



ST PAUL'S
GIRLS' SCHOOL

Substance Misuse Policy

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Document owner	Deputy Head (Safeguarding & Inclusion)/DSL
Approved by	High Mistress
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Availability	School website; staff portal; student portal

Legal framework

- Misuse of Drugs Act 1971
- DfE Screening, Searching and Confiscation (July 2023)
- DfE Drug Advice for schools (2012)
- DfE Behaviour in schools (2024)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE, 2026)
- NPCC When to Call the Police (2024)

Availability of this policy

A copy of this policy may be downloaded from our [website](https://www.spgs.org) or is available on request from the school office, St Paul's Girls' School, Brook Green, London, W6 7BS (tel: 0207 603 2288). This policy can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required.

Who this policy applies to

This policy applies to all students when they are on school premises, travelling to or from school, attending school-organised or school-related activities, visits, trips or events, or otherwise representing the school. The school may also take action in response to incidents occurring outside school where there is a safeguarding concern, a significant impact on the school community or the school's reputation.

It also applies to all staff, volunteers, contractors and others working with or on behalf of the school who may have responsibilities under this policy

What this policy is for

This policy aims to:

- safeguard and support students
- reduce the risk of harm arising from substance misuse
- provide education that enables students to make informed and healthy choices
- set clear expectations regarding prohibited substances
- ensure that concerns and incidents are addressed consistently and appropriately through pastoral support, disciplinary measures, safeguarding intervention, or a combination of these approaches.

Other relevant school policies

- Behaviour policy
- Student Search and Belongings policy
- Safeguarding (Child Protection) policy
- First Aid policy

Policy statement

The school has a zero-tolerance approach to the possession, use, supply or distribution of illegal drugs and other prohibited substances in school or during school activities. Concerns relating to substance misuse will be managed through a combination of safeguarding, pastoral support and disciplinary measures, taking account of the individual circumstances of each case. Student breaches of this policy will be addressed in accordance with the Behaviour Policy and, where relevant, the Searching, Screening and Confiscation Policy.

Definitions

Substances: for the purposes of this policy, "substances" includes alcohol, tobacco, nicotine products (including vaping devices and e-cigarettes), solvents, medicines used other than as prescribed, controlled drugs, new psychoactive substances and any other substance used for the purpose of intoxication or mood alteration.

Substance misuse: the possession, use, supply, distribution or facilitation of prohibited substances, or the misuse of prescribed or over-the-counter medication.

Prohibited substances: are substances whose possession, use or supply is unlawful, age-restricted, unauthorised, or otherwise prohibited by the school. For the purposes of this policy, the misuse of prescribed or over-the-counter medication will be treated as substance misuse

The school will treat new psychoactive substances and other substances intended to produce intoxication or psychoactive effects in the same way as illegal drugs for the purposes of school discipline and risk assessment.

Safeguarding and pastoral support

All substance misuse concerns must be reported and recorded in accordance with the Safeguarding (Child Protection) Policy. The Deputy Head (Safeguarding & Inclusion) (DSL) and Deputy Head (Pastoral) (DDSL), referred to in this policy as the "relevant Deputy Heads", have day-to-day responsibility for managing concerns under this policy. The High Mistress has overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy and for decisions relating to serious substance misuse incidents. The High Mistress must be informed of any suspected or confirmed incidents involving prohibited substances.

The welfare and best interests of the student will be the school's primary consideration. The school will seek to work in partnership with parents, unless safeguarding considerations indicate otherwise, and may involve external agencies where appropriate to support the student.

The school recognises that some substance-related concerns may be most appropriately addressed through pastoral and safeguarding support rather than disciplinary action alone. This may include circumstances where:

- A student or parent voluntarily discloses concerns about substance use
- A student is seeking help to address substance misuse
- Concerns relate to experimentation or possession for personal use outside school and do not involve supply to others
- The school determines that a supportive intervention is in the student's best interests.

Any response will be determined on a case-by-case basis, taking account of safeguarding considerations, the welfare of the student and the wider school community.

Responding to concerns and incidents

The school will investigate concerns relating to the possession, use, supply or misuse of prohibited substances and will respond in accordance with its safeguarding and behaviour policies. All concerns or incidents must be reported to a member of the safeguarding team and recorded in accordance with the Safeguarding (Child Protection) Policy.

Where a substance is found or suspected, staff should take reasonable steps to safeguard students, secure any substance and seek immediate assistance from a member of the safeguarding team. Medical assistance will be sought where necessary. Parents will normally be informed unless safeguarding considerations indicate otherwise.

The High Mistress may, where reasonable grounds exist, authorise searches and other investigatory measures in accordance with school policies and relevant guidance. The school reserves the right to request drug or alcohol testing where there is a reasonable justification for doing so; parental consent will normally be sought, and the school will take account of relevant professional advice. The school may seek police involvement where appropriate.

Students are expected not to possess, use, supply or facilitate the use of prohibited substances. Students who are present during substance-related incidents, or who otherwise become involved in such incidents, may also be subject to investigation and disciplinary action where appropriate.

Incidents involving illegal drugs, new psychoactive substances or the supply of prohibited substances will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Depending on the circumstances, parents will be informed, the police may be involved and serious breaches, including the possession, use or supply of illegal drugs on school premises or during school activities, are likely to result in serious disciplinary sanctions and may result in permanent exclusion.

Staff should remain alert to indicators of substance misuse and report any concerns in accordance with the Safeguarding (Child Protection) Policy.

Education and prevention

The school is committed to promoting students' health, safety and wellbeing through education and prevention. Age-appropriate learning about alcohol, drugs, vaping, nicotine and risk-taking behaviours is delivered through the PSHE curriculum and wider pastoral programme.

Monitoring and review

The relevant Deputy Heads will monitor substance misuse concerns and incidents, including patterns and emerging trends. This information will be reviewed periodically and reported to the High Mistress and, where appropriate, the Governing Board. The policy will be reviewed at least every three years or sooner if legislation, guidance or school circumstances require.

Appendix 1: Substance Misuse Incident Procedures

A student is found in possession of a drug or suspected drug

1 Where a member of staff finds a student in possession of a Suspected Controlled Drug, that member of staff should:

- a) Either confiscate the substance (in front of a witness, if possible) and isolate the student, or isolate the student with the substance and accompany the student to relevant Deputy Head. In either case, the student must be supervised at all times by a member of staff.
- b) In the presence of a witness, if possible, relevant Deputy Head, the substance should be put into a suitable, sealed container. The container should be accompanied by a description of the circumstances in which the substance was confiscated.
- c) The relevant Deputy Head may seek police advice for analysis and disposal. The container should be securely stored in the Medical Centre prior to disposal.
- d) If there is reason to believe that the student has taken the substance, the relevant Deputy Head will seek immediate health advice either from the school nurse or ambulance services.
- e) The relevant Deputy Head will follow the advice from the High Mistress or provided by the police on understanding how, when and where the student came into contact with the substance, ensuring that any internal school investigation does not compromise or interfere with a concurrent police inquiry.
- f) In order to safeguard themselves, staff should record the time, place and circumstance of the substance coming into their possession in CPOMS. The substance must never be kept on the person of the member of staff, nor in a place of their own safe keeping.

Drug or suspected drug found on school premises or on a school activity/trip

2 Where a member of staff finds a suspected prohibited substance on school premises, that member of staff should:

- a) Take possession of the substance, taking note of the safeguarding advice above.
- b) Follow steps (a) to (c) in Part 1 above.

If this occurs on an overseas trip, the student may be sent home at the parents' expense.

A student discloses that they are using drugs/alcohol/solvents, or a student discloses that others are using/selling prohibited substances

3 In these circumstances, whether the use, or alleged use, is in school or out of school, the member of staff must inform the relevant Deputy Head.

A member of staff suspects a student of being under the influence of a prohibited substance

4 In these circumstances, the relevant Deputy Head must be informed, and medical advice sought.

Drug or solvent misuse: recognising the warning signs

5 Early detection of drugs misuse is extremely important. If a young person's drug misuse is identified at an early stage, it is easier for action to be taken to prevent that young person's further misuse of drugs. Therefore, teachers need 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. All staff are also directed to: *Frank: "Honest Information About Drugs"*¹; *Frank: A-Z*².

¹ <https://www.talktofrank.com/>

² <https://www.talktofrank.com/drugs-a-z>