



Wychwood School

SUBSTANCE USE AND MISUSE POLICY (SMOKING, ALCOHOL AND DRUGS)

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Definition

The DfE definition of a drug in “Drugs Guidance for Schools” is: *“A substance people take to change the way they feel, think or behave. This includes:*

- *All illegal drugs (those controlled by the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971).*
- *All legal drugs, including alcohol, tobacco, volatile substances, ketamine, khat and alkyl nitrites.*
- *All over-the-counter drugs and prescription drugs.*

Principles

- At Wychwood, Oxford we believe that as part of our pastoral care we have a duty to inform and educate the girls on the consequences of substance use and misuse.
- We condone neither the misuse of cigarettes, e-cigarettes, drugs, legal ‘highs’ and alcohol by our girls, nor the illegal supply of these substances.
- We acknowledge the importance of our pastoral role in the welfare of our girls, and will seek to persuade girls in need of support to come forward.
- We believe in the principle of sharing the responsibility for education with parents, by keeping them informed and involved.
- We are committed to promoting a healthy, safe environment in which good citizenship and respect for the law can flourish.
- As we are committed to the health and safety of the girls we will take action to safeguard their well-being.
- 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 legal and illegal drugs and substances.

Aims

- To enable pupils to make healthy, informed choices about nicotine, drugs, legal ‘highs’ and alcohol.
- To provide accurate information about such substances.
- To increase understanding about the implications and possible consequences of use and misuse.
- To widen understanding about related health and social issues, e.g. sex and sexuality, crime, HIV and AIDS.
- To enable girls to identify sources of appropriate personal support.

Education programme

We have a well-constructed PSHE programme at Wychwood, Oxford that focuses, among other things, upon the potential short-term and long-term risks to health from drug and substance abuse, including alcohol and nicotine. We concentrate on teaching young people the importance of making healthy, informed choices. However, there is also an ethical dimension, designed to instil an understanding of the importance of complying with the criminal law. We aim also to promote an awareness of the pressures on young people to conform to certain behaviours and to help improve their ability to cope with such pressures.

This involves pupils of all ages and extends across the curriculum, involving PSHE, science, RS and drama lessons among others. In these curriculum areas content and methods are designed to be appropriate to the age and general awareness of the pupils. We also have forums and assemblies on the topic, talks from the police and from time to time make use of travelling workshops and road shows to cover the serious risks from abuse of substances including alcohol and tobacco.

Pupils can discuss their individual worries about drugs or substances with their Form Teacher, one of the Housemistresses, their Progress Tutor or a member of the Senior Pastoral Team. They can also refer themselves to the School Counsellor or doctor for individual guidance, without fearing sanctions or adverse report. We are conscious of the importance of working together, including with parents and guardians, in order to promote the well-being of the girls.

PROCEDURE

Illegal drugs

If a pupil comes forward and voluntarily identifies herself as a drug user and asks for help, or if her parents or friends ask for help on her behalf, we may, depending upon the circumstances, and at the discretion of the Head, offer her the opportunity to reform her habit with the support of a drug testing programme and counselling (at the parents' expense). Full details of the arrangements will be discussed with the parent or guardian.

We will always investigate rumours about involvements in legal and illegal drugs and substances, including questioning a pupil, searching her room and personal possessions. We will inform parents and guardians as a matter of urgency and invite them into the school to discuss the matter.

The normal sanction for possession or involvement with drugs is expulsion. Alternative sanctions, (when there are mitigating circumstances), could involve suspension and a final warning. Any pupil found offering drugs to another pupil will be expelled and, following consultation with the Governors, the matter may be referred to the police.

Alcohol and nicotine (to include cigarettes and e-cigarettes)

We do not allow the pupils at Wychwood, Oxford to bring alcohol or nicotine onto the premises, or to consume either substance when wearing school uniform out of school. Pupils in Study I and II (Years 12 and 13) who are allowed off the premises during the school day are forbidden from visiting pubs or bars, as well as from smoking, vaping (using e-cigarettes) or consuming alcohol. This rule also applies to all school trips and visits, whether in this country or overseas, irrespective of whether or not pupils are wearing school uniform at the time.

The School is a public place; smoking or vaping is therefore illegal for everyone, including staff and visitors.

We will offer wine to parents and guardians at certain formal events to which they are invited. We believe that pupils in their final two years at the school should learn that the moderate consumption of alcohol has its place in our civilisation when accompanied by food and lively conversation. We therefore offer limited quantities of wine to members of the Study on set

occasions, such as socials with a sit-down meal, and always under the supervision of a member of staff. Soft drinks are always available at such events. Younger pupils are not allowed alcohol.

Pupils caught breaching these guidelines on alcohol or who are caught smoking or vaping can expect to be suspended and for their parents or guardians to be invited to the school in order to discuss the matter. A pupil may be referred for a session of counselling where we have reason to believe that she has issues with either alcohol or nicotine, for example, when there are repeated infringements.

School Rules

The school rules (below), which are published in the New Girls' Pack and in the pupils' planners and which are explained to the whole school on a termly basis, affect the health and safety of the individual and of others in the community. Girls who infringe these rules may be sent home or suspended.

Smoking: The School is a non-smoking establishment. Cigarettes, e-cigarettes, lighters or matches* must not be brought into school. The law does not permit smoking or vaping in public places such as the School – buildings or grounds. Girls are not permitted to smoke or vape when wearing school uniform out of school.

** Prior to a Duke of Edinburgh Expedition girls may bring in one box of matches (in a dry container or bag) which must be handed in to a member of staff until the beginning of the expedition.*

Alcohol: Alcohol must not be brought into the School or consumed on school premises except in the context of legitimate entertainment with an adult staff presence such as a meal.

Drugs: Legal or Illegal substances must not be brought into the School or used on the premises.

We always remind the girls that, although we can never condone an action such as those above for which they may be sent home, or worse, we will always support them individually in their attempts to reform.