Links with other policies

This policy should be read alongside the school's:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- First Aid Policy

- Relationships and Health Education Policy
- SEND Policy
- Equality Policy
- Educational Visits Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Data Protection Policy
- Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Policy
- Complaints Procedure.

Key external guidance

Department for Education: Searching screening and confiscation

Department for Education and ACPO: Drug advice for schools

Department for Education: Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026

Department for Education: Relationships Education Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education

Department for Education: Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools academies and pupil referral units in England.

Appendix 1 Substance related incident record

This form supplements, and does not replace, any required safeguarding, first-aid, accident or behaviour record.

Field	Record
Pupil or person involved	
Class or role	
Date and time	
Location	
Staff completing record	
Senior staff informed and time	
Factual description of concern or incident	
Symptoms or immediate risks	
First aid or medical action including 999 or advice received	
Substance or item involved if known	
Item found or confiscated and how it was secured	
Search conducted details and staff present	
Police or other agency contact and reference number	
Parent or carer contact including time and outcome	
Safeguarding concerns and DSL decision	
Behaviour pastoral or educational response	
Follow-up actions responsible person and review date	