



NORTHGATE
High School

Drugs & Prohibited Substances Policy

Respect | Determination | Teamwork

Review period: Biennial

Review by: Mr J Tunaley

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Next Review: October 2025

Drugs & Prohibited Substances Policy

1 Aims and Objectives

- To recognise the need for educating students regarding drug and substance misuse by providing opportunities for students to acquire knowledge and understanding about the dangers of drug misuse
- To minimise the number of young people in school engaging in drug use, delaying the onset of first use, and reducing the harm caused by drugs
- To help students and staff recognise and respond to indications of drug misuse in or near school
- To enable those who have concerns about drugs – students, staff or parents/carers – to seek help or advice
- To make clear to all concerned what the school's policy on drugs is, and how issues involving drugs will be dealt with

2 What is a Drug?

- 2.1** The definition of a drug given by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime is: a substance **people take to change the way they feel, think or behave.**
- 2.2** The term is used by the DfE to refer to all drugs, including illegal drugs, alcohol, tobacco, volatile substances (such as lighter fuel, glue or aerosols) and over-the-counter and prescription medicines. Students, staff and parents/carers need to understand that all drugs have the potential to cause harm; that using drugs in combination can increase risk; and that legal drugs can be as addictive as some illegal drugs.

3 The Legal Position Regarding Drugs and its implication for Northgate High School

- 3.1** It is an offence under Section 8 of the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 for the management of any establishment (including schools) to knowingly permit the supply or production of any illegal drugs on their premises. It is also an offence to allow premises to be used for the smoking of cannabis or opium. Illegal drugs therefore have no place in schools.
- 3.2** In addition, certain legal drugs such as tobacco, alcohol, psychoactive substances and volatile substances must not be brought onto the school premises by students, nor must items relating to them such as matches and cigarette lighters. Furthermore, students should not be on or near the school site under the influence of alcohol or volatile substances.
- 3.3** However, there are instances where drugs may be legitimately brought into schools. Students in Years 7 - 11 who are on prescribed medicine may bring such medication into school with the full knowledge of key staff. Progress directors and office staff should always be informed in such instances. The school does not give students non-prescribed medicines such as headache tablets. Students may bring this type of medicine into school at their parents'/carers' discretion, but only in a quantity appropriate for personal use that day.

4 What constitutes a Drug Incident within School?

- 4.1** A drug incident may be suggested by a number of things such as the following:
- drugs or associated paraphernalia found on the school premises
 - a student demonstrating an inappropriate level of knowledge of drugs for their age
 - a student found in possession of drugs or associated paraphernalia
 - a student found supplying drugs on or near the school premises
 - a student or parent/carer thought to be under the influence of drugs
 - information that the illegitimate sale or supply of drugs is taking place in the local area
 - a disclosure by a student
- 4.2** Both students and staff need to be alert to such signs and need to be prepared to act upon them when appropriate. Where there is a concern that a person may have taken drugs, the overriding first concern must be for their safety. Therefore any medical emergency must be dealt with, via first aid treatment or the emergency services before addressing other issues.

5 Concerns about drugs within School

5.1 Staff or students/parents/carers who have concerns about drugs should immediately pass these concerns onto the Designated Safeguarding team. Each incident will then be followed up and dealt with according to the situation, but the following are some of the issues that will need to be considered:

- the response and motivation of the student(s) concerned
- judging whether this is a one off incident or a longer-term situation
- the legality of the drug – (if illegal, police must be informed)
- the quantity of the drug involved
- the home circumstances of the student(s)
- if illegal drugs are suspected, where does the incident appear on a scale from ‘possession of a small quantity’ to ‘persistent supply, whether for or not for payment’?
- if supply of illegal drugs is suspected, how much was supplied, was the student coerced into the supply role, and is there evidence of organised habitual supply?

5.2 All incidents regarding suspected drug abuse in school must be fully recorded since records, including notes of any discussions with students, may be used in any subsequent court proceedings. Notes should include the time, date, place and people present, as well as what was said.

6 The position in school regarding temporary possession and disposal of suspected illegal drugs

6.1 According to the DfE and ACPO drug advice for schools September 2012, the law permits school staff to search a student and take temporary possession of a substance suspected of being an illegal drug for the purposes of preventing an offence from being committed or continued in relation to that drug. Should a member of staff find him/herself taking temporary possession of such a substance, he/she should adhere to the following:

- 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
- inform the police of the identity of the person/persons from whom the substance was obtained
- 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 student
- identify any safeguarding concerns
- deal with according to the school sanctions as outlined below

6.2 We have a separate Searching, Screening and Confiscation policy that should be read alongside this policy.

7 Involving parents/carers and dealing with complaints

7.1 Schools are not required to inform parents/carers before a search takes place or to seek their consent to search their child. There is no legal requirement to make or keep a record of a search although such a search would normally be recorded on a student file.

7.2 Although the school would normally inform the individual student’s parents or carers where alcohol, illegal drugs or potentially harmful substances are found, there is no legal requirement to do so.

8 Responses to Drug-Related Incidents in or near School (This section should be read alongside the school behaviour policy)

8.1 Students found to be under the influence of or in possession of harmful substances in or near school will face sanctions. The sanctions that will be applied will depend on the nature of the drugs-related offence.

8.2 A: Student found using, under the influence of or in possession of a legal substance (e.g. alcohol, e-cigarettes, tobacco, psychoactive substances, or volatile substances) in school

Sanctions that will be applied include the following:

- Interview with Head or Assistant Head of Sixth Form (post-16 students)
- warning/detention/letter home to parents/carers
- referral for counselling, either in-school or in liaison with outside agencies
- behaviour support plan or pastoral support programme
- suspension
- a managed move

8.3 B: Student found in possession of an illegal substance in school

Sanctions that will be applied include the following:

- referral for counselling, either in-school or in liaison with outside agencies
- Suffolk Pupil Support Framework
- fixed term exclusion with the clear indication that other than in exceptional circumstances a second offence will almost certainly result in permanent exclusion
- a managed move
- permanent exclusion

C: Other than in exceptional circumstances, a student found supplying drugs (whether for payment or not) or intending to supply drugs on or near the school premises, or a student committing a second offence of having an illegal substance, alcohol or legal highs in or near school, or a second offence of being under the influence of drugs, alcohol or legal highs during school time.

- permanent exclusion

8.4 Where the concern is that a student may be in danger of getting involved in drug related activities, it may be appropriate to offer early intervention and targeted prevention, again in liaison with other agencies including the option of the Counsellor based at Northgate High School. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will take responsibility for setting this process in motion.

9 Preventative Work

9.1 At Northgate we recognise that educating young people about drugs is a powerful tool in helping make sure they understand the risks involved and ultimately make sensible informed choices. We also recognise that making sure students have support and reporting mechanisms signposted is vital.

9.2 Here at Northgate High School, the drug and alcohol education curriculum is delivered as part of the Key Stage three and four PSHE and Citizenship scheme of work and incorporates the statutory elements from the Science curriculum. We believe all students should have equal access to education programmes that equip them with the skills, knowledge and attitudes to make healthy and informed decisions about their lives. As part of its care for the welfare of its students, we believe the school has a responsibility to inform and educate students about drugs, alcohol and the role of medicines.

The curriculum at Northgate High School is inclusive of all students, whatever their individual needs. As such, teaching and learning in PSHE, as in all other subjects, may be adapted and scaffolded to ensure that all students can access the content at an appropriate level.

In order to make the information more accessible and engaging, outside agencies and visitors are often used to carry out workshops at the school which provide our students with knowledge about drugs and alcohol education. When visitors are used to deliver aspects of the drugs education curriculum, they will not be left alone to work with students. The classroom teachers will be part of the experience so s/he can follow up the work.

Our approach to drug and alcohol education in PSHE seeks to support the following objectives in respect of drug use and misuse:

- To provide accurate information about substances in relation to personal safety.
- To enable students to make healthy, informed choices by increasing knowledge, challenging attitudes and developing and practising skills.
- To develop an understanding that all medicines are drugs, but that not all drugs are medicines, and that all

substances are harmful if not used properly.

- To increase understanding about the implications of and possible consequences of drug use and misuse.
- To provide facts about legal substances and illegal substances, including drug-taking, and the associated risks, including the link to serious mental health conditions.
- To develop an understanding of the law relating to the supply and possession of illegal substances.
- To build awareness of the dangers of drugs that are prescribed but still present serious health risks.
- To clarify misconceptions about the prevalence and acceptability of drug use among peers.
- To enable students to identify sources of appropriate personal support.
- To help students to develop skills such as self-esteem and assertiveness – thus enabling fulfilled lives without the reliance upon substances.
- To widen understanding about related health and social issues including crime, impact on both family and community.

In order to achieve these aims and objectives, we seek to:

- Provide a safe, healthy environment in which students can learn and develop
- Ensure all members of the school community are familiar with the policy

9.3 Liaison with the Police Safer Neighborhood Team is vital through assemblies highlighting the need to keep themselves safe and conversations with students that we may have concerns about, related to drugs or other prohibited substances.

10. County Lines **(This section should be read alongside the Safeguarding policy)**

10.1 There are county lines operating in the Ipswich area and because of this we have trained staff in how to spot the signs and indicators that a young person might have become involved in child criminal exploitation in line with KCSIE.

10.2 Students at Northgate have assemblies that highlight the dangers associated with county lines. They are also informed how to report any concerns they have regarding county lines.

10.3 Northgate fully support the work of Suffolk Against Gang Exploitation and will communicate with them when we have concerns about the possible involvement of a young person in gang culture.

10.4 Where we receive information pertaining to gang or drug involvement we will complete the necessary reporting processes to make sure the student is safeguarded. We will also complete police information sharing protocols.

10.5 Link to the Online school's intelligence reporting portal: www.suffolk.police.uk/schools-intelligence-reporting-tool

