



Gosfield School

Drugs and Drug Testing Policy

We are committed to promoting a healthy, safe environment at Gosfield School, in which good citizenship and respect for the law can flourish. 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 illegal drugs and substances.

EDUCATION PROGRAMME

We have age-related health education and PSHE programmes that focus upon the potential short-term and long-term risks to health from drug and substance abuse. As with our related programmes concerning alcohol and tobacco, they concentrate on teaching the importance of young people making healthy, informed choices. However, they also include an ethical dimension, designed to instil an understanding of the importance of complying with the law. Our programmes involve pupils in the Prep School and continue throughout your child's time at the school. They extend across the curriculum, involving PSHE and Science lessons. We also have assemblies on the topic, the School educates students to understand that the use of illegal drugs is or may be a criminal offence and will be harmful to their health, integrity, independence, opportunities and careers.

Our staff play an important role in maintaining awareness about the risks involved. Pupils can discuss their individual worries about drugs or substances with any member of staff as we are very conscious of the importance of working together in order to promote the wellbeing of your son or daughter.

SUPPORT

Smoking/ vaping and drugs are forbidden, indeed, providing, selling or using illegal drugs is regarded as a very serious offence. Mood-enhancing products, such as Nitrous Oxide, "Poppers" and other so-called 'legal highs' or new psychoactive substances (NPS), are absolutely forbidden. Solvents or other aerosols must not be inhaled. Stimulants such as "Pro Plus" are also not permitted. In the unlikely event that a pupil voluntarily identifies themselves as a drug user and asks for help, or if their parents or friends ask for help on their behalf, we may, depending upon the circumstances, and at the discretion of the Principal, offer them the opportunity to reform their habit with the support of a drug testing programme and counselling (at the parents' expense). Bringing the School into disrepute for any reason associated with alcohol or drugs and substances, whether or not the student is in the care of the School at the time. Action will be taken when the welfare of any member of the School community or the reputation of the School is affected.

If a pupil fails their first drug test (so confirming usage of a banned drug or substance), they will only be allowed to remain at the school on condition that they submit to regular drug testing throughout their remaining time at the school, and on the clear understanding that they will be excluded immediately on failure of a subsequent drug test, or if there is evidence that a sample has been tampered with in any way.

INVESTIGATION

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

Suspicious or accusations of drug possession on the school premises must be brought to the attention of the Assistant Principal Pastoral (DSL), who will co-ordinate the investigation and keep the Principal informed.

The Principal will inform the Chairman of Governors about substantive drugs investigations.

SEARCHES FOR DRUGS, SUBSTANCES AND RELATED PARAPHERNALIA

If a pupil is believed to have prohibited items in their possession, the Principal, and staff authorised by the Principal, may search a pupil or a pupil's possessions:

- a search of outer clothing; and/or
- a search of School property, eg pupils' lockers or desks; and/or
- a search of personal property, eg bag or pencil case within a locker

Searches will be conducted in such a manner as to minimise embarrassment or distress. Any search of a pupil or their possessions will be carried out in the presence of the pupil and another member of staff. Where a pupil is searched, the searcher and the second member of staff present will be the same gender as the pupil. Where the Principal, or staff authorised by the Principal, find anything which they have reasonable grounds for suspecting is a prohibited item, they may seize, retain and if applicable contact the police to dispose of the item.

Search Procedure

Parents and guardians will be contacted as a matter of urgency and informed of the school's investigation.

Any pupil who is suspected of being in possession of prohibited items will be kept in isolation and have their mobile phone confiscated until contact with parents or guardians is made.

The pupil will be reminded of the importance of co-operation with the school.

Two staff will be present and careful written records kept.

The pupil will be asked whether they are in possession of drugs. If they say 'no' they will be invited to co-operate by turning out their pockets and handing over their bag to be searched. Pupils may also be asked to unlock their locker, although the school can search this without the pupil's consent if necessary.

If the pupil refuses to co-operate, a decision must be made as to whether to release them or whether to ask parents to come to school and use their authority to ensure co-operation. If a personal search is unavoidable it may be appropriate to contact the police and request this.

Any drugs confiscated from pupils will be given to the police for disposal as soon as possible.

POLICE INVOLVEMENT

The School may use its discretion to decide whether police involvement is appropriate. They may invite the police to bring sniffer dogs onto School premises unannounced to check for drugs.

In most cases, the School will decide to request the involvement of the police from the outset. If the police suspect that a pupil possesses or has stored drugs, substances or related paraphernalia, the police may elect to investigate using their own procedures or may pass the matter to the School to investigate.

If the School seizes a controlled drug the School will contact the police to dispose of the item as soon as is reasonably practicable.

SANCTIONS

The normal sanction for possession of or involvement with drugs is permanent exclusion even if he/she is about to sit public examinations. Any pupil found offering drugs to another pupil will be excluded and, following consultation with the Governors, the matter may be referred to the police.

In the event of a pupil not being permanently excluded due to mitigating circumstances, it may be that future schools will be informed of the circumstances by the Principal.

Student Safeguarding and Child Protection procedures will be taken into account when applying this policy. If a child is in danger of immediate, serious harm, elements of these outlined procedures may not be followed in order to expedite appropriate care for the child.

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