



SUBSTANCE USE AND MISUSE POLICY

It is important that students should be given opportunities to consider the effects of substances such as tobacco, E cigarettes, vaporisers, legal highs, psychoactive substances, alcohol and other drugs on themselves and others and to make informed and healthy decisions about the use of such substances. The latest NHS report published in September 2022 that details the national picture for smoking, drinking and drug use among young people can be found here: [Smoking, Drinking and Drug Use among Young People in England, 2021 - NHS England Digital](#)

Tobacco

Smoking is the single most preventable cause of premature death and ill-health in our society. The School policy on smoking aims to give students the message that the habit creates health problems for smokers and non-smokers alike, that non-smoking represents the norm in society, and that they receive support from the School to ensure that a smoking habit is not acquired or broken.

Aims

- To create an environment where non-smoking is the norm and where students are not exposed to adult smoking;
- To educate students as to the immediate dangers of smoking and the use of vaporisers;
- To encourage those students who do smoke or use vapes to break free from the habit.

Smoking, or being in possession of cigarettes, vaporisers, E cigarettes or tobacco, is prohibited;

- In school buildings and grounds;
- Whilst in school uniform;
- When representing the School on outings and trips;
- At any time whilst under School Discipline.

Alcohol

Alcohol is a depressant drug, particularly when taken in large quantities. If drunk in sensible amounts alcohol may produce feelings of relaxation and the health risks are considerably reduced if drinkers keep below the recommended levels. However, even at low levels, the potential for serious accidents arises. More information can be found here: [Smoking, Drinking and Drug Use among Young People in England, 2021 - NHS England Digital](#)

Aims

- To develop knowledge and understanding about alcohol as a drug and its effect on the body;

- To encourage sensible, appropriate and safe drinking behaviour;
- To practise personal and social skills and the strategies needed to deal with situations where alcohol is present;
- To educate the students as to the place of alcohol in the political, social and economic environment in which it exists.

Drinking, or being in possession of alcohol, is prohibited:

- In the School buildings or grounds (except for formal occasions sanctioned by the School);
- In public houses and other licensed premises whilst in school uniform and whenever prohibited by law;
- Whilst on School outings and trips or at any other time whilst under School discipline (except for formal occasions sanctioned by the School).

Drugs

Obtaining or possessing controlled drugs by any method other than by a doctor's prescription is illegal and drug-trafficking is a criminal offence. Solvents, psychoactive substance and Legal Highs, too, are dangerous substances if misused and account for a number of premature deaths amongst children and adolescents each year.

Aims

- To develop students' understanding of the difference between controlled and illegal drugs;
- To educate students on the effects of drugs on the mind and body;
- To provide opportunities for students to practise the personal and social skills and the strategies needed to deal with situations involving drugs;
- To promote an individual student's self-confidence, self-esteem and self-worth;
- To help enable students to have strategies to withstand pressure, especially in social settings;
- To explain the legal situation with regards to the use and misuse of drugs;
- To provide counselling for students and signpost support for their families where this is needed;
- To provide information about help agencies (regarding their presence, location and function).

Any student involved in illegal drugs, psychoactive substance, legal highs or other banned substance, including solvents, on School premises can expect to be temporarily or permanently excluded from School. The Police may be informed of any incident involving illegal drugs.

However, the School considers each drug related incident individually and recognises that a variety of responses are necessary to deal with incidents. It considers carefully the implication of any action it takes and seeks to balance the interests of the students involved, other students, staff and the local community.

For students and families looking for external local support around substance misuse the school recommends Catch22, details of which can be found in this link: [Surrey Young People's Substance Misuse | Catch22 \(catch-22.org.uk\)](https://www.catch-22.org.uk)

For up to date and accurate information around drugs the school recommends the following website: [Honest information about drugs | FRANK \(talktofrank.com\)](https://www.talktofrank.com)

Achievement of Aims

The aims outlined in this policy are fulfilled through aspects of the student's experiences in the taught curriculum, the informal curriculum and through opportunities for co-curricular activities.

We deliver Drugs Education in the taught curriculum, mainly through age appropriate PSHME lessons, Religious Education and Science, but other opportunities to reinforce learning will occur in other parts of the teaching programme. The School actively co-operates with agencies such as Community Police, Children's Services, Health and Drug Agencies to deliver its Drugs Education programme and to deal with incidents of substance use and misuse.

Alongside the School's Drug Education programme, pastoral care includes the use of school counselling, referral to outside agencies for counselling, being placed on a Drugs Contract (including the willingness to submit to random drug testing) or referral to outside agencies for further drug education.

Visitors to the School will be informed of the expectations and values held within this policy where appropriate.

Individual pupils

Urgent pastoral support will be provided for any pupil who seeks it. Pupils have on occasion, asked voluntarily to be placed on a Drugs Contract to act as an incentive to help them change patterns of behaviour. In such cases, a student can speak to any member of staff who will pass on the information to the Head of Year, Head of Section or the Senior Deputy Head. The Headmaster will be informed, but the management of the matter, as one of pastoral and disciplinary concern, will be the responsibility of the Head of Section and the Senior Deputy Head.

Involvement of Parents

The School aims to provide opportunities for parents to learn about drug usage in young people and to articulate shared concerns about the dangers that can arise from substance misuse. Parents are encouraged to contact the School if they have concerns about the harmful use of substances at RGS Guildford via the School Nurse, their son's Form Tutor, Head of Year, Head of Section or the Senior Deputy Head.

The School's Drugs Contract and testing

The aim of drug testing in School is to support those pupils thought to be most at risk of drug-taking and to act as a general deterrent. A test may be required if the School has reasonable cause to believe a Student may be using illegal drugs, harmful or psychoactive substances. This may have arisen from a variety of factors including:

- a report of drug use;
- a change in behaviour;

- a change in mood;
- a change in academic performance;
- a change in lifestyle;
- if a controlled substance or associated paraphernalia is found by a member of staff.

A decision on whether a student will be required to take a test will be made in consultation with the relevant Head of Section, Assistant Head Pastoral (DSL), Deputy Head (Pupils) or the Headmaster. The School will attempt to contact parents should a test be required.

The Drugs Contract will set out the expectations for the student, over a set period of time, and will require the student and his parents to sign an agreement with the School. Where a Drugs Contract has been established and a test returns with an indication of continuing use or if a student refuses to take a test, the student may be asked to leave the School. This will also be the case if the individual's behaviour raises concern about their own safety and welfare or the welfare of others in the School.

This policy works in conjunction with the Safeguarding Policy, the Behaviour (Rewards and Sanctions) Policy, the Exclusions Policy and the School Rules 2023-2024.

Reviewed by: Assistant Head Pastoral (DSL) and Senior Deputy Head

Date of last review: July 2024

Date of next review: Trinity 2025