



Parmiter’s School Drugs Policy

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1. Introduction

Parmiter’s School actively seeks to provide an environment where all members of the community are safe from harm. As such, the school takes a robust approach to any individual or group that violates our Behaviour, Drugs or Anti-Bullying policies.

It is recognised that a variety of substances, both legal and illegal, are available to young people of school age in society beyond Parmiter's School. Consequently, a proactive approach is taken in addressing this problem. We ensure that our students are educated on the dangers of substance use and misuse through our Science and Personal Development curriculums, and also through Liberal Studies, Form Time and assemblies. In addition, drugs awareness sessions may be organised to provide information to parents and carers.

2. Definition of a Drug

A drug is a substance that affects the way in which the body functions physically, emotionally or mentally. For purposes of this policy, by ‘drugs’ we are referring to:

- All illegal drugs, referred to as controlled substances. (Those controlled by the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, and subsequent amendments) e.g. cannabis, ecstasy, LSD, heroin.
- All legal drugs, including but not limited to; alcohol, tobacco, volatile substances (those giving off a gas or vapour which can be inhaled) caffeine, khat and alkyl nitrites (known as poppers), psychoactive drugs and vaping devices.
- All over-the-counter and prescription medicines e.g. paracetamol, cough medicines.

By ‘drugs paraphernalia’ we mean items such as; cannabis grinders, rolling papers, filters, matches, lighters and pipes etc.

3. Curriculum Aims

We believe that the purpose of drug education should be to give students knowledge, skills and outlook to appreciate the benefits of a healthy lifestyle and to relate these to their own actions, both now and in the future.

Through the curriculum we aim to:

- Enable young people to make healthy, informed choices, through helping them to increase their knowledge, challenging and exploring attitudes and developing awareness of key issues including drugs.
- To help young people to develop further a sense of self-worth and self-esteem.
- To increase understanding about the implications and possible consequences of drug use and misuse.
- To help young people to distinguish between different substances, consider their use, misuse, benefit and harm.
- To listen to young people's thoughts, feelings and concerns and to ensure that drug education responds to their needs.
- To counter any inaccurate messages and myths which young people may receive about drugs with accurate information.
- To widen understanding about health, social and legal issues.

4. Definition of School Jurisdiction

The legal definition of school premises includes everything within the property boundaries including buildings, outbuildings, playgrounds or fields and also extends to include other settings such as vehicles, boats, marquees, conference centres or any venue managed by the school at the time. E.g. premises of a school trip or visit.

This policy also applies to students who have left the school site during school hours, or are travelling to or from school. In line with Behaviour in Schools (2024) the school may impose sanctions on a student for possession or misuse of drugs outside schools when students are:

- Taking part in any school-organised or school-related activity
- Travelling to or from school
- Are in some way identifiable as a student at the school.

The school may also impose sanctions on a student for possession or misuse of drugs at any time, whether or not the conditions above apply, if the conduct:

- Could have repercussions for the orderly running of the school,
- Poses a threat to another student, or
- Could adversely affect the reputation of the school.

Medicines

Our Medical Policy outlines the procedures for the management and administration of medicines.

Alcohol

No alcohol may be brought on to school premises or consumed during the course of a school day. Any person (including staff, students, parents, carers and visitors) under the effects of alcohol will be asked to leave the premises and return at a later date for the safety of the whole school. Parents/carers will be asked to collect their children from the school and will be encouraged to seek immediate medical support.

Smoking and Vaping

School premises are a no smoking site at all times. Students are not permitted to bring to school any smoking materials, including vapes, matches or lighters. In the interests of health and safety, should a student be found in possession of any of these on school premises, they will be confiscated and parents informed. Smoking, or being in possession of smoking materials on school premises or whilst travelling to/from school will result in sanctions issued in line with our Behaviour Policy. This also applies to "vaping" and the use of electronic cigarettes.

Illegal drugs and "psychoactive substances"

No illegal drugs, psychoactive substances or drugs paraphernalia are allowed to be brought on to, or used on school premises. Bringing any such items onto school premises is considered a serious breach of this drugs policy. Seeking to influence or glamorise illegal drug use or the use of psychoactive substances either in person on school premises or via social media is also considered a serious breach of this Drugs Policy.

Solvents

The school will ensure that potentially hazardous substances it authorises are stored safely, and students will be supervised if it is necessary that they come into contact with them in the course of their work. Students are not permitted to be in possession of solvents. Bringing solvents or hazardous substances onto school premises is considered a serious breach of this drugs policy.

5. Responses to Drug Related Incidents

A drug incident may be any of the following:

- Finding drugs, or related paraphernalia
- Possession of drugs by an individual
- Use of drugs by an individual
- Supply of drugs on school premises
- Individuals disclosing information about their drug use
- Student reports of parents, staff or other students using drugs
- Hiding drugs in or around the school premises for later collection (by themselves or by third parties)
- Glamorising or encouraging the use of drugs and other substances

Any response to drug related incidents needs to balance the needs of the individual student concerned with the wider school community. Therefore, suspension or permanent exclusion from school is a likely though not automatic response to a drug incident. Permanent exclusion will be considered in serious cases where:

- There is a serious breach or persistent breaches of our Drugs and/or Behaviour Policies and or,
- Allowing a student to remain at Parmiter's School may seriously harm the education, safety or welfare of the student or that of other members of the school community.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will be responsible for coordinating the management of drug-related incidents, offering sources of support and liaising with outside agencies including the police.

Incidents will be dealt with after making an assessment of the situation and will be reported to the Headteacher. All incidents and responses will be recorded within 24 hours.

Individuals in Possession of Unauthorised Drugs

If any student or adult on school premises is found in possession of an unauthorised drug it will be confiscated, if possible. If the drug is suspected to be illegal, the school will contact Hertfordshire Police for discussion and advice. Illegal substances will be handed to the police to be legally destroyed as soon as possible and not stored for longer than necessary. Parents and carers will be informed (unless for safeguarding reasons this is not in the best interests of the student) and other professionals such as Children's Services will be informed or consulted as appropriate.

Possession with Intent to Supply Controlled Drugs

If investigations indicate that a student may have possession with intent to supply a controlled drug, then the information will be passed to the police and the Youth Offending Team will be notified. Appropriate action to safeguard all members of the school community will then be taken.

Where a student is found to have supplied any prohibited item or substance (legal or otherwise) to another student, they are likely to receive a more significant sanction, up to and including permanent exclusion.

Confidentiality

Parmiter's School will always seek to work with parents and carers when information, or allegations of drug use are made. There may be occasions when, for safeguarding reasons, this may not be appropriate (please refer to our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy).

Complete confidentiality can never be promised to a student, though information given in confidence will not generally be disclosed more widely. In particular if a student chooses to disclose that they are using a drug without medical authorisation, this information will not be used against them. However, action will be taken to safeguard the individual and those around them. Regarding disclosures, staff will follow the procedures outlined in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Support for Students

At Parmiter's, the welfare of our students is paramount and intervention will be made if the school feels a student is showing signs which indicate particular risks of, or from, involvement with drugs, whether their own or the involvement of their parents/carers.

We believe that early intervention, where possible, is significant. Such interventions may include:

- Support and advice in school
- Referral to specialist external services
- Liaison with the Police.

Right to Search

Staff reserve the right to search students if they have reason to believe that they are carrying offensive weapons, illegal substances or anything that is illegal or dangerous. Searches will usually be carried out by members of the Senior Leadership Team or Key Stage Leaders, and parents and carers will always be informed when this has happened. Any searches will be carried out in line with the [DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation](#).

If students are involved with any activity which breaks the law, the police may be involved in intimate searches and the confiscation of items. Similarly, the police will be involved if any student is suspected of having contact with an illegal substance. This includes possession, using or dealing. In such cases, the police will decide what course of legal action, if any, should be taken.

6. Links to Other Policies

This Drugs Policy has links to the following policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Exclusions Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Medical Policy

7. Supporting Organisations

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

Tel: 020 3817 9410 Email: admin@adfam.org.uk Website: www.adfam.org.uk

Alcohol Change UK works to reduce the incidence and costs of alcohol-related harm and to increase the range and quality of services available to people with alcohol-related problems.

Tel: 020 3907 8480 Email: contact@alcoholchange.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 714 650 (general queries only) Website: www.childrenslegalcentre.com

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 7766 9900 Website: www.drinkaware.co.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: 0300 123 6600 Email: frank@talktofrank.com Website: www.talktofrank.com

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: 0808 800 2222 Website: www.familylives.org.uk

Smokefree - NHS Smoking Helpline: 0300 123 1044;

Website: <https://www.nhs.uk/better-health/quit-smoking/>

Stars National Initiative offers support for anyone working with children, young people and families affected by parental drug and alcohol misuse. Website: www.childrenssociety.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: www.gov.uk/youth-offending-team

Appendix 1: Guidance for Staff

Signs and Symptoms of Possible Drug Misuse

It is important for staff to be vigilant, particularly when they are in charge of activities which take groups of young people away from the school premises. Research has shown that first experiments with drugs by young people almost always involve a substance provided by a friend. The signs listed below may indicate that individuals or groups of young people are misusing drugs. Their presence alone is not conclusive proof of drug misuse; many of them are a normal part of adolescence, but the presence of several signs together may indicate a need for concern.

Warning Signs in Individuals

- Changes in attendance, and being unwilling to take part in school activities
- Change in attitude towards school work
- Unusual outbreaks of temper, marked swings of mood, restlessness or irritability
- Reports from parents that more time is being spent away from home, possibly with new friends or with friends in an older age group
- Excessive spending or borrowing of money
- Stealing money or goods
- Excessive tiredness without obvious cause
- No interest in physical appearance
- Sores or rashes especially on the mouth or nose
- Lack of appetite
- Heavy use of perfume etc. to disguise smell of drugs
- Wearing sunglasses at inappropriate times to hide dilated or constricted pupils
- Slurred speech
- Glazed eyes
- Unsteady on feet

Warning Signs in Groups

- Regular absence on certain days
- Keeping away from other students and avoiding supervised areas, eg. groups who often gather near the school gate or at the perimeter of the playground or sports field.
- Being the subject of rumours about drug taking
- Talking to strangers near the premises
- Stealing in organised groups
- Using 'drug slang'
- Exchanging money or objects in the playground
- Associating sporadically with one person who is much older and not normally part of the peer group.

Objects That May Indicate Drug Misuse

- Foil containers or cup shapes made from silver foil, perhaps discoloured by heat
- Metal tins
- Spoons discoloured by heat
- Pill boxes
- Plastic, cellophane or metal foil wrappers
- Small plastic or glass phials or bottles
- Twists of paper
- Straws
- Sugar lumps
- Syringes and needles
- Cigarette papers and lighters/Rizla packets with torn off corners
- Spent matches
- Plastic bags or used butane gas containers (solvent abuse)
- Shredded cigarettes, home rolled cigarettes and pipes (cannabis).

Procedures if substance misuse is discovered

If staff discover substances which are suspected to be drugs, the following procedure should be followed:

1. Summon assistance from a member of SLT who will, in the presence of a witness, take possession of the substance. Medical help should also be sought if necessary. Under no circumstances, promise total confidentiality. Any searches must be carried out in line with the [DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation](#)
2. Do not leave the substance unattended or in the possession of a student while you enlist the support of a colleague as a witness. If this cannot be done, accompany the student (or students) with the substance to the School Office.
3. Record the time, place and circumstances in which the substance came into your possession.
4. Do not investigate the nature of the substance yourself, but record its approximate size and appearance.
5. Where possible, have the recordings countersigned by a witness.
6. Hand the substance immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or other member of SLT. Do not keep the substance on your person or in a place of safekeeping; to do so may place you at risk.
7. The DSL or Deputy will place the substance in a clear, sealed bag and lock it in a safe.
8. The DSL will sign and date the package and you will be asked to sign as well as any witness who was present. The substance will be passed to the police.
9. The DSL or member of SLT will contact the parent/carer(s) of the student(s) involved.

10. If any substance found on/with a student is thought to be a controlled drug, the police will be contacted to determine an appropriate strategy.
11. Where drugs are handed on to another authority, including the police, this should also be witnessed.

International School Trips and Visits

The use or possession of controlled substances on a school trips abroad may have serious consequences for the students concerned and they may be dealt with by the local police in accordance with the laws of the country in question. After a written statement has been produced stating the nature and details of the offence, the SLT trip contact will be informed of the situation and the student will be sent home at parents expense.

Domestic School Trips and Visits

If a member of staff suspects that a student is in possession of a controlled drug, they should contact the SLT trip lead immediately and will also be advised to contact the local police. Arrangements will then be made for the student to be removed from the trip and collected by their parents/carers.