



**ST MARGARET'S**  
SCHOOL

Drugs and Controlled  
Substances Policy

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SCHOOL

## Drugs and Controlled Substances Policy Review:

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This Drugs and Controlled Substances Policy applies to the whole school including Boarding and the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

## **General Policy Statement**

At St Margaret's School (the "School"), we are committed to promoting a healthy, safe environment, in which good citizenship and respect for the law can flourish. We believe that it is important to deliver a clear, consistent moral framework that promotes the integrity of our community and gives all of our pupils the understanding and self-confidence to reject illegal drugs and controlled substances.

The School tolerates neither the misuse or possession of drugs or alcohol by members of the School nor the illegal supply of these substances. It is committed to the health and safety of its members and will take action to safeguard their well-being. The School Rules state that no pupil may bring in, have in their possession or use tobacco, alcohol or other prohibited substances including vapes in school or on school trips in the UK or abroad.

The School will actively seek to prevent the abuse of controlled drugs and will treat cases of abuse by pupils as serious misconduct. The School will uphold the laws of the land relating to substance misuse and all known cases of illegal drug abuse will be reported to the police.

This Policy has been developed in consultation with the whole school community and partner agencies. It is a living document, which will be evaluated, refined and updated on a regular basis.

## **Scope**

For the purposes of this Policy, "drugs" includes alcohol, tobacco, medicines, volatile substances (e.g. aerosols, solvents, glue or petrol) and any new psychoactive substances ("legal highs") and other substances used for abuse by members of the School.

The School is aware that some substances which are not illegal may have an intoxicating, and/or stimulating and/or hallucinogenic effect. For the avoidance of doubt, these fall into the definition of "drugs" for the purpose of this policy. The use of any products which have such an effect is against the School Rules and pupils misusing such substances (including possession or supply of such substances) will be dealt with in a similar fashion to those who use illegal substances.

The definition of "use" in this policy includes either deliberate or reckless inhalation, injection or ingestion. The definition of "possession" includes having the drug or substance on one's person, in one's clothing, in the Boarding House or in one's belongings, although "possession" may also include having knowingly concealed a drug or substance in another location with the intention of retrieving it in the future, including coercing another pupil to conceal the substance in the School, the Boarding House or belongings.

The School community extends beyond the school site. Pupils may not use, possess or supply these substances at any time; either at school or away from school, including during the holiday periods. Action will be taken where the School is brought into disrepute for any reason associated with alcohol or drugs and substances, whether or not the pupil is in the care of the School at the time.

The School recognises that some drugs are required for medical purposes. Parents should be informed that any medication brought to the School for their children must be deposited with the School Nurse in the Medical Centre. In such cases, the prescribed medication protocol will be followed.

## **Implementation**

Drug misuse is a major threat to individuals, families and the wider community. Young people are influenced by their parents, youth culture, the media, their peers and others. In our view, education plays a key role in ensuring that pupils know the risks of drug taking and have the knowledge and skills to resist. As such, priority will be given at all levels of the School to a continuing programme of education about drugs and other substances in order to:

- enable pupils to make healthy, informed choices by increasing knowledge, challenging attitudes and developing and practicing skills;
- provide accurate information about substances;
- increase understanding about the implications and possible consequences of use and misuse;
- seek to minimise the risk that users and potential users face; and
- enable young people to identify sources of appropriate personal support.

These objectives are fulfilled through aspects of the pupils' experiences in the taught curriculum, the informal curriculum and through opportunities for extra-curricular activities. We deliver drugs education in the taught curriculum mainly through PHSE and Science, but other opportunities will occur in other parts of the teaching programme. Pupils are also encouraged to think carefully about their attitudes and aspirations, and to explore ways of making decisions and of developing strategies for resisting "peer pressure".

In addition to our educational programmes, the School's disciplinary approach aims to deter individuals who may be tempted to experiment with drugs or to persuade others not to do so. Any response to drug-related incidents will consider the needs of individual pupils concerned and those of the wider community of the School.

The Medical and Welfare Centre Staff play an active role in promoting greater awareness about the risks involved and will offer health advice. Pupils can discuss their individual concerns about drugs or substances with their Head of Year/Tutor/member of the Pastoral Team. They can also refer themselves to the Medical Centre or Welfare team for individual guidance, without fearing sanctions or adverse report.

### **Suspicion of Drug Use**

If a pupil is suspected of being under the influence of drugs on school premises, the School must prioritise the safety of the young person and those around them. If necessary, it should be dealt with as a medical emergency, administering First Aid and summoning appropriate support. Depending on the circumstances, parents or the police may need to be contacted. If the child is felt to be at risk or it is considered a safeguarding issue, the Safeguarding Policy will come into effect and Children's Services may need to be contacted. Sanctions may be invoked and parents will normally be involved.

Procedural guidance on the handling of different situations is available in Appendix 1.

### **Searching**

The Head and staff authorised by her have a statutory power to search pupils or their possessions, without consent, where they have reasonable grounds for suspecting that the pupil may have a prohibited item. Prohibited items relevant to this policy include (but are not limited to):

- alcohol
- illegal/controlled drugs
- tobacco and cigarette papers
- vaping equipment
- any item banned by the School's rules and policies e.g. legal highs or other unauthorised substances.

The decision to undertake a search without consent can only be taken by a member of SMT (unless the incident occurs whilst not on the School premises when other staff may be authorised by a member of SMT). The member of SMT will follow the guidance given in the School's Search Policy.

Where the person finds substances, which are not believed to be controlled drugs, these can be confiscated where a teacher believes them to be harmful or detrimental to good order and discipline. This would include new psychoactive substances or 'legal highs' or other unauthorised substances or equipment. If school staff are unable to identify the legal status of a drug, it should be treated as a controlled drug.

Procedures to be used if dealing with controlled drugs are outlined in Appendix 1.

### **Testing Policy**

The School does not routinely or randomly test for drugs but retains the right to do so with due cause. Parents will be informed prior to a test taking place. For example, the School Nurse may ask a pupil to carry out a simple alcohol test, using a non-invasive alcohol sensor, which will reveal alcohol consumption, in cases where there is any doubt.

The records of testing will not be used for any other purpose and they will be destroyed when the pupil concerned leaves the School and it is no longer required.

### **Pupils Whose Parents/Guardians or Family Members Misuse Drugs**

The School will be alert to behaviour which might indicate that a child is experiencing difficult home circumstances. Staff are proactive in the early identification of a pupil's needs and in safeguarding children.

Where problems are observed or suspected, or if a child chooses to disclose that there are difficulties at home and it is not deemed a safeguarding issue, the School will follow protocols for assessing the pupil's welfare and support needs and when and how to involve other sources for the child such as Children's Services, services commissioned by the Drug and Alcohol Action Teams (DAAT) programmes and, where appropriate, the family.

### **Staff Training**

Staff will be advised of the policy at induction and annually, and training will be undertaken when appropriate. Those involved in drug education will be given opportunities for relevant training. A list of useful organisations is given in Appendix 2 for staff wishing to broaden their knowledge or involved in accessing support for pupils.

### **Guidance for School Visits**

#### **UK Visits**

If the substance is discovered on a visit away from the School, the teachers should contact the Head (or member of the SMT if the Head is not available) without delay.

#### **Visits Abroad**

If the visit is abroad, staff will need to be aware that the police in that country may act differently from our own police. The Head (or member of the SMT) should be contacted without delay. In these circumstances a detailed record of events should be made on the appropriate reporting system. Any items that are confiscated should be discussed with the Head (or member of SMT) who will advise as to what should be done with them. In no circumstances should any attempt be made to bring any illegal substance back into the UK. If the incident is sufficiently serious, i.e. in terms of numbers of pupils or quantity of illegal drugs recovered, the Head or Vice Principal may consider advising the teacher to consult the British Consulate in the country. The Head will decide what action, if any, should be taken on return.

## **Appendix 1 - Procedures for Dealing with Suspected Drug Abuse**

### **Legal Substances**

#### **Tobacco**

St Margaret's School is a smoke free environment and has a no-smoking policy. Smoking is a health and safety risk and is particularly serious indoors as it exposes others to passive smoking and is a significant fire risk. Smoking in public buildings in England is illegal and carries a heavy fine.

Parents are aware that pupils are not allowed to smoke in school, nor are they permitted to have cigarettes, vaping equipment, lighters, matches, etc. in their possession. If a pupil is caught smoking, vaping or in possession of cigarettes or vaping equipment, the Head, the Vice Principal or Head of Sixth Form must be informed. The item(s) should be confiscated and returned to the parents or destroyed. They must not be returned to the pupil. Appropriate sanctions will then be invoked. Parents will usually be informed.

The School provides information and support for smokers to quit e.g. promoting access to smoking cessation classes, which may be provided on the School site.

#### **Alcohol**

It is an offence under the Licensing Act 1964 to sell intoxicating liquor without a licence and an occasional licence can be applied for in the event that alcohol is sold at school. It is also an offence to sell alcohol to anyone under the age of 18. No licence is needed by the School to offer (but not sell) alcohol to staff or parents or pupils (over 18) at social events, or to store alcohol on the premises. Pupils and parents are aware that, except in certain circumstances under the supervision of a member of staff, pupils are not allowed to drink alcohol in school, nor are they permitted to have alcohol in their possession.

If a pupil is caught drinking, under the influence of, or in possession of alcohol, a senior member of staff must be informed. The item(s) should be confiscated and returned to the parents or destroyed. They must not be returned to pupils. Appropriate sanctions will then be invoked. Parents will usually be informed.

#### **Other legal substances**

In recent years there has been a growth in the number of "legal highs" available to young people. Volatile substances are also commonly abused by young people, e.g. cannabidiol (CBD) products. Substances that fall into these categories and which fit the definition of drugs above will be dealt with in the same way as alcohol and tobacco. A senior member of staff (SMT) must be informed, substances must be confiscated and destroyed or returned to parents and appropriate sanctions will be invoked. Parents will usually be informed. If there is uncertainty about what the substance is, it will be treated as a controlled drug.

Police will not usually be involved where issues concern legal drugs. The School may wish to inform trading standards or police about the inappropriate sale or supply of tobacco, alcohol or volatile substances to pupils in the local area.

### **Illegal Substances**

#### **Controlled drugs**

These drugs include, for example, cannabis, cocaine, ecstasy, heroin, amphetamines, barbiturates, magic mushrooms etc.

All staff need to note that:

- a. it is an offence under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 to take into one's possession illegal substances even with the intent of preventing a pupil from committing or continuing to commit an offence in connection with that drug unless the member of staff takes all responsible steps as soon as possible to follow the advice below
- b. it is also an offence to fail to co-operate with any police investigation as such failure to co-operate may amount to obstruction
- c. it would be an offence for staff to knowingly allow or condone the use of illegal drugs on school premises.

## **Dealing with suspicion of controlled drug use**

Where a pupil's behaviour gives rise to concerns about possible drug use, or where information about drug use or supply identifies named individuals, a specific, dated, factual record should be made, and the matter referred to a member of SMT.

## **If controlled drugs are found**

In taking temporary possession and disposing of suspected controlled drugs schools are advised to:

- ensure that a second adult witness is present throughout;
- seal the sample in a plastic bag and include details of the date and time of the seizure/find and witness present;
- store it in a secure location, such as a safe or other lockable container with access limited to senior members of staff;
- notify the police without delay, who will collect it and then store or dispose of it in line with locally agreed protocols. The law does not require a school to divulge to the police the name of the pupil from whom the drugs were taken but it is advisable to do so;
- in all cases the School may decide to request the involvement of the police from the outset as they may choose to investigate using their own procedures;
- record full details of the incident, including the police incident reference number;
- inform parents/carers, unless this is not in the best interests of the pupil;
- identify any safeguarding concerns and develop a support and disciplinary response;
- if any equipment associated with substance misuse is found it should be handled with extreme care, particularly where equipment involves syringes, to obviate any risk of infection. Equipment should be stored in a secure and rigid container. Any syringes should be disposed of in the sharp safe, held in the Medical Centre;
- sanctions will usually be applied.

## Appendix 2 – Useful Organisations

**ADFAM** offers information to families of drug and alcohol users, and the website has a database of local family support services.

Tel: 020 7553 7640 Email: [admin@adfam.org.uk](mailto:admin@adfam.org.uk) Website: <http://www.adfam.org.uk>

**ASH (Action on Smoking and Health)** A campaigning public health charity aiming to reduce the health problems caused by tobacco.

Tel: 020 7739 5902 Email: [enquiries@ash.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@ash.org.uk) Website: <http://www.ash.org.uk>

**Children's Legal Centre** operates a free and confidential legal advice and information service covering all aspects of law and policy affecting children and young people.

Tel: 01206 877910 Email: [clc@essex.ac.uk](mailto:clc@essex.ac.uk) Website <http://www.childrenslegalcentre.com>

**Children's Rights Alliance for England** A charity working to improve the lives and status of all children in England through the fullest implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Email: [info@crae.org.uk](mailto:info@crae.org.uk) Website: <http://www.crae.org.uk/>

**Drinkaware** An independent charity that promotes responsible drinking through innovative ways to challenge the national drinking culture, helping reduce alcohol misuse and minimise alcohol related harm.

Tel: 020 7307 7450 Website: <https://www.drinkaware.co.uk/>

**Drinkline** A free and confidential helpline for anyone who is concerned about their own or someone else's drinking.

Tel: 0800 917 8282 (lines are open 24 hours a day)

**Drug Education Forum** this website contains a number of useful papers and briefing sheets for use by practitioners:

Website: <http://www.drugeducationforum.com/>

**DrugScope** is a centre of expertise on illegal drugs, aiming to inform policy development and reduce drug-related risk. The website includes detailed drug information and access to the Information and Library Service. DrugScope also hosts the Drug Education Practitioners Forum.

Tel: 020 7520 7550 Email: [info@drugscope.org.uk](mailto:info@drugscope.org.uk) Website: <https://www.drugscope.org.uk/>

**FRANK** is the national drugs awareness campaign aiming to raise awareness amongst young people of the risks of illegal drugs, and to provide information and advice. It also provides support to parents/carers, helping to give them the skills and confidence to communicate with their children about drugs.

24 Hour Helpline: 0800 776600 Email: [frank@talktofrank.com](mailto:frank@talktofrank.com) Website <https://www.talktofrank.com/>

**National Children's Bureau** promotes the interests and well-being of all children and young people across every aspect of their lives.

Tel: 020 7843 6000 Website: [www.ncb.org.uk](http://www.ncb.org.uk)

**Family Lives** A charity offering support and information to anyone parenting a child or teenager. It runs a free-phone helpline and courses for parents, and develops innovative projects.

Tel: 0800 800 2222 Website: <http://familylives.org.uk/>

**Re-Solv (Society for the Prevention of Solvent and Volatile Substance Abuse)** A national charity providing information for teachers, other professionals, parents and young people.

Tel: 01785 817885 Information line: 01785 810762

Email: [information@re-solv.org](mailto:information@re-solv.org) Website: [www.re-solv.org](http://www.re-solv.org)

**Smokefree** NHS Smoking Helpline: 0800 169 0 169

Website: <http://smokefree.nhs.uk>

**Stars National Initiative** offers support for anyone working with children, young people and families affected by parental drug and alcohol misuse.

Website: <https://www.addiction-ssa.org/>

**Directgov Young People** can help young people with information and advice on issues relating to health, housing, relationships with family and friends, career and educational options, money, as well as helping young people find out about activities they can get involved in.

Website: <http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/YoungPeople/index.htm>

**We are With You** is one of the UK's largest specialist drug and alcohol treatment charities. As well as adult services, they provide services specifically tailored to the needs of young people and their parents. The Skills for Life project supports young people with drug misusing parents.

Website: <https://www.wearewithyou.org.uk/>

**Youth Offending Teams** Local Youth Offending Teams are multi-agency teams and are the responsibility of the local authority, who have a statutory duty to [prevent offending by young people under the age of 18.

Website: <http://www.justice.gov.uk/global/contacts/yjb/yots/index.htm>



[www.stmargarets-school.org.uk](http://www.stmargarets-school.org.uk)

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