



Drug Guidance

Author	S Case	Source	The Key
Approved By	ESPC	Status	Non Statutory
Last Review	June 2026	Next Review	June 2028

Details of Policy Updates

Date	Details
18/01/2018	Reviewed and updated to reflect current guidance/guidelines
01/03/2020	Additional information about confiscation of substances
15/02/2021	Establishment name and roles updated
15/02/2021	Updated MIS provider
01/07/2024	Updated with relevant guidance
29/06/2026	Major Revision: updated statutory references, strengthened safeguarding links, added county lines/exploitation guidance, updated vaping policy, revised police involvement procedures, updated support services

Contents

- 1. Policy Statement and principles**
- 2. Legal Framework**
- 3. Definitions**
- 4. Roles and Responsibilities**
- 5. Drug Education**
- 6. Managing Drug-related Incidents**
- 7. Searching, Screening and Confiscation**
- 8. Safeguarding and Child Protection**
- 9. Support and Intervention**
- 10. Working with Parents and External Agencies**
- 11. Staff Conduct**
- 12. Monitoring and Evaluation**
- 13. Review**
- 14. Appendices**

1. Policy Statement and Principles

Our Commitment

North Star Academy Trust is committed to the health, safety, and wellbeing of all members of our school community. We recognise that drugs use, both legal and illegal, is a reality in young people's lives and we have a duty to inform, educate and support our pupils to make healthy, informed choices.

Core Principles

- The health and safety of our school community and meeting the pastoral needs of pupils is our priority in managing drug related issues.
- We will work in partnership with parents, carers and the local community to enable pupils to make healthy informed choices and discourage the misuse of drugs.
- We recognise that children involved with drugs may be the victims of exploitation who require support and protection, not just sanctions.
- We will respond to drug-related incidents with a balance of education, support and appropriate consequences.
- We will remain a drug –free environment across all our schools.
- We will ensure consistency and fairness in our approach while considering individual circumstances.
- We will maintain confidentiality appropriately while prioritising safeguarding.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- All pupils across North star Academy Trust Schools.
- All school staff, volunteers and visitors.
- All school premises including grounds and buildings.
- All school-organised activities, including trips, visits and residential stays.
- Journeys to and from school where pupils are under school supervision.

A separate policy applies to staff conduct (See Staff Code of Conduct)

Zero Tolerance

North Star Academy Trust operates a zero-tolerance approach to use of illegal and unauthorised substances on school site or during the school day. However, we recognise that zero tolerance to possession and use does not mean zero support to pupils who may be vulnerable or at risk.

2. Legal Framework

This guidance has been written in consultation with the following guidance:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026 – DFE statutory guidance
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation: advice for schools (July 2022) DFE Guidance
- Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE), and Health Education (2019, updated 2021) - DFE statutory guidance
- Working Together to Safeguarding Children (2023) - HM Government
- When to call the police, guidance for schools and colleges (2020) - National Police Chiefs Council.

Legislation

- Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 (as amended)
- Psychoactive Substances Act 2016
- Education Act 1996 (powers to search)
- Education Act 2011 (powers to search without consent)
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Human Right Act 1998 (Article 8 – right to privacy)

National Strategies

- **From Harm to Hope: A 10 year drugs plan to cut crime and save lives (2021)** - HM Government
- **Serious Violence Strategy (2018)** - Home Office

Local Guidance

- Offensive Weapons and Controlled Drugs in Educational Settings (November 2021, updated January 2022) - Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership
- Bristol Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures
- North Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures
- Bath and North East Somerset Safeguarding Partnership procedures
- Local police protocols for schools

3. Definitions

What is a drug?

A drug is ‘a substance people take to change the way they feel, think or behave’.

This policy covers:

Medicines

- Prescription medicines
- Over-the-counter medicines
- These are covered separately in our ‘Supporting Pupils with Medical Needs’ policy

Legal Substances

- Alcohol
- Tobacco and tobacco products
- E-cigarettes and vaping products (including nicotine and non-nicotine varieties)
- Volatile substances (solvents, aerosols, glues)
- Caffeine products (energy drinks)

Controlled Drugs (Illegal under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971)

- Class A Drugs (e.g., heroin, cocaine, crack cocaine, ecstasy, LSD, magic mushrooms, methamphetamine)
- Class B Drugs (e.g., cannabis, amphetamines, barbiturates, codeine, ketamine, synthetic cannabinoids)
- Class C Drugs (e.g., anabolic steroids, benzodiazepines, GHB, some tranquillisers)

New Psychoactive Substances (NPS)

- Formally known as legal highs – now illegal under the Psychoactive Substance Act 2016
- Substances designed to mimic the effects of controlled drugs

Drug-Related Paraphernalia

- Items associated with drug use (e.g., rolling papers, grinders, pipes, needles)

What is Drug Misuse

Drug misuse includes:

- Using illegal drugs
- Using illegal substances in harmful or inappropriate ways
- Using prescription medicines not prescribed to you
- Using prescription medicines in ways not intended
- Sharing or selling prescription medicines
- Deliberately inhaling volatile substances

4. Roles and Responsibilities

The Trust Board

- Approving this policy and monitoring this implementation
- Ensuring the policy is reviewed every two years
- Ensuring adequate resources are allocated for drug education and support
- Monitoring drug-related incidents and trends across the trust
- Ensuring Safeguarding procedures are robust

Local Governing Bodies:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy at school level
- Reviewing drug related incidents and trends
- Ensuring drug education is effective and age-appropriate
- Supporting the Headteacher in managing serious incidents

Headteacher:

- Implementing this policy consistently
- Ensuring all staff understand their roles and responsibilities
- Ensure all staff receive appropriate training
- Manage drug-related serious incidents
- Making decisions about sanctions including exclusions
- Liaising with police and external agencies
- Reporting to Local Governing Body and Trust Board
- Ensuring parents are informed appropriately

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

- Acting as the first point of contact for drug-related concerns
- Assessing safeguarding risks related to drug-related incidents
- Liaising with external agencies (police, social care, health services)
- Maintaining records of drug-related incidents on CPOMS
- Identifying patterns and trends
- Ensuring appropriate support is in place for vulnerable pupils
- Coordinating multi-agency responses where needed
- Considering whether incidents indicate child criminal exploitation or other abuse

Deputy DSL can also fulfill this role in the absence of the DSL.

All staff:

All staff are responsible for:

- Being vigilant to all signs of drug use or involvement
- Reporting concerns immediately to the DSL
- Following the procedures in this policy
- Delivering drug education as appropriate to their role
- Maintaining appropriate confidentiality
- Treating all pupils with dignity and respect
- Recognising that all pupils involved with drugs may be victims who need protection

Authorised Staff for Searching

The following staff are authorised to carry out searches without consent:

- Headteacher
- All members of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT)
- All members of the Engagement Team
- Other staff may be authorised at the discretion of the Headteacher on a case-by-case basis

Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Follow this policy and school rules
- Report concerns about drugs to a trusted adult
- Support peers who may be struggling
- 5. Engage positively with drug education
- Understand the consequences of breaking school rules

Parents and Carers

We expect parents and carers to:

- Support this policy and the school's approach
- Discuss drugs and their risks with their children
- Inform the school of any concerns
- Work in partnership with the school to support their child
- Attend meetings when requested

5. Drug Education

Statutory Requirements

Health education, which includes drugs education, is a statutory requirement for all pupils in state-funded schools. Our drug education programme fulfils our statutory duties under the DfE's "Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education "guidance (2019, updated 2021)

Drug Education is a major component of drug prevention. Drug prevention aims to minimise the number of young people engaged in drug use, delay the age of onset of first use, reduce the harm caused by drugs and enable those who have concerns about drugs to seek help.

Aims

Our Drug Education programme aims to:

- Enable all our pupils to make healthy, informed choices by increasing their knowledge

- Develop pupils' skills to assess risk and make safe decisions
- Explore attitudes towards drugs and challenge misconceptions
- Develop pupils' self-esteem and confidence to resist peer pressure
- Know where and how to access support
- Understand the legal, social and health implications of drug use
- Develop critical thinking about drugs portrayed in media and society
- Understand the risks of drug exploitation

Content

Our drug education programme is:

- Age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate
- Evidence-based and follows DfE guidance
- Inclusive and sensitive to pupils' needs and backgrounds
- Delivered through our PSHE/RSHE curriculum
- Responsive to emerging issues (e.g., vaping, county lines)

The programme covers:

Foundation stage and KS1:

- Understanding that some things are good for us and some are not
- How to keep our bodies healthy
- Who to ask for help
- Understanding medicines and when we need them
- Basic safety rules

Key Stage 2

- Understanding the difference between medicines and other drugs
- Why people use drugs and the risks involved
- The effects of alcohol and tobacco
- How to resist peer pressure
- Where to get help and advice
- Understanding rules and laws about drugs

Key Stage 3

- Detailed knowledge of different drug types and their effects
- Understanding addiction and dependency
- The legal status of different drugs and consequences
- Risks of drug use including mental and physical health impacts
- Understanding county lines and criminal exploitation
- Recognising and resisting peer pressure
- Critical evaluation of drug-related media messages
- Where to access support and treatment

Key Stage 4

- In-depth understanding of short and long-term effects of drugs
- Understanding harm reduction approaches
- The impact of drugs on life choices and opportunities
- Understanding the link between drugs and crime
- Recognising signs of exploitation and how to get help
- Understanding consent and drugs

- Preparing for adult life and making informed choices

Methodology and Resources:

We use:

- Interactive and participatory teaching methods
- Age-appropriate resources from reputable sources
- Real-life scenarios and case studies (age-appropriate)
- Visiting speakers (following our Visiting Speakers Policy)
- Films, videos and digital resources
- Discussion and debate
- Role-play and decision-making activities

All resources are reviewed by the PSHE Lead to ensure they are:

- Accurate and up-to-date
- Age-appropriate
- Aligned with our values
- Evidence-based

Resources used for teaching drug education are available to view on request.

Specific Focus: Vaping

Given the significant rise in youth vaping, our drug education programme includes specific content on:

- What vaping is and how e-cigarettes work
- The nicotine content of vapes and addiction risks
- Health risks associated with vaping, particularly for young people
- Marketing tactics used by vaping companies
- The law regarding vaping and age restrictions
- How to resist peer pressure to vape

Working with External Agencies

We may work with external agencies to complement our drug education programme, including:

- School nurses
- Police liaison officers
- Specialist drug education providers
- Youth workers
- Former substance users (in recovery)

All external contributors:

- Must follow our Visiting Speakers Policy
- Will be briefed on our approach and values
- Will be supervised by school staff
- Will use age-appropriate content
- Will not promote a particular viewpoint

External agencies we work with include:

- Bristol Drugs Project
- CAMHS Substance Misuse Service

- Avon and Somerset Police Schools Liaison Team
- Local public health teams

Staff training and support:

All staff receive training on:

- This drug policy and procedures
- Recognising signs of drug use and exploitation
- How to respond to disclosures
- Safeguarding procedures related to drugs
- Delivering age-appropriate drug education (for teaching staff)

Training is provided:

- During staff induction
- As part of annual safeguarding training
- Through CPD for PSHE and pastoral staff
- In response to emerging issues

Training is sourced from:

- Trust-led training
- Local authority training programmes
- Specialist drug education providers
- Online resources and webinars
- Safeguarding partnerships

Inclusion and Sensitivity

We recognise that:

- Some pupils may have family members who misuse drugs
- Some pupils may have experience of drug use themselves
- Some pupils may be particularly vulnerable to drug-related exploitation
- Cultural and religious backgrounds may influence attitudes to drugs

Our drug education:

- Is delivered sensitively and without judgment
- Provides opportunities for individual support
- Respects confidentiality (within safeguarding boundaries)
- Avoids stigmatising language
- Recognises that pupils may need different levels of support

Right to Withdraw

Parents do not have the right to withdraw their children from Health Education, which includes drugs education, as it is statutory. However, we encourage parents to discuss any concerns with the Headteacher.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Monitoring and evaluation of our Drug Education programme will be carried out on a regular basis by the Quality of Education and Deep Dive Process.

Parents

We will share responsibility for the education of pupils with parents, who will be kept informed and involved through newsletters and individual discussions where appropriate.

6. Management of Drug-Related incidents

What is a Drug-Related Incident

A drug-related incident includes any of the following:

- Finding drugs or drug paraphernalia on school premises
- Possession of drugs by a pupil or staff member
- Use of drugs on school premises or during school activities
- Supply or suspected supply of drugs
- Pupils under the influence of drugs
- Disclosure of drug use by a pupil
- Concerns about a pupil being involved in drug-related activity
- Allegations of drug use or supply
- Concerns about parental/carers drug misuse affecting a child

Immediate Responses to Drug-Related Incidents

If a member of staff suspects or discovers a drug-related incident, they must:

- 1. Ensure immediate safety**
 - a. Check if anyone needs medical attention
 - b. Call 999 if there is a medical emergency
 - c. Remove other pupils from the immediate area if necessary
 - d. Secure any substances or paraphernalia safely
- 2. Inform the DSL immediately**
 - a. Contact Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a Deputy DSL
 - b. Provide brief details of the incident
 - c. Follow instructions from the DSL
- 3. Do not:**
 - a. Conduct your own investigation
 - b. Promise confidentiality to pupils
 - c. Dispose of any substances (unless there is an immediate safety risk)
 - d. Return substances to pupils
 - e. Delay reporting concerns

DSL Response and Procedure

When informed of a drug-related incident, the DSL will:

Immediate Actions:

1. Assess if there is an immediate safeguarding risk
2. Ensure medical needs are met (call 999 if necessary)
3. Secure any substances or paraphernalia
4. Ensure the pupil is supervised appropriately
5. Consider whether other pupils may be involved or at risk

Investigation:

1. Gather information from staff and pupils

2. Speak with the pupil(s) involved (with appropriate support)
3. Consider whether a search is necessary and lawful
4. Record all information on CPOMS
5. Assess the safeguarding context

Risk Assessment: The DSL will assess:

- Is the child at immediate risk of harm?
- Could this indicate child criminal exploitation (e.g., county lines)?
- Are there concerns about the child's home environment?
- Is this part of a pattern of concerning behaviour?
- Are other children at risk?
- Does this require a referral to children's social care?
- Should the police be informed?

Decision Making: Based on the assessment, the DSL will decide on:

- Whether to inform parents (unless this would place the child at risk)
- Whether to involve police
- Whether to make a referral to children's social care
- What support the pupil needs
- What sanctions are appropriate (in consultation with SLT)
- Whether other agencies need to be involved

Sanctions and Consequences

We will apply a range of sanctions depending on:

- The substance involved
- The quantity
- Whether there is evidence of supply or dealing
- The age and maturity of the pupil
- The pupil's previous behaviour record
- Any safeguarding concerns or vulnerabilities
- Whether the pupil is a victim of exploitation
- The context and circumstances

Possible sanctions include:

- Verbal warning
- Written warning
- Confiscation of items
- Loss of privileges
- Detention
- Internal exclusion
- Fixed-term exclusion
- Permanent exclusion (for the most serious incidents, particularly involving supply)

Permanent exclusion will be seriously considered for:

- Supply or dealing of drugs
- Possession with intent to supply
- Repeated serious incidents despite interventions
- Incidents that pose a serious risk to other pupils or staff

However, **we will always consider safeguarding concerns and whether a pupil is being exploited before making exclusion decisions.** Exclusion will not be used if it would increase risk to the child.

Police involvement

We will consider police involvement on a case-by-case basis, taking into account:

- The substance involved and its classification
- The quantity
- Evidence of supply or dealing
- The age of the pupil
- Safeguarding concerns
- Whether the pupil may be a victim of exploitation
- The likely impact on the pupil's future
- The views of parents (where appropriate)

We will always inform the police when:

- We believe a child is at risk of significant harm
- There is evidence of supply or dealing of controlled drugs
- We find a significant quantity of controlled drugs
- There are concerns about county lines or criminal exploitation
- We are advised to do so by children's social care
- There is a risk to other pupils or staff

We may inform the police when:

- A pupil is found in possession of a controlled drug (depending on circumstances)
- There are repeated incidents involving the same pupil
- We need advice on the legal status of a substance

We will not automatically inform the police when:

- A pupil is found with a very small amount of a controlled drug for personal use and there are safeguarding concerns suggesting they may be a victim
- A pupil discloses previous drug use and is seeking help
- The incident involves only tobacco, alcohol or vaping products (unless there are other concerns)

Specific Substance Procedures

Medicines:

- See our Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Unauthorised possession of prescription medicines will be treated seriously
- Sharing prescription medicines will be treated as supply

Tobacco and Smoking:

- North Star Academy Trust schools are smoke-free sites
- Pupils found smoking or in possession of tobacco products will face sanctions as per our Behaviour Policy
- Parents will be informed
- Support will be offered for pupils who want to quit

E-cigarettes and Vaping:

- E-cigarettes and vaping products (including nicotine-free varieties) are not permitted on school premises
- Pupils found with vaping products will have them confiscated

- Parents will be informed
- Sanctions will be applied as per our Behaviour Policy
- Repeated incidents will result in escalating sanctions
- We will provide education about the risks of vaping and nicotine addiction
- Support will be offered for pupils who want to quit

Alcohol:

- No alcohol will be consumed during the school day by pupils
- Pupils found in possession of alcohol will have it confiscated and disposed of
- Parents will be informed
- Sanctions will be applied depending on circumstances
- Pupils under the influence of alcohol will be supervised until safe to go home
- Parents will be required to collect the pupil

Volatile Substances:

- Potentially harmful substances (glues, aerosols, solvents) are stored securely
- Pupils are supervised when using such substances for legitimate purposes
- Use of aerosols is minimised due to asthma/respiratory risks
- Suspected misuse of volatile substances will be treated as seriously as other drug incidents

Controlled Drugs and New Psychoactive Substances:

- Any controlled drug or NPS found will be confiscated immediately
- The DSL will be informed immediately
- Police will be contacted in line with the procedures above
- Parents will be informed (unless this would place the child at greater risk)
- Safeguarding procedures will be followed
- Appropriate sanctions will be applied

Unknown Substances:

- If staff cannot identify the legal status of a substance, it will be treated as a controlled drug
- The substance will be secured and police contacted for advice
- The pupil will be supervised appropriately
- No staff member should taste, smell or handle unknown substances without appropriate protection

Advice and Support for parents:

Information about local drugs and support services will be provided for pupils and parents, but staff at the school will not give individual advice to pupils about their personal drug use. All young people can be referred to **Bristol Early Help** (0117 903 6444) for advice, information, support and counselling or to Bristol Drugs Project. (0117 987 6000).

Young Persons Substance Advice Service, North Somerset - [01275 888 360](tel:01275888360)

Bath and North East Somerset Drug and Alcohol Service - [01225 329411](tel:01225329411)

7. Searching, Screening and Confiscation

This section is based on the DfE guidance "Searching, Screening and Confiscation: Advice for Schools" (July 2022).

Searches with Consent

School staff can search a pupil for any item if the pupil agrees. Consent should be sought before any search

Searches without Consent

The Headteacher and authorised staff have 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 include:

- Knives or weapons
- Alcohol
- Illegal drugs (controlled drugs)
- Stolen items
- Tobacco and cigarette papers
- E-cigarettes and vaping products
- Fireworks
- Pornographic images
- Any article that the member of staff reasonably suspects has been, or is likely to be, used to commit an offence, or to cause personal injury to, or damage to property

Authorised staff at our schools:

- Headteacher
- All members of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT)
- All members of The Hub Team
- Other staff may be authorised by the Headteacher on a case-by-case basis

Reasonable Grounds for Suspicion

Staff can only undertake a search without consent if they have reasonable grounds for suspicion. This might include

- Information from other pupils
- Observing suspicious behaviour
- Finding drug paraphernalia
- A pupil appearing to be under the influence
- Reliable information from staff or parents
- Previous incidents involving the pupil

Reasonable grounds cannot be based solely on:

- Stereotypes or assumptions
- The pupil's appearance
- The pupil's background

Conducting a Search

Before the search:

- Explain to the pupil why you are searching them
- Seek consent (even if you have the power to search without consent)
- Have another member of staff present as a witness
- Consider the pupil's age and any vulnerabilities

During the search:

- Conduct the search on school premises or where the member of staff has lawful control of the pupil
- Only search outer clothing (coats, jackets, bags, lockers)
- Do not require the pupil to remove clothing other than outer clothing
- The search must be conducted by a person of the same sex as the pupil
- There must be another staff member present as a witness (also of the same sex as the pupil, if possible)

Exceptions:

- In exceptional circumstances, a search can be conducted by a person of the opposite sex and/or without a witness, but only where:
 - There is a risk of serious harm if the search is not conducted immediately, AND
 - It is not reasonably practicable to summon another member of staff

Pupils' right to privacy:

- Under Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights, pupils have a right to respect for their private life
- This means pupils have a right to expect a reasonable level of personal privacy
- However, this right is not absolute and can be interfered with if justified and proportionate
- A lawful search conducted in accordance with this policy and DfE guidance is justified and proportionate
- Staff should be particularly mindful of privacy expectations as pupils get older

Searching possessions:

- Staff can search pupils' possessions (bags, lockers, desks)
- Pupils' possessions can only be searched in their presence and in the presence of another member of staff
- Lockers can be searched without the pupil present if there are urgent concerns

Use of force:

- Reasonable force can be used to conduct a search if necessary
- Force should only be used as a last resort
- Any use of force must be reasonable, proportionate and necessary
- Any use of force must be recorded

Confiscation**School staff can seize:**

- Any prohibited item found as a result of a search
- Any item, however found, which they consider harmful or detrimental to school discipline

Handling confiscated items:**Alcohol:**

- Can be retained or disposed of
- Should not be returned to the pupil
- May be disposed of as the school thinks appropriate
- Parents may be asked to collect it

Controlled Drugs:

- **Must be delivered to the police as soon as reasonably possible**
- Must not be returned to the pupil under any circumstances
- See storage procedures below

Other substances (including suspected NPS or unknown substances):

- Can be confiscated if believed to be harmful or detrimental to good order and discipline
- If staff cannot identify the legal status of a substance, it should be treated as a controlled drug
- Should not be returned to the pupil

Tobacco, cigarette papers, e-cigarettes and vaping products:

- Will be confiscated
- Will be disposed of
- Will not be returned to pupils
- Parents may be informed and asked to discuss with their child

Drug paraphernalia:

- Will be confiscated
- Will be disposed of or retained as evidence
- Will not be returned to pupils

Storage of Confiscated Drugs

When taking temporary possession of suspected controlled drugs, staff must:

1. Ensure a second adult witness is present throughout**2. Seal the substance immediately:**

- a. Place in a plastic bag or secure container
- b. Seal the bag/container
- c. Label with:
 - i. Date and time of seizure
 - ii. Location of seizure
 - iii. Name of staff member who found it
 - iv. Name of witness
 - v. Name of pupil (if known and appropriate to record)
 - vi. Description of substance

3. Store securely:

- a. Store in the designated secure location: [INSERT SPECIFIC LOCATION - e.g., "the safe in the Headteacher's office"]
- b. Access is limited to: Headteacher, DSL, and [INSERT OTHER AUTHORISED STAFF]
- c. The substance must remain sealed and must not be examined, handled or tested by school staff

4. Notify police without delay:

- a. Call 101 to report the find
- b. Request collection of the substance
- c. Record the police incident reference number
- d. Police will collect and dispose of the substance in line with local protocols

5. Record the incident:

- a. Complete a full record on CPOMS
- b. Include the police incident reference number
- c. Record all actions taken
- d. Record who was informed

6. Maximum storage time:

- a. Controlled drugs should not be stored for longer than 24 hours if possible
- b. If police have not collected within 48 hours, contact them again
- c. Keep a log of all attempts to contact police

The law does not require schools to divulge to the police the name of the pupil from whom drugs were taken, but it is advisable to do so to ensure appropriate safeguarding and support.

Informing Parents

- Schools are not required to inform parents before a search takes place or to seek their consent
- However, we will inform parents after a search if prohibited items are found
- There is no legal requirement to inform parents, but it is good practice
- We may delay informing parents if doing so would place the child at risk of harm

Recording Searches

- There is no legal requirement to record searches
- However, we will record all searches without consent on CPOMS
- Records will include:
 - Date, time and location
 - Name of pupil
 - Reason for search
 - Staff members involved
 - Items found (if any)
 - Actions taken
 - Whether parents were informed

Complaints

Complaints about searching or screening should be dealt with through our normal complaint's procedure

Staff Conduct and drugs:

Issues relating to staff conduct and drugs will be managed using the Trusts "Code of Conduct".

8. Safeguarding and Child protection

Drugs and Safeguarding

Drug-related incidents may indicate safeguarding concerns. We recognise that children involved with drugs may be victims who require protection, not just sanctions.

Drug-related incidents may be linked to:

- **Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)** - including county lines involvement
- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
- Abuse or neglect at home
- Parental substance misuse
- Peer-on-peer abuse
- Mental health difficulties

- Trauma or adverse childhood experiences
- Grooming by adults or older young people
- Serious violence

County Lines and Criminal Exploitation

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into areas outside of their usual operating area, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other forms of "deal line". Children and vulnerable adults are exploited to move, store and sell drugs and money.

Warning signs that a child may be involved in county lines:

- Persistently going missing or travelling to other areas
- Unexplained money, clothes or possessions
- Excessive receipt of texts or phone calls
- Relationships with controlling or older individuals or groups
- Leaving home or care without explanation
- Suspicion of physical or sexual assault
- Parental concerns about behaviour
- Carrying weapons
- Significant decline in school performance
- Change in wellbeing or signs of self-harm
- Misuse of drugs or alcohol

If we suspect county lines involvement, we will:

- Treat the child as a victim who needs protection
- Make an immediate referral to children's social care
- Inform the police
- Complete a risk assessment
- Put support in place
- Work with multi-agency partners
- Not exclude the child unless absolutely necessary for the safety of others

Contextual Safeguarding

We recognise that safeguarding incidents and behaviours can be associated with factors outside the school and can occur between children outside of school. We will consider the context within which incidents occur and work with partners to address risks.

Responding to Disclosures

If a pupil discloses drug use (their own or someone else's), staff should:

- Listen without judgment
- Not promise confidentiality
- Reassure the pupil they've done the right thing
- Explain what will happen next
- Report to the DSL immediately
- Record the conversation accurately

We will not:

- Investigate ourselves
- Confront alleged perpetrators
- Make promises we cannot keep

- Delay reporting

Parental Substance Misuse

If we become aware that a pupil's parent or carer is misusing drugs or alcohol in a way that may affect the child's welfare, we will:

- Assess the impact on the child
- Consider whether this meets the threshold for a referral to children's social care
- Offer support to the family where appropriate
- Work with other agencies to support the child and family
- Follow our safeguarding procedures

Referrals to Children's Social Care

We will make a referral to children's social care if:

- We believe a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm
- We have concerns about child criminal exploitation or county lines
- We have concerns about parental substance misuse affecting the child
- A child is persistently going missing
- We have concerns about a child's safety or welfare

Referrals will be made by the DSL (or Deputy DSL) in line with local safeguarding partnership procedures.

Information Sharing

We will share information with other agencies where necessary to safeguard children, in line with:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR
- Our Information Sharing Policy

Sensitive information will only be disclosed:

- With careful attention to pupils' rights and needs
- On a need-to-know basis
- In the child's best interests
- In line with data protection legislation

9. Support and Intervention

Our Approach to Support:

We recognise that pupils involved with drugs need support, not just sanctions. Our approach is to:

- Understand the underlying reasons for drug involvement
- Address any vulnerabilities or risks
- Provide appropriate interventions
- Work in partnership with pupils, families and external agencies
- Monitor progress and adjust support as needed
- Maintain a compassionate, non-judgmental approach

Types of Support Available

Pastoral Support:

- One-to-one mentoring with a trusted adult
- Regular check-ins with pastoral staff
- Access to The Hub for additional support
- Peer support programmes
- Reintegration support following absence or exclusion

Targeted Interventions:

- Small group work on decision-making and risk-taking
- Resilience-building programmes
- Self-esteem and confidence-building activities
- Anger management support
- Conflict resolution skills

Specialist Support:

- Referral to school counselling services
- Referral to CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services)
- Referral to specialist substance misuse services for young people
- Educational psychology assessment and support
- Early Help Assessment and support plan

Family Support:

- Family meetings to discuss concerns and support strategies
- Signposting to parenting support services
- Referrals to family support services
- Information about local support groups

Early Intervention

We will identify pupils who may be at risk of drug involvement through:

- Monitoring attendance, behaviour and academic progress
- Staff observations and concerns
- Information from pupils, parents or external agencies
- Analysis of patterns and trends

Early intervention may include:

- Enhanced pastoral support
- Targeted drug education
- Mentoring
- Family engagement
- Referral to Early Help services

Risk Assessment and Support Planning

For pupils involved in drug-related incidents, we will:

- Complete a comprehensive risk assessment
- Develop an individual support plan
- Identify key staff to support the pupil
- Set clear expectations and targets
- Review progress regularly
- Involve the pupil and family in planning
- Work with external agencies as needed

Reintegration Following Exclusion

If a pupil has been excluded for a drug-related incident, we will:

- Hold a reintegration meeting before the pupil returns
- Agree clear expectations and support
- Put a support plan in place
- Monitor the pupil closely
- Maintain communication with parents
- Review progress regularly

Supporting Pupils in Recovery

If a pupil is receiving treatment for substance misuse, we will:

- Work closely with treatment services
- Make reasonable adjustments to support their recovery
- Maintain confidentiality appropriately
- Provide a supportive environment
- Celebrate progress and achievements
- Plan for successful reintegration

10. Working with Parents and External

Partnership with Parents

We believe that working in partnership with parents is essential. We will:

- Inform parents of drug-related incidents (unless this would place the child at risk)
- Invite parents to meetings to discuss concerns and support
- Provide information about drugs and how to talk to children
- Signpost parents to support services
- Keep parents informed of their child's progress
- Respect parents' views while prioritising the child's welfare

We will not inform parents if:

- Doing so would place the child at risk of significant harm
- We are advised not to by children's social care or police
- There are child protection concerns about the parents

Communication with Parents

When informing parents of drug-related incidents, we will:

- Contact them as soon as possible (usually the same day)
- Arrange a face-to-face meeting where appropriate
- Explain what has happened clearly and factually
- Explain what actions we are taking
- Listen to parents' views and concerns
- Agree next steps together
- Provide information about support available
- Follow up in writing if appropriate

External Agencies

We work in partnership with a range of external agencies, including:

Police:

- Avon and Somerset Police Schools Liaison Team
- Local Neighbourhood Policing Teams
- We have agreed protocols for information sharing and joint working

Children's Social Care:

- Bristol Children's Social Care: 0117 903 6444 (office hours) / 01454 615 165 (out of hours)
- North Somerset Children's Social Care: 01275 888 808
- Bath and North East Somerset Children's Social Care: 01225 396 312 / 0300 247 0101 (out of hours)

Health Services:

- School nurses
- CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services)
- Specialist substance misuse services for young people
- GP services

Substance Misuse Services:

- **Bristol Drugs Project Young People's Service:** 0117 987 6000
- **CAMHS Substance Misuse Service**
- **We Are With You (formerly Addaction)** - services across our areas
- **FRANK** - national drugs helpline: 0300 123 6600 / www.talktofrank.com

Early Help Services:

- Bristol Early Help: 0117 352 1499
- North Somerset Early Help
- Bath and North East Somerset Early Help

Youth Services

- Local youth workers and youth centres
- Youth offending teams (where appropriate)

Safeguarding Partnerships

- Bristol Safeguarding Children Partnership
- North Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership
- Bath and North East Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership

Multi-Agency Working

For complex cases, we may convene or participate in:

- Early Help Assessments and Team Around the Family (TAF) meetings
- Child Protection Conferences
- Child in Need meetings
- Multi-Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) meetings
- Strategy meetings
- Core groups

We will:

- Share information appropriately to safeguard children
- Contribute to multi-agency assessments and plans
- Attend meetings and provide reports
- Implement agreed actions
- Communicate effectively with all partners

11. Staff Conduct

Staff use of Drugs and Alcohol

All staff are expected to act as role models and must not:

- Use, possess or supply illegal drugs at any time
- Be under the influence of illegal drugs at work
- Be under the influence of alcohol at work
- Smoke or vape on school premises (including e-cigarettes)
- Bring alcohol onto school premises

Staff who are taking prescribed medication that may affect their ability to work safely must:

- Inform the Headteacher
- Seek medical advice about fitness to work
- Follow any restrictions advised by their doctor

Smoking and Vaping

North Star Academy Trust schools are smoke-free and vape-free sites. This applies to:

- All buildings and grounds
- School vehicles
- All times (including before and after school, and during school events)
- All staff, visitors, contractors and parents

Staff must not:

- Smoke or vape on school premises
- Smoke or vape in sight of pupils
- Smoke or vape in school uniform or while representing the school
- Smoke or vape during school trips or residential visits when supervising pupils

Substance Misuse by Staff

If we become aware that a member of staff has a substance misuse problem, we will:

- Treat the matter sensitively and confidentially
- Encourage the staff member to seek help
- Signpost to appropriate support services (e.g., occupational health, GP, counselling)
- Consider reasonable adjustments to support recovery
- Follow our disciplinary procedures if conduct or performance is affected

However, we will take disciplinary action, which may include dismissal, if a member of staff:

- Uses, possesses or supplies illegal drugs
- Is under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol at work
- Brings the school into disrepute through drug or alcohol-related behaviour
- Puts children at risk through their substance use
- Refuses to engage with support

Disclosure of Convictions

Staff must disclose any drug-related convictions or cautions to the Headteacher immediately. This includes:

- Convictions or cautions received before employment
- Convictions or cautions received during employment

Failure to disclose may result in disciplinary action, including dismissal.

Reporting Concerns About Colleagues

All staff have a duty to report concerns about a colleague's conduct, including:

- Suspected drug or alcohol use
- Being under the influence at work
- Behaviour that puts children at risk

Concerns should be reported to the Headteacher or, if the concern is about the Headteacher, to the Chair of Governors.

Staff can also report concerns via our whistleblowing procedures.

12. Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring Drug-Related Incidents

The DSL will:

- Maintain a record of all drug-related incidents on CPOMS
- Analyse patterns and trends termly
- Report to the Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team
- Provide anonymised data to the Local Governing Body and Trust Board
- Identify any emerging issues or concerns

Data monitored includes:

- Number and type of incidents
- Substances involved
- Age and year groups of pupils involved
- Locations of incidents
- Times/patterns of incidents
- Outcomes and sanctions applied
- Support provided
- Police involvement
- Exclusions

Evaluating Drug Education

We will evaluate the effectiveness of our drug education programme through:

- Pupil voice surveys and feedback
- Parent surveys
- Staff feedback
- Lesson observations
- Analysis of drug-related incidents
- Assessment of pupils' knowledge and understanding
- Comparison with local and national data
- Quality assurance of the curriculum

Quality Assurance

This policy and its implementation will be monitored through

- Regular review of incident data
- Safeguarding audits
- Governor monitoring visits
- Staff training evaluation
- Review of case studies and individual incidents

- External reviews (e.g., Ofsted, safeguarding peer reviews)

Reporting

The DSL will provide reports to:

- **Senior Leadership Team:** Termly summary of incidents and trends
- **Local Governing Body:** Termly anonymised data and analysis

The Trust Safeguarding Lead will provide reports to:

- **Trust Board:** Termly summary report across all trust schools

Reports will include:

- Number and nature of incidents
- Actions taken
- Effectiveness of support
- Any concerns or emerging issues
- Recommendations for policy or practice changes

13. Review

This policy will be reviewed every **two years** or sooner if:

- There are changes to legislation or statutory guidance
- There are significant changes to local or national drug trends
- An incident highlights the need for policy review
- Requested by the Trust Board or Local Governing Body

Next review date: June 2028

The policy will be reviewed by:

- The DSL
- Senior Leadership Team
- Trust Safeguarding Lead
- In consultation with staff, pupils and parents

Following review, the policy will be approved by:

- Trust Education Standards and Performance Committee (ESPC)
- Trust Board

Appendices

Appendix 1: Drug Related Incident Response Flowchart

DRUG-RELATED INCIDENT OCCURS



ENSURE IMMEDIATE SAFETY

- Medical emergency? Call 999
- Remove other pupils if needed
- Secure any substances safely



INFORM DSL IMMEDIATELY



DSL ASSESSES SITUATION

- Gather information
- Speak with pupil(s)
- Consider search if appropriate
- Record on CPOMS



DSL RISK ASSESSMENT

- Immediate risk of harm?
- Safeguarding concerns?
- Exploitation indicators?
- Other children at risk?



DECISION MAKING

- └--> INFORM PARENTS (unless this increases risk)
- └--> POLICE INVOLVEMENT? (case-by-case basis)
- └--> CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE REFERRAL? (if safeguarding threshold met)
- └--> SUPPORT NEEDED? (pastoral, specialist, etc.)
- └--> SANCTIONS? (in consultation with SLT)



IMPLEMENT ACTIONS

- Deliver consequences
- Put support in place
- Liaise with agencies
- Monitor and review



RECORD AND REVIEW

- Full record on CPOMS
- Monitor effectiveness
- Adjust support as needed

Appendix 2: Drug Classification

Class A Drugs (Most serious - maximum penalty: 7 years imprisonment and/or unlimited fine for possession)

- Cocaine and crack cocaine
- Ecstasy (MDMA)
- Heroin
- LSD (acid)
- Magic mushrooms (if prepared for use)
- Methamphetamine (crystal meth)
- Methadone

Class B Drugs (Maximum penalty: 5 years imprisonment and/or unlimited fine for possession)

- Cannabis (including synthetic cannabinoids like Spice)
- Amphetamines (speed)
- Barbiturates
- Codeine
- Ketamine
- Mephedrone

Class C Drugs (Maximum penalty: 2 years imprisonment and/or unlimited fine for possession)

- Anabolic steroids
- Benzodiazepines (e.g., diazepam, temazepam)
- GHB/GBL
- Khat
- Some tranquillisers

Note: Penalties for supply/dealing are significantly higher. New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) are illegal under the Psychoactive Substances Act 2016.

Appendix 3 – Signs and Symptoms of Drug Use

Physical Signs:

- Unusual smells on breath, body or clothing
- Bloodshot or glazed eyes
- Dilated or constricted pupils
- Sudden weight loss or gain
- Deterioration in physical appearance or personal hygiene
- Slurred speech
- Impaired coordination
- Marks on arms or other parts of body
- Frequent nosebleeds (cocaine use)
- Persistent cough (cannabis smoking)

Behavioural Signs:

- Changes in attendance or punctuality
- Decline in academic performance
- Loss of interest in activities
- Changes in friends or social groups
- Secretive behaviour
- Mood swings or personality changes
- Increased aggression or irritability
- Appearing lethargic or overly energetic
- Paranoia or anxiety
- Memory problems or confusion

Social Signs:

- Withdrawal from family and friends
- New friendship groups
- Unexplained money or possessions
- Stealing or borrowing money
- Staying out late or going missing
- Involvement with older individuals or groups
- Association with known drug users

Psychological Signs:

- Depression or anxiety
- Paranoia
- Lack of motivation
- Poor concentration
- Changes in sleep patterns
- Suicidal thoughts

Possession of:

- Drugs or drug paraphernalia
- Large amounts of cash
- Multiple mobile phones
- Scales or small bags

Important: These signs do not necessarily indicate drug use - they may indicate other issues such as mental health difficulties, bullying, or family problems. Always investigate concerns sensitively and holistically.

Appendix 4: Support Services Contact Information

National Services:

FRANK - Honest information about drugs

- Tel: 0300 123 6600 (24/7)
- Text: 82111
- Website: www.talktofrank.com
- Live chat available

Childline

- Tel: 0800 1111 (24/7)
- Website: www.childline.org.uk
- Online chat available

The Mix - Support for under 25s

- Tel: 0808 808 4994 (11am-11pm daily)
- Website: www.themix.org.uk
- Online chat and email support

Adfam - Support for families affected by drugs and alcohol

- Website: www.adfam.org.uk
- Tel: 020 3817 9410

Release - Drugs, the law and human rights

- Tel: 020 7324 2989
- Website: www.release.org.uk

Bristol Services:

Bristol Drugs Project - Young People's Service

- Tel: 0117 987 6000
- Website: www.bdp.org.uk
- Address: 2 Dove Street South, Bristol, BS2 8JX

Bristol Children's Social Care

- Tel: 0117 903 6444 (office hours)
- Emergency Duty Team: 01454 615 165 (out of hours)

Bristol Early Help

- Tel: 0117 352 1499
- Email: earlyhelpbroker@bristol.gov.uk

Avon and Somerset Police - Schools Liaison

- Non-emergency: 101
- Emergency: 999

North Somerset Services:

We Are With You (North Somerset)

- Tel: 01934 425 100
- Website: www.wearewithyou.org.uk

North Somerset Children's Social Care

- Tel: 01275 888 808
- Emergency Duty Team: 01454 615 165 (out of hours)

Bath and North East Somerset Services:

DHI (Developing Health and Independence) - Young People's Service

- Tel: 01225 585 510
- Website: www.dhi-online.org.uk

Bath and North East Somerset Children's Social Care

- Tel: 01225 396 312
- Emergency Duty Team: 0300 247 0101 (out of hours)