



Substance Misuse Policy

Approval Date – June 2026

Date for Review – June 2029

It is the policy of the governors at Westfield Academy to safeguard and promote the welfare, health and safety of students in our care, and others who use the Academy, protecting them from the dangers of substance misuse.

Rationale

The purpose and rationale of the Substance Misuse Policy is to:

- Identify the legal requirements and responsibilities of the school.
- Reinforce and safeguard the health and safety of students and others who use the school.
- Clarify the school's approach to substance misuse for all staff, students, governors, parents/carers, external agencies and the wider community.
- Give guidance on developing, implementing and monitoring the drug, alcohol and tobacco education program.
- Enable staff to manage drugs on school premises, and any incidents that occur, with confidence and consistency, and in the best interests of those involved.
- Ensure that the response to incidents involving drugs complements the overall approach to drug education and the values and ethos of the school.
- Provide a basis for evaluating the effectiveness of the school substance misuse education program and the management of incidents involving illegal and other unauthorised drugs.

Substance misuse refers to the purchase, supply or consumption/intoxification of any illegal or legal substance as defined by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime: *The harmful or hazardous use of psychoactive substances, including alcohol and illicit drugs, which can lead to dependency and significant social, physical, or mental impairment.*

At Westfield Academy we have interpreted this as being

'A substance people take to change the way they feel, think or behave'

The term 'drugs' and 'drug education', unless otherwise stated, is used throughout this document to refer to all drugs:

- all illegal drugs (those controlled by the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971);
- all legal drugs, including alcohol, tobacco, E-cigarettes and vapes, and associated paraphernalia, volatile substances (those giving off a gas or vapour which can be inhaled), ketamine, khat, alkyl nitrites ('poppers') and new psychoactive substances ('legal highs').
- all over-the-counter and prescription medicines.

If staff are unable to identify the legal status of a confiscated drug or substance, it should be treated as a controlled drug.

This policy applies to all staff, students, parents/carers, governors and partner agencies working at Westfield Academy. It includes journeys to and from school in school uniform, work experience,

residential trips and college courses. In any situation where a student may need protection from the possibility of abuse, the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead should be consulted and school child protection procedures followed.

Roles and Responsibilities

1. Headteacher The Headteacher has overall responsibility for the welfare and wellbeing of students in our care. This responsibility is delegated in part to the Pastoral Manager, the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Heads of Year for the management of specific student issues and the strategic development of the substance misuse policy and procedures.

1.2 Deputy Headteacher (Inclusion)

- Monitors the curricular dimensions of Substance Misuse and Drug Education.
- Monitors pastoral support and consistency of approach provided by Heads of Year.
- Coordinates appropriate response to incidents of substance misuse.
- Ensures that the Headteacher and Governors (Student Learning Committee) are informed of current issues and provision.
- Ensures the policy is regularly updated and reviewed.

1.3 Teachers and Support Staff Any member of staff with an issue or concern relating to substance misuse should immediately discuss it with a senior member of staff or Head of Year. Allegations of substance misuse must always be given the highest priority and referred immediately.

No medicine, including paracetamol, may be given to a student without the direct written consent of the student's parents. Students must not carry medicines with them around the school. All medicines, including home supplied paracetamol, must be left with Student Reception. All medicines must be clearly labelled with the name of the student and be stored securely with access restricted to named individuals'.

1.4 Governors The school governors will review this policy in line with the review policy timetable. They will also be involved in disciplinary proceedings as and when needed.

Related Documents

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Curriculum Provision for Substance Misuse and Drug Education.
- Appendix 2 – Management of Substance Misuse and Drugs in School.

Other Documents

This policy has been written, taking into account national and local guidance, in particular, guidance from the DFES ref: 00001-2012. This policy should be considered in conjunction with other written policies on behaviour, health and safety, healthy schools, school visits and safeguarding & child protection.

Additional related documents include the statutory guidance "Keeping Children Safe in Education," the school's "Child Protection Policy," and the "Students with Medical Conditions Policy". This policy is also guided by the school's general power to discipline under Section 91 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

Monitoring

- This policy and its implementation will be monitored by the Deputy Headteacher (Inclusion) and the governors' Student Learning Committee with responsibility and overview for the welfare of students.

Appendix 1 - Curriculum Provision for Substance Misuse and Drugs Education

The school delivers a balanced curriculum which:

- promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of students at the school and of society;
- prepares students at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

Substance misuse and drug education is a major component of drug prevention and is an important aspect of the school curriculum. Its aim is to provide opportunities for students to develop their **knowledge, skills, attitudes** and understanding about drugs and appreciate the benefits of a healthy lifestyle, relating this to their own and others' actions.

It aims to:

(i) Increase students' **knowledge** and understanding and clarify misconceptions about:

- the short- and long-term effects and risks of drugs;
- the rules and laws relating to drugs;
- the impact of drugs on individuals, families and communities;
- the prevalence and acceptability of drug use among peers;
- the complex moral, social, emotional and political issues surrounding drugs.

(ii) Develop students' personal and social **skills** to make informed decisions and keep themselves safe and healthy, including:

- assessing, avoiding and managing risk;
- communicating effectively;
- resisting pressures;
- finding information, help and advice;
- devising problem-solving and coping strategies;
- developing self-awareness and self-esteem.

(iii) Enable students to explore their own and other peoples' attitudes towards drugs, drug use and drug users, including challenging stereotypes, and exploring media and social influences.

Aspects of drug, alcohol and tobacco education are encompassed within the ethos of the school and are delivered through:

- Core Subjects
- Personal Development and Lessons
- Focused Health weeks
- Project/theme lessons
- Assembly time
- School Health Clinic.

At Key Stage 3 (KS3), students learn more about the effects and risks of drugs and the laws relating to drugs. They learn the skills to recognise and manage risk and to resist pressures. They continue to develop the skills to make choices for a healthy lifestyle and learn about where to go for help and advice.

At Key Stage 4 (KS4), students build on their knowledge and learn more about the effects of drug misuse on family, friends, community and society. They gain greater understanding through

clarifying their opinions and attitudes in discussions and debate and considering the consequences of their decisions.

Our Wider Curriculum and Personal Development programme at Westfield Academy enriches students with an understanding and awareness of issues surrounding substance misuse. Students are delivered engaging sessions on topics such as: the psychology behind addiction, different types of addiction; awareness and the dangers of alcohol, illegal drugs, prescription drugs, vaping and drug related crime. These sessions also provide students with resources and support networks if they require advice with substance misuse.

Teachers may need to focus more on developing students' confidence and skills to manage situations, which require making decisions about drugs. This may include developing competence to manage medicines responsibly, staying safe and understanding and managing feelings. Teachers should pay particular attention to enabling students to seek help and support when they need it.

Drug, alcohol and tobacco education is monitored to ensure teachers deliver good quality lessons following the agreed programme, and that appropriate training is provided to help them do this. Monitoring is undertaken through a variety of means e.g. lesson observations; review of lesson plans and evaluations; gathering evidence of learning opportunities and changes in students' knowledge and understanding.

The school nursing service, police, youth services and health promotion specialists support the drug, alcohol and tobacco education work done by the school. Contributors are always informed of what has gone before and what is expected of them, and their role and contribution is carefully negotiated to ensure it meets the needs of the students. A member of staff is always available when visitors are working with our students. To ensure these sessions are effective, the school will negotiate session content beforehand to take account of class needs, brief visitors on any particular student sensitivities or identified drug issues, and ensure teachers follow up any unresolved issues or distress caused in subsequent lessons. Where visitors are invited to deliver aspects of the drug, alcohol and tobacco education program, the school follows the guidance in NSPCC Learning School Visitors and Safeguarding last updated April 2026.
<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection-schools/school-visitors>.

Appendix 2 - Management of Substance Misuse and Drugs at school

2.1 Searches

The school does not need to seek consent before a search for statutory prohibited items, which include knives or weapons, alcohol, illegal drugs, stolen items, tobacco, e-cigarettes and vapes, fireworks, and pornographic images. All searches will be conducted by two adults (usually Head of Year and Senior Leadership Team). Where possible searches should be carried out by 2 members of the same sex as the student being searched. The person conducting the search may not require the student to remove any clothing other than "outer clothing" (such as hats, shoes, boots, socks, gloves, and scarves). Intimate searches going further than this can only be conducted by a person with more extensive powers, such as a police officer. If a search is refused, The Headteacher will consider whether to call the police and the child is isolated until parent(s) arrives. Searches will be conducted in such a way as to minimise potential embarrassment or distress.

Every effort will be made to persuade the person to hand over voluntarily any drugs, in the presence of a second adult witness. Searches will be carried out when the individual refuses and the drug is believed to be illegal, and the school wishes to proceed along formal lines.

Staff may search school property, for example, students' lockers or desks, if they believe drugs to be stored there. Where consent is refused, the school will balance the likelihood that an offence has been committed against the risk of infringing the individual's privacy without just cause.

After any search involving students, the parent(s)/carer(s) will be contacted by the school, regardless of whether the result of the search is positive or negative.

In taking temporary possession and disposing of suspected illegal drugs staff will:

- Ensure that a second adult witness is present throughout.
- Seal the sample in a plastic bag.
- Store it in the school safe.
- Without delay notify the police, who will be asked to collect it and then store or dispose of it.
- Record full details of the incident on a seizure record. This must include: a description of the item, the time, date and place of seizure, full details of from whom the item was seized, details of the staff member seizing the item, and the signatures of witnesses. The police incident reference number should also be included.

Staff should not attempt to analyse or taste unknown substances. Police may advise on analysis and formal identification.

If formal action is to be taken against a student, the police will make arrangements for them to attend a local police station accompanied by an appropriate adult for an interview. Only in exceptional circumstances should arrest or interviews take place at school. An appropriate adult should always be present during interviews, preferably a parent/carers or duty social worker.

Disciplinary Actions and Exclusions should not be the automatic response to a drug incident, and permanent exclusion should only be used in serious cases. The school recognises that drug use can be a symptom of other problems and will prioritise early intervention and referral to support services alongside any necessary disciplinary measures.

2.2 Legal Drugs

The police will not always necessarily be involved in incidents involving legal drugs, but the school will inform trading standards or police about the inappropriate sale or supply of tobacco, alcohol or volatile substances to students in the local area.

2.3 Alcohol and tobacco

In keeping with our National Healthy School Standard, and Somerset Council policy, Westfield Academy is a no-smoking site. The no-smoking policy applies to all visitors to the school, for example, parents, suppliers, supply or temporary staff and contractors.

Parents/carers will be informed that the alcohol/tobacco and all associated smoking paraphernalia has been disposed of. In cases where a suspension is necessary, items will be disposed of once this has taken place.

2.4 Disposal of drug paraphernalia

Needles or syringes found on school premises will be placed in a sturdy, secure container, using gloves. A tin is kept in the Finance Office for this purpose, out of reach of students. Used needles and syringes will be disposed of appropriately and not put in domestic waste.

2.5 Medicines

No medicine, including paracetamol, may be given to a student without the direct written consent of the student's parents. Students must not carry medicines with them around the school. All medicines, including home supplied paracetamol, must be left at reception. All medicines must be clearly labelled with the name of the student and be stored securely with access restricted to named individuals.

Students under 16 should not bring any medication to school unless accompanied by a letter from their parent/guardian giving permission and indicating dosage. **Where it is necessary for a student to take medication during a school day, parents MUST inform the Head of Year in writing so that appropriate arrangements can be made.** This applies to both prescribed and non-prescribed treatments. **Any non-prescribed medicines brought into school with parental consent must be kept in their original packaging.**

Unless needed in an emergency, all medicines should be kept secure in the Student Reception. No member of staff should take possession of medicine on behalf of children. Medicine containers should be labelled clearly with the dosage and student's name. It is the student's responsibility to remember to take medication and he/she must report to the appropriate office.

The exception to these rules will be in cases where medication may be needed in an emergency e.g. inhalers for asthma, epi-pens for adrenaline/epinephrine injection for anaphylaxis and emergency medication for epilepsy. In such cases the parents must inform the school what medication their child is carrying and take full responsibility for its use and safety. Students who use inhalers are encouraged to bring them to school everyday. The SENCO will be informed about any students who may need to use emergency medication in order to provide any necessary support and training for staff. All Parents are given a medical consideration form and must complete it to inform the administration staff of any ailment their child may have and medications required, including permission to give paracetamol to students. Some students with high tariff (life endangering) conditions will have their own Personal Medical Plan facilitated either by the SENCO or Head of Year and in consultation with parents.

Generally other medicines must never be given to students, not even paracetamol, either by teaching or office staff. Medication of this nature will only be administered if parents have signed the medical consent form. The office staff will then administer the correct dosage. The school will never administer aspirin to any student under 16 years old unless prescribed by a doctor.

A record of the administration of **any medicine** must be kept in the Medicine Log located in Student Reception.

Parents/carers will be informed and will be asked to collect and dispose of unused or date-expired medicines.

2.6 Volatile substances

Some solvents or hazardous chemicals are legitimately used by school staff or students. These substances are stored securely (in line with regulations) and managed to prevent inappropriate access or use. Arrangements are set out in the school's Health & Safety Policy.

2.7 Staff with key responsibility for drugs

Management of drug related issues in school: Mark Bromham (Pastoral Manager) and Julie Coles (Designated Safeguarding Lead). If any member of staff has concerns about any drug related incident then they should immediately inform a member of the SLT.

2.8 Police contact

First point of contact: dial 101 (police control room). Other contact details are available from Student Reception. If they are unavailable, a message should be left to contact the school.

2.9 Referral and external support

A referral to Somerset Drug and Alcohol Service will always follow an incident which has received a suspension.

Heads of Year, SENCO and SLT are responsible for referral to agencies. A list of local support services and national helplines/websites is available for students and parents.

Students are made aware of the various internal and external support structures via Personal Development lessons and assemblies. Local Service Team support and national helplines/websites are advertised on House/Year notice boards or are available from the Health Clinic. Information is available from Heads of Year for individual students or parents as and when required.

2.10 Confidentiality

Members of staff cannot and should not promise total confidentiality. The boundaries of confidentiality should be made clear to students. Children aged 12 or over may generally be expected to have the capacity to understand and make their own decisions regarding consent to share information; if a child is not competent, a person with parental responsibility should be asked to consent on their behalf. If a student discloses information which is sensitive, not generally known, and which the student asks not to be passed on, it should be discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Head of Year, or Pastoral Manager. Every effort will be made to secure the student's agreement to the way in which the school intends to use any sensitive information.

It may be necessary to invoke local child protection procedures if a student's safety is under threat. It will be only in exceptional circumstances that sensitive information is passed on against a student's wishes, and even then the school will inform the student first and endeavour to explain

why this needs to happen. These exceptions are defined by a moral or professional duty to act in the public interest, where sharing confidential information without consent is justified. This includes when there is reasonable cause to believe a child is suffering or at risk of significant harm, or to prevent or detect a serious crime. The key factor in deciding whether to share confidential information without consent must be proportionality.

Furthermore, if a student involved in a drug-related incident is known to the local authority's children's services, the details of this incident must be shared with the named social worker as soon as is reasonably possible.

2.11 Involvement of parents/carers/visitors

In any incident involving illegal and other unauthorised drugs, the school will normally involve the child's parent(s)/carer(s) and explain how they intend to respond to the incident and to the student's needs. Where the school suspects that to do this might put the child's safety at risk, or if there is any other cause for concern for the child's safety at home, then the school will exercise caution when considering involving parents/carers.

Parents/carers are encouraged to approach the school if they are concerned about any issue related to drugs and their child and the school will refer parents/carers to other sources of help, for example, specialist drug agencies or family support groups, as required.