



Drugs and Alcohol Policy

This policy applies to all pupils at Bishop's Stortford College including those in Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1.

At Bishop's Stortford College we are committed to promoting a healthy, safe environment, 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 our pupils the understanding and self-confidence to reject illegal drugs and other mind-altering substances.

In this document where the term 'drugs' is used, this includes, illegal drugs, new psychoactive substances ("legal highs") and volatile substances, unless otherwise specified. Alcohol and tobacco are dealt with separately, later in the policy.

In the Senior School PSHE programmes focus on the potential short-term and long-term risks to health from drug and substance abuse. They concentrate on teaching the importance to young people of making healthy, informed choices. However, they also include an ethical dimension, designed to instil an understanding of the importance of complying with the criminal law.

Our Medical team plays an active role in promoting greater awareness about the risks involved and will offer informed medical advice. Pupils can discuss their individual worries about drugs or substances with their Housemaster or Housemistress, or a member of the PSHE team. They can also refer themselves to the Medical staff and to the School Counsellor and, so long as the pupil is not part of an existing investigation, this will not normally lead to disciplinary action.

In the Prep School, the PSHE programmes for Upper Shell, Form One and the Lower Third contain a module on drugs education, addiction and illegal drugs. During Lower Third Science lessons, the effects of alcohol and tobacco are considered as well as the potential damage they can cause. Pupils also produce pieces of individual work looking at encouraging informed choices.

In the Pre-Prep, the pupils are made aware of the people who care for us; this includes discussion about the dangers of medicines. Pupils raise issues and concerns during PSHE sessions, and this can include dangers such as alcohol.

Designated Senior Member of Staff

In accordance with the Government's Drug Strategy 2010, we have designated senior members of staff with responsibility for the Drugs Policy and all drug issues within the Senior School, Prep School and Pre-Prep.

The members of staff responsible in each area of the College are the Senior Deputy Head in the Senior School, the DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead) in the Prep School and Head of Pre-Prep.

Relationship to Other Policies

This policy has links with the College Aims and Ethos, Behaviour Policy, Safeguarding Policy, Searching Policy and First Aid Policy. Pupils in the Senior school have access to the information relating to this policy on each House noticeboard.

Sanctions

The College, as befits its zero-tolerance approach toward drugs, has a clear set of sanctions dealing with the abuse of drugs and a clear scheme for detection.

Pupils need to be aware that:

- The use of illegal drugs or other psychoactive substances by College pupils, at school or elsewhere, may be a crime, and is an offence against College rules.
- E-cigarettes, nicotine pouches 'snus', and vape pens are banned from the College campus.
- The possession of drugs, sale of drugs to other pupils or the taking of drugs, or being under the influence, whilst at school or under the supervision of College teaching staff i.e. on trips, for example, will lead to permanent exclusion and reporting to the police.

Should the College Head have cause to believe there may be serious, albeit non-specific drug-related concerns, which have the potential to adversely impact the wellbeing of pupils, random drug-testing might be considered a necessary safeguard. This may also include the use of canine detection units to ensure no drugs are being held on the premises. If a pupil is reasonably suspected of being under the influence of drugs, then they may be required by the College Head to take a drugs test in the College Medical Centre. They will be asked to consent to a test and parents will be informed. If a pupil refuses to be tested, the College Head may draw an adverse inference that they have taken illegal drugs, New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) or other as yet undesignated substances which are harmful or detrimental to good order and discipline.

Failing such a test would constitute an offence against College rules, regardless of whether the drugs were taken on or off the College premises or in College time, and the pupil would then be subject to the same disciplinary approach as someone discovered to be in possession of or to be using drugs on College premises.

If parents become aware of drug taking outside the school, then this should be reported to the police and to the College. If parents report such incidents to the College, e.g. at parties, or weekends or in the school holidays, then the College would normally pass on such intelligence to the police.

The Testing Procedures

Standard Commercially available Multi Drug Test

In the first instance, pupils suspected of drug abuse will be asked to provide a urine sample (or equivalent) which will be tested in the College Medical Centre using a urinary dip stick, or other such test. A change in colour in the dip stick device indicates the presence of specific categories of drug. The result of this test is sensitive, but because the interpretation of the colour change is subjective, a further test using a fresh sample would be undertaken.

If the test is negative, then no further action would be taken.

Urine Samples

If either drug test indicated a positive result, pupils would be required to give a further urine sample and this would be sent away for testing. The process of obtaining the sample in secure conditions, the chain of custody of the sample, and the detailed analysis of the sample by the Laboratory, makes this a reliable confirmatory method of testing.

Parents will be contacted, if at all possible, to inform them that the testing process is to be undertaken. However, the testing itself will proceed once the College Head deems that it is necessary.

Searching and Confiscation

The College has the general power to discipline, as set out in Section 91 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, which enables a senior member of staff to confiscate, retain or dispose of a pupil's property as a disciplinary measure, where reasonable to do so.

Where the person finds other substances, which are not believed to be illegal drugs, these can be confiscated where a teacher believes them to be harmful or detrimental to good order and discipline. This would include new psychoactive substances or 'legal highs'. If College staff are unable to identify the legal status of a drug, it should be treated as a controlled drug.

The College is not required to inform parents before a search takes place or to seek their consent to search their child. Following a search, whether or not anything is found, the College will make a record of the person searched, the reason for the search, the time and the place, who was present and note the outcomes and any follow-up action, although there is no legal requirement to do so.

The College would normally inform the individual pupil's parents or guardians where alcohol, illegal drugs or potentially harmful substances are found, though there is no legal requirement to do so.

Complaints

Complaints about searching should be dealt with through the normal College Complaints Procedure.

New Psychoactive Substances (NPS)

Young people are becoming increasingly aware of, and in some cases using, new psychoactive substances (NPS). These are designed to mimic the effect of illegal drugs but are structurally different enough to avoid being classified as illegal substances under the Misuse of Drugs Act. Despite being labelled as legal, these substances are not always safe to use and often contain controlled drugs making them illegal to possess. If there is uncertainty about what the substance is, it should be treated as an illegal drug.

Illegal Drugs

In taking temporary possession of suspected illegal drugs, the College will:

- ensure that a second adult witness is present throughout;
- seal the sample in a plastic bag and include details of the date and time of the seizure/find and witness present;
- store it in a secure location, such as a safe or other lockable container with access limited to senior members of staff;
- notify the police without delay; disposal of the drugs will take place safely and securely under advice from the police.
- record full details of the incident, including the police incident reference number, if appropriate;
- inform parents/carers, unless this is not in the best interests of the pupil; and
- identify any safeguarding concerns and develop a support and disciplinary response.
- Drugs use can be a symptom of other problems and pupils may be referred to relevant youth/family support services.

Responding to Drug Related Incidents

If a pupil is suspected of being under the influence of drugs or alcohol on College premises, the College must prioritise the safety of the young person and those around them. If necessary, it should be dealt with as a medical emergency, administering first aid and summoning appropriate support. Depending on the circumstances, parents or the police may need to be contacted. If the pupil is felt to be at risk, the Safeguarding Policy will come into effect.

Alcohol

Alcohol is an addictive substance and is technically classed as a drug. Its use is controlled by laws which, for young people between the ages of 5 and 18, define not whether but where alcohol may be drunk.

In accordance with the Governments Drug Strategy 2010, the College recognises that there are problems associated with alcohol abuse, particularly in relation to young people. So, we have rules regarding the consumption of alcohol and we also have a commitment to educate our pupils so that they understand the effects of alcohol and the potential dangers of it. This

is carried out via our Personal, Social, Health Education programme (the Empower Programme).

Pupils are informed that alcohol is a depressant which reduces the ability to make rational decisions and it can lead directly or indirectly to problems of ill-health.

Disclosure

- Disclosure is when a pupil tells a member of staff about drug-taking so that the school can act to help the individual concerned to stop taking drugs.
- Disclosure can be made either about oneself or another individual; if the latter it should be motivated purely by concern and a desire to help.
- If disclosure is made independently, the case will be managed in a non-disciplinary way.
- To be genuinely 'independent' a disclosure must be initiated by the pupil at a time other than during an investigation. Once staff have begun an interview and disciplinary process disclosure can no longer provide immunity from sanction.

Rules Associated with the Consumption of Alcohol

- The College Head's permission should be sought on every occasion that alcohol is to be made available to pupils.
- The law of the land should be observed.
- In no circumstances may alcohol be brought on to College premises by pupils.
- Being under the influence of alcohol at any time or in any place whilst under the College's authority, other than the under strict supervision as described below, is forbidden.

The Licensing Act November 2005

This Act allows alcohol to be served at events and functions where pupils/guests are under the age of 18. The law states that 16- and 17-year olds are permitted to drink beer, wine or cider, under supervision, but only while having a plated meal. It does not permit the consumption of alcohol by 16- and 17-year-olds at any other type of event or function.

To comply with this legislation:

- no pupil below the Sixth Form should be served alcohol on any occasion;
- alcohol may occasionally be served to Sixth Formers within strictly defined limits set by the College Head; and
- alcohol may be served as an accompaniment to a meal eaten with a knife and fork under certain occasions under the supervision of a member of staff, or parent.

- No spirits should ever be served to pupils.
- Alcohol should never be served to pupils in public gatherings such as concerts or plays.
- Outside the College, the normal laws of the land with regard to alcohol apply. On trips abroad, the local laws apply except that alcohol is never allowed for pupils under 16. These will be addressed in Trips documentation.

Offences

The following actions by pupils are considered to be offences:

- Being in possession of alcoholic drinks whilst on College property outside of those occasions stated above.
- Being intoxicated at any time, or in any place, whilst under the Head's authority. This includes school trips.
- Supplying alcohol to anyone whilst at school, or supplying alcohol to another pupil (or pupils) during term time.
- Bringing the College into disrepute through alcohol misuse at any time.

Penalties

Any breach of these regulations will be notified to parents. The usual penalty for bringing or consuming alcohol in school is suspension. The College Head, or in the Prep School the Head (or their deputies), will always be involved in determining the punishment for alcohol related offences.

The College's response to any breach of these regulations will include educational support and referral to a medical practitioner or counsellor as necessary. If the offence is associated with a College function, a ban on similar events may also be imposed.

Tobacco

The minimum age for smoking is 18 and schools are subject to the same smoke-free legislation as other premises. The College is a smoke-free and vape free site. Pupils should understand the non-smoking policy, which is published on the website and in Houses. College policies are designed to support smoking prevention and cessation. E cigarettes and vapes are considered in the same way as cigarettes, for the purpose of this policy.

Offences: The following are considered to be offences:

1. Smoking at any time or in any place whilst under the Head's authority.
2. Being in the company of other pupils who are smoking or vaping.

3. Having breath or clothes which smell of cigarette smoke (without adequate explanation).
4. Being in possession of tobacco, cigarettes, e-cigarettes, vapes, smokable herbs or extracts, cigarette papers, lighters, fuel or matches.

It should be understood that:

- a) Anyone – staff pupil or visitor – should expect to be able to move freely around the school at any time without being concerned that they will come across pupils involved in illicit behaviour.
- b) Smoking within the reach of buildings- especially residential accommodation – is a fire hazard and therefore considered to be an even more serious offence.

Penalties

Each time a pupil commits any of these offences -

- The usual penalty for smoking whilst under the authority of the Head, for example, on campus or whilst on a school trip, or in school uniform is suspension. The usual penalty for the possession of a vape in school is also suspension.

Counselling may be offered if it considered appropriate.

References:

- DfE and ACPO (association of Chief Police Officers) Drug and Advice for Schools 2012
- Governments Drug Strategy 2010
- Drug Advice for Schools Searching and Confiscation
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Education Act 2011