
Alcohol, Tobacco and Drugs Policy

Table of Contents

1	General	2
2	Policy Statement	2
3	Drug Education	3
4	Investigation	3
5	Discipline	4
6	Review and Development	4

Reviewed	Autumn 2024
Name of owner/author	Deputy Head (Pastoral)
Approval by	Policy Committee
Target Audience	Whole School Community/Public
Where available	Website, Staffshared Drive
Review Date	Autumn 2025

1 General

School rules include the explicit prohibition of the possession and use of illegal substances within the school, or on any activity organised by the school. Tobacco, e-cigarettes and alcohol may also not be brought into the school.

We recognise that illegal drugs are increasingly available in society, and we see it as part of our responsibility to educate pupils about the dangers of illicit involvement with drugs, and in the drugs sub-culture. A significant part of the health education curriculum is concerned with the reasons why young people find the drugs sub-culture attractive, and of the underlying assumptions and philosophy behind it.

Whilst a primary concern is to prevent pupils from using illegal drugs, we include within the health education curriculum reference to alcohol and tobacco misuse and to other substance abuse (including legal highs). We also include e-cigarettes within this category given the addictive aspect of nicotine.

Birkdale's policy is educational, pastoral and disciplinary - in that order. As a Christian school, we want our pupils to experience (in Jesus' words) "life in all its fullness". The positive promotion of a healthy lifestyle is an integral part of the wider health education programme, and the drugs policy should be seen within this context.

2 Policy Statement

It is the policy of Birkdale School to promote a healthy lifestyle, and actively discourage the use of controlled drugs or abuse of alcohol on or off the premises. Any illegal use of controlled drugs by pupils will be treated as serious misconduct. The Deputy Head (Pastoral) is responsible for co-ordinating the management of drug-related incidents, offering sources of support and liaising with outside agencies.

The School will operate a zero-tolerance policy towards drug use or supply on or off the premises. If a pupil is found to be, or suspected to be, under the influence of drugs or alcohol, in possession of or suspected of supplying drugs, tobacco, e-cigarettes or alcohol, a senior member of staff will be informed, and they will investigate. Parents will be informed and, if appropriate, the Police will be contacted. Depending on the outcome of the investigation, a pupil will be offered appropriate support and/or face disciplinary sanctions in line with the Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions Policy and the Exclusions Policy.

2.1 Alcohol

Alcohol may not be consumed during normal school hours and pupils must not be under the influence of alcohol at any time during the school day or when driving to and from School or when in uniform.

2.2 Tobacco

The School operates a no smoking policy throughout the School buildings and grounds, on school trips or at any School event or function. Equally pupils must not smoke in school uniform, which would be bringing the School into disrepute.

2.3 E-Cigarettes/Vapes

The legal age for purchasing e-cigarettes/vapes is 18 and they typically contain nicotine which is an addictive substance. However, e-cigarettes/vapes can also be used to consume illegal substances and therefore the school does not allow pupils to be in possession of e-cigarettes/vapes at any time.

2.4 New Psychoactive Substances

Laws criminalising the production, distribution, sale and supply of what are otherwise known as new psychoactive substances came into effect in May, 2016. Formerly known as 'Legal Highs', they present a growing concern and have been described as being more dangerous than heroin. The school does not advocate the use of such substances or permit them to be brought into school.

2.5 Drugs

The abuse of any substance prohibited by law by pupils in or out of School is not permitted. Pupils found to be supplying or distributing prohibited substances will be in serious breach of School rules and will be subject to permanent exclusion.

Pupils found to have been taking or abusing a prohibited substance will be offered counselling and a programme of education in addition to that normally undertaken by the school. Pupils found to have been taking or abusing prohibited substances in or out of school may be subject to permanent exclusion.

The School reserves the right to involve the Police if it considers/appears that there may have been a breach in the law.

3 Drug Education

The study of substance use and abuse is an integral part of the school's health education curriculum. It aims to allow pupils to acquire the knowledge, understanding and skills which enable them to consider the effects of substances such as tobacco, e-cigarettes/vapes, alcohol, medicines and other drugs on themselves and others, and to make informed and healthy decisions about the use of such substances.

Drug education content is delivered to pupils through PSHE lessons and is set out in the PSHE curriculum document which is available on request. Pastoral help and guidance is available for parents and pupils on an individual basis when required. The school welcomes opportunities to involve parents in the counselling process, and we look to parents to support the Birkdale policy on and off the premises, promoting the same responsible attitude. Staff are also offered training with regards to drugs given that the nature of abuse and dangers of drugs and legal highs is an ever growing concern in society.

4 Investigation

Behaviour which suggests drug abuse will be followed up by the pastoral staff of the school, typically the Head of Section and Deputy Head (Pastoral). Pupils will be interviewed by two members of staff and a written record of the interview will be made. As part of an investigation a pupil can be searched if there are reasonable grounds for suspecting the pupil to be in possession of drugs. Any search will follow the guidance in the Appendix A Searching, Screening and Confiscation within the Behaviour, Rewards & Sanctions Policy.

If it is confirmed that there are reasonable grounds for suspecting that a pupil may have been misusing illegal drugs, the Head will be informed and is responsible for further investigations; this may require a pupil to take some form of test in an appropriate time frame. These tests will usually only be applied if there is sufficient suspicion that a pupil has been taking or abusing a prohibited substance, although the school reserves the right to test on a random basis. The school will make every effort to keep parents informed of the situation, and will seek parents' consent before

administering a drugs test. Parents may be present while the test is carried out. No test will be carried out against the wishes of the parent or the pupil. However, if a pupil refuses to take a test, they may be required to leave the school.

When illegal drugs are found on a pupil or on school premises, staff will temporarily take possession of the suspected substance. The substance will be placed in a suitable sealed container in the presence of a witness, if possible the Head. The Head will then decide whether to inform the Police and seek advice or destroy the substance. It is not permissible to retain the substance as this is an offence under the misuse of Drugs Act 1971. If drugs are found in school, an investigation will always be instigated.

Police will always be informed when there is a legal requirement to do so, and may be informed on other occasions, if, in the opinion of the Head, such action would be appropriate and helpful. Close and regular liaison with the local community Police officer is of key importance.

5 Discipline

A distinction is drawn between the possession of illegal substances and their provision or sale.

Selling or actively promoting any illegal substance will usually result in the permanent exclusion (expulsion) of the individual(s) concerned. The possession of an illegal substance will have serious consequences. The Head has the right to consider each individual case and take what action is appropriate in the light of school policy.

Any action taken will balance the needs both of the individual and of the school community, and pastoral counselling will be recommended as appropriate.

If a pupil has been found to infringe the school's code of practice by being in possession of, or involved in the use of illegal drugs, the school reserves the right to permanently exclude that pupil from the school. If not permanently excluded, then a condition of the pupil's continuing in the school will be that he/she undergoes further drugs testing during the remainder of his/her career in the school. Any further positive tests will lead to permanent exclusion.

6 Review and Development

6.1 Procedure

This document, together with the effectiveness of its procedures, is reviewed annually by the Policy Committee and Governing Board and as events or legislation change requires.

6.2 Links with other Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- Behaviour, Rewards & Sanctions Policy, including - Searching, Screening and Confiscation
- Exclusions Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- PSHE Policy
- PSHE Schemes of Work