

St Benedict's Catholic College



Drugs and Substance Abuse Policy

Date Reviewed	February 2025
Noted by Governors	12 th March 2025
Due for review	Spring Term 2028

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Drugs and substance abuse policy



Background

This policy follows the guidelines outlined in the **DfE and Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) drug advice for schools**

“Advice for local authorities, headteachers, school staff and governing bodies” (Sept 12)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/drugs-advice-for-schools>

These guidelines suggest that “all school policies on behaviour and discipline should include a clear statement of the school’s attitude to illegal drugs and other substances open to misuse and of the disciplinary measures which will be applied to drug related incidents.”

Drug-related incidents within the school's responsibilities. This policy has links with the following College policies: Relationships and sex education, Health and Safety, and communications policy.

The purpose of the policy

The aim of this policy is to acknowledge and clarify the College’s role in drug and substance abuse prevention and education and ensure it is appropriate to the needs of all our students.

This policy applies to all of the following people when they are on the College premises: students, staff, parents/carers and visitors. Breaches of this policy by any of those mentioned will be dealt with by the Principal/Governing body. This policy also applies to students and staff when off-site when staff act in loco parentis. This includes all educational visits.

Although the College is not responsible for students travelling to and from college, we will work with parents/carers and / or other agencies should any problems be identified. The College is responsible for students during break and lunchtimes and this policy applies during these times. It also affects the use of college premises after normal College hours. Organisers of any after college events should be made aware of the policy and their responsibility to implement it.

Definition of a drug

For the purpose of this policy the following definition of a drug will apply:

“a substance people take to change the way they feel, think or behave.”

This broad definition allows for the inclusion of all medication, legal/illegal drugs (including alcohol and tobacco), volatile substances (see also the College’s Health and Safety Policy and COSHH Policy) and all over the counter and prescription medicines.

Principles of the policy

The principles that inform the drugs policy and internal procedures are based on concern about the health, wellbeing and safety of the college community as a whole as well as individual students

The Governing Body believes that the possession and or use of such drugs or substances in college, during the day or while travelling to or from college is very serious and will be dealt with accordingly. The drugs/substances covered by this policy are not to be bought, sold or otherwise exchanged or brought onto the College premises, College transport, or while students are on College visits.

The College is aware that different groups of people may have some involvement in responding to a drug-related incident. These could include the Principal, students, staff, governors, parents, police and drug counsellors. Each may require particular information before deciding on how to respond and may have varying concerns, rights and responsibilities.

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Our aims are:

- To raise awareness of and recognition of the dangers of drug and substance abuse
- To help students manage personal, social and emotional development and change.
- To develop personal and social skills
- To encourage students to adopt healthy lifestyles
- To provide a framework for effective drug education;
- To provide systems for dealing with drug related incidents within the College environment;
- To ensure that the College's drug education programme reflects the aims and values of the College and its Governing Body.

Roles and responsibilities

Governors

As part of their responsibilities for the management of the College, the governors have agreed this policy. They will continue their involvement through regular evaluation of it.

Principal

The Principal takes overall responsibility for providing a safe place of work for all staff and students and as such takes responsibility for this policy, its implementation, and for liaison with the Governing Body, parents/carers, LA, 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 such as ESWs, Child Protection Officers, and police.

PSHE Coordinator

The coordinator together with the Principal has a responsibility for supporting other members of staff in the implementation of this policy. The PSHE coordinator will provide a lead in the dissemination of information relating to drug education. They are responsible for identifying and providing good quality resources and in-service training. The Principal, or in her absence her Deputy are the first point of contact for advice/support in dealing with a drug-related incident.

Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are encouraged to support the College's drug education programme. They are responsible for ensuring that guidelines relating to medication in college are followed (see Administration of Medicines Policy).

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, and therefore, it will be handled with care and consideration. The Principal will consider if there are any special circumstances which may temper this right. The child protection service may be contacted in the first instance and advice sought (see College's Safeguarding Children policy/procedures).

All Staff

Drug prevention is a whole College issue. All staff, both teaching and non-teaching, should be aware of the policy and how it relates to them should they be called upon to deal with a drug-related incident. This includes lunchtime supervisors and the site manager and cleaning staff. If they have queries or training requirements, these should be made known to the PSHE Coordinator or the Principal. The site team regularly check the College premises – any substances or drug paraphernalia found will be recorded and reported to the Principal and dealt with in accordance with this policy.

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Equal Opportunities Statement

Drug education will be provided to all students with consideration of any particular needs (see Equal Opportunities policy).

Identifying a situation

The staff at St Benedict's Catholic College will become familiar with the following warning signs of possible illegal drug and/or substance abuse use. The list is not exhaustive:

- changes in attendance
- decline in performance in college and home learning
- mood swings, restlessness or irritability
- reports from parents/carers that unusual amount of time is spent away from home
- excessive spending or borrowing of money
- stealing money or goods
- wearing of costly fashion items ie. coats and trainers
- Concealing a second phone on their person
- excessive tiredness, without obvious cause
- no interest in physical appearance
- sores or rashes especially on the mouth or nose
- lack of appetite
- over-use of perfume, after-shave, etc, to disguise the smell of drugs.

Unauthorised substances

No substances are to be brought into the College premises unless authorised by the Principal or through the agreed protocol for the use of medicines on the College premises. This includes alcohol, tobacco (including vapes), volatile substances and medicines. This applies to anybody using the building regardless of age or whether they are staff or students of the College.

Students found in violation of this section of the College policy, on college premises, will be dealt with in the following way:

- Parents will be contacted by the relevant member of staff. Parents' support will be sought in stressing to the student how the use of unauthorised substances in college is a serious breach of college rules.
- A suitable consequence will be considered. The severity of the consequence will depend upon various factors such as the age of the student, the circumstances of the incident, whether it is a student's first offence and whether it has or the degree to which it has affected other students.
- The substance and associated paraphernalia such as matches, rolling papers, zip bags or lighters found in a student's possession in college will be confiscated. They will be placed in a labeled envelope and kept securely until parents can collect them.

What to do in the event of finding a drug/unauthorised substance or suspected illegal substance

1. Take possession of the drug/substance and inform the Principal, or if not available a senior member of staff.
2. In the presence of a witness the article should be packed securely and labeled with the date, time and place of discovery.
3. The package should be signed by the person who discovered it and stored in a secure place.

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4. Police should be contacted immediately, and arrangements should be made to hand the package over to them. Staff should not attempt to analyze or taste any found substance. In the event of discovering a hypodermic needle the incident should be recorded and the following procedure should be followed in order to protect all persons:

EXTREME CARE SHOULD BE TAKEN

1. Do NOT attempt to pick up the needle.
2. Cover the needle with a bucket or other container.
3. If possible, cordon off the area to make it safe.
4. Inform the Principal or senior member of staff.
5. Contact Environmental Health.

What to do in the event of finding or suspecting a student is in possession of a drug

1. Request that the student hand over the article(s). Staff can ask students to turn out pockets or bags but cannot demand that this happens.
2. Having taken possession of the substance/paraphernalia, the procedure should be followed as above.
3. Students should be placed in isolation until the matter has been investigated.
4. Parents should be contacted as quickly as possible.

If a student refuses to hand over articles a search may be required – it should be noted that:

- Teachers can search College property, i.e., cupboards and trays without permission;
- Teachers should not search students or personal possessions.

Procedures for dealing with a child suspected to be under the influence of a drug or substance

Stay calm and ensure child is supervised in a quiet area. Do not leave them unsupervised for any amount of time; seek medical advice from a First Aider. If the child is drowsy or unconscious place them in the recovery position, loosen tight clothing and attempt to establish what the child has taken. Any suspected substances should travel with child if removed for treatment. Vomit should be safely collected where possible and taken with the child (for analysis). Incident must be logged on CPOMS.

Procedures for dealing with parents/carers under the influence of drugs on the College premises

Staff should attempt to maintain a calm atmosphere. If staff have concern regarding discharging a student into the care of a parent/carer, attempts should be made to discuss alternative arrangements with the parent/carer, for example requesting another family member to escort the child home. The focus of the staff must be the maintenance of the student's safety and welfare, as opposed to the moderation of the parents' behaviour. Where the behaviour of the parent/carer immediately places the child at risk of significant harm or repeated behaviour places the child at risk, or the parent/carer becomes abusive or violent, staff should consider whether to invoke child protection procedures and/or the involvement of the police.

When to contact the police

There is no legal obligation for the College to contact the police when a drug incident or offence has been discovered. Contacting the police is at the Principal's discretion. However, the College has established close liaisons with our local police and any information about illegal sales of drugs

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including alcohol and tobacco will be reported to them. In the event of a drug-related incident in the College, the College would cooperate with the police should they wish to search premises.

In the event of a serious incident the police may request to interview student(s). Parent(s)/carer(s) must be notified. They may refuse to give consent or prefer the interview to take place in their home, in which case the police will arrange. Parents/carers may give authority to a responsible adult, e.g., a teacher to be present during the interview.

Dealing with the media

If there has been a drug-related incident, the LA will be informed. Advice will be given by the LA on dealing with enquiries from the media to protect the interests of the child and the College.

Discipline

In normal circumstances parents will be contacted. If the Principal assesses that the situation is a child protection issue, then CPS will be contacted in the first instance.

This College does not condone drug misuse. However, in deciding an appropriate consequence must consider the interests of the child balanced against the best interests of the whole College community. Whilst exclusion is a possible consequence (suspension or permanent) it would only be considered as a last resort. A range of responses may also be considered that may include:

- a pastoral support programme;
- referral to an appropriate agency;
- home-College contract;
- behaviour support plans;
- a managed move;
- fixed term exclusion;
- suspension.

Consideration should be given to:

- the age of the student;
- whether one student or a group of students is involved;
- whether there is evidence of peer pressure;
- whether it is the student's first offence.

Drugs education

Drugs education in St Benedict's Catholic College is delivered both through cross-curricular themes and within the PSHE programme. Drugs education in the College is co-ordinated by the PSHE co-ordinator and will:

- Help students to gain an understanding of drug and substance abuse
- Dispel myths
- Provide accurate information
- Clarify values and attitudes

Trained staff will teach drug education but, where appropriate, outside visitors may make a contribution. Such visitors are used in a planned way and their contributions are evaluated. Staff have access to on-going advice, support and training as part of their own professional development. The College cooperates with agencies such as the LA, police, health and drug prevention and support agencies.

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Staff development

The policy aims to ensure that the approach taken on the issue of drugs is a whole-college one and is part of our commitment to and concern for the health and well-being of the whole college community. Staff will need to be confident and skilled to teach drug education and students need to receive up to date, relevant and accurate information as well as support. All staff will have access to information about drugs and drug issues through in-house training events. Where relevant to the role of a member of staff more detailed and specific training will be accessed and provided.

Parents and carers

The St Benedict's College community consists of caring and cooperative parents and carers and the Governing Body hope that parents who are concerned about their child and drugs will feel they can contact the college for support. The college will wish to ensure that no student is hindered from achieving their potential because of drug misuse. However, if specific counselling or specialist help is needed the parent/carer will be informed of appropriate agencies and services.

Review & monitoring

The implementation of this policy will be monitored by the college reviewed by the Governing Body in accordance with the policy and procedures schedule.