



Drugs Policy (September 2026)

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Safeguarding Statement

The School recognises its moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children. We endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected and valued and always to consider the best interests of the child. We are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and follow our procedures to ensure that children receive effective support, protection and justice.

We operate within a culture of openness and recognise and accept that abuse can happen in any organisation.

1 Policy Aims

Sancton Wood School is committed to fostering a healthy and safe environment for all students, which is reflected in our stringent policies against the use of illegal drugs, vaping, and smoking. Our Drugs & Other Substances Policy clearly outlines the school's zero-tolerance stance on the possession, use, or distribution of controlled substances, including cigarettes and vaping devices. We believe in educating our students about the risks and consequences associated with these activities, and we enforce a strict disciplinary framework to maintain the integrity of our school community. By working together with parents and providing supportive counselling, we aim to empower our students to make informed and responsible choices, ensuring their well-being and adherence to the law.

Young people face growing pressures to use or experiment with controlled drugs, alcohol, tobacco and other substances. Our purpose at Sancton Wood is to do all we can to reduce these pressures, to educate children about the risks of involvement with drugs and to maintain an environment free from illegal drugs and from the temptation to use illegal drugs and other harmful or potentially harmful substances.

The responsibility for the education of our pupils is shared with parents and effective communication and co-operation is essential to the implementation of the School's policy. The



School offers advice to parents and also hopes that parents will share concerns with the School should they consider their son is involved in illegal drug usage.

It is also our purpose at Sancton Wood:

- To ensure compliance with the criminal law under which it is an offence for any person to possess, use, supply or sell controlled drugs or for the School to allow its premises to be used for those purposes.
- To help develop in each of our pupils the moral courage to reject those parts of "youth culture" which may be harmful to their health, integrity, independence, opportunities and respect for the law.
- To maintain the integrity of the School community, to reflect the wishes of parents, and to provide support and confidential counselling for those who may otherwise be tempted to take risks or experiment with illegal drugs.
- To provide a firm disciplinary framework for dealing with pupils who bring illegal drugs into School and use or tempt others to use them at or away from School premises. **Pupils involved with illegal drugs in this way are liable to expulsion.**
- To increase understanding of the implications and possible consequences of use and misuse, and the law.
- To provide pupils with accurate information about drugs and other harmful or potentially harmful substances and make them aware of consequences of substance misuse.
- To enable pupils to make healthy, informed choices by increasing knowledge, challenging attitudes and developing coping strategies.
- To actively discourage the use of illegal drugs and to treat cases of illegal drug usage by pupils as serious misconduct which will be investigated, and may lead to the imposition of sanctions against pupils.

Parents are asked to give their wholehearted support to these aims.

2 Scope

The policy applies at all times when a pupil is in the care of the School. It will also apply to complaints or other incidents in or out of School where an individual pupil or the reputation of the School is affected, for example when one pupil is found to have offered illegal drugs or other substances to another.

Concerns about drugs that relate to the conduct of staff, volunteers or parents are outside of the scope of this policy. However, such concerns, as and where they arise, will always be treated seriously, and will be addressed in accordance with the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures, and, where relevant, the Staff Code of Conduct and the Staff Disciplinary Procedure.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (or, in their absence, a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead) should always be consulted whenever a concern arises about drugs, regardless of whether the concern relates to the conduct of pupils, staff, volunteers or parents.



3 Implementation of this Policy

Implementation of this Policy will be based upon trust and understanding between pupils, staff and parents and is seen as being in the best interests of all pupils at the School. It is also meant to act as a positive and effective deterrent.

The Principal takes overall responsibility for the policy and its implementation, also for liaison with the DSL, Governing Body, parents and appropriate outside agencies.

The AP Pastoral will oversee the pastoral care implications of this Policy.

Education: A continuing programme of education about drugs will be maintained throughout the School. The programme will be delivered primarily through the School's Personal, Social and Health Education programme which begins in the first year at the School and also in the course of PE, chemistry and biology lessons. All staff will, in addition, have their own contributions to make as appropriate situations present themselves. Tutors will also remind their tutees of the school rules regarding drug abuse and the consequences of failure to adhere to the rules at the start of each year.

Training of Staff: The programme of education for pupils will be complemented by regular in-service training for staff. The Principal will ensure that all teaching staff receive an update at least every three years.

Involvement of Parents: Parents will be kept informed of any changes or developments to the School's programme of drugs education. Parents will be invited to the School on certain occasions to discuss issues related to adolescence and youth culture. Parents are also encouraged to contact the School if they feel that their child may have been offered, or in any way be involved with illegal drugs. If Parents attending school premises appear to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol, they will be asked to leave and the member of staff making the request should refer the matter to the School's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a Deputy DSL.

Individual Pupils: Help will be provided for any pupils genuinely seeking it as part of the School's pastoral care provision. The tutorial system allows pupils to discuss their anxieties about drugs or substances in confidence, if they need to do so. However, confidentiality will not be provided to any pupil who discloses that she/he is taking illegal drugs. A pupil coming forward with a drugs problem will receive help, but will also be required to go on to a programme of regular drug testing if they wish to remain at the school and receive its support.

Investigation: The School will investigate any rumour about involvement with illegal drugs or substances. The Principal (P) or Assistant Principal (AP) will cause an investigation into the matter, to be undertaken with a view to establishing the facts. They may carry out the investigation themselves or ask the Head of School (HOS) or other senior member of staff to investigate if they consider it appropriate (hereafter, 'the Investigator').

The investigation may involve segregating a pupil for no longer than necessary; asking them questions; asking them to give a written account of particular circumstances; searching their personal belongings; taking possession of property (such as a mobile phone or school bag or wallet) for analysis; and/or asking the pupil to provide a urine sample under appropriate supervision.



Investigations will be conducted fairly and in accordance with natural justice. The pupil will have reasonable access to a telephone, toilet, food and drink and will not be left unaccompanied for long periods of time. The pupil shall be entitled to be accompanied and assisted by their tutor, or an appropriate member of the pastoral staff other than the investigator during the investigation and in particular during any investigatory interview. The pupil will be encouraged to make a written statement in relation to the complaint or allegation.

4 Searching

Searching Pupils and Their Belongings

The school is committed to safeguarding all pupils and maintaining a safe environment. In line with the Department for Education's guidance on Searching, Screening and Confiscation, the school distinguishes between searches conducted with consent and those conducted without consent.

1. Searches with Consent

Where appropriate, staff may seek the consent of a pupil (or their parent/carer, where relevant) before conducting a search. Consent may be sought when the situation is not urgent or when the item in question is not classified as prohibited. The member of staff will assess whether the pupil is capable of giving informed consent. If consent is refused, the school may consider the pupil's response and general demeanour and may involve parents or the police if necessary.

2. Searches without Consent

In accordance with the law, the Headteacher and authorised staff may conduct a search without consent if they have reasonable grounds to suspect that a pupil is in possession of a prohibited item, such as:

- Illegal drugs
- Alcohol
- Stolen items
- Weapons
- Vaping devices
- Fireworks
- Pornographic material

These searches will always be:

- Conducted by authorised staff.
- Carried out with respect for the pupil's dignity and privacy.
- Documented and, where appropriate, followed up with parents and safeguarding staff.

5 Police Involvement



If the School seizes a controlled drug, the drug may be destroyed if there is good reason to do so. Otherwise the School will deliver it to the police as soon as reasonably practicable. In all other cases, the School may 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 back to the School to investigate.

The School may use its discretion to decide whether police involvement is appropriate.

6 Discipline following misuse of Drugs or Substances

The School will consider each substance incident individually and recognises that a variety of responses will be necessary to deal with incidents. The School will take temporary possession of a substance that is or is suspected to be an illegal drug to protect the pupil from harm and from committing the offence of possession. This is permitted in law.

School staff will not attempt to analyse or taste an unidentified substance. The substance will be handed over to the police, who will be able to identify whether it is an illegal drug, or may be destroyed or securely disposed of. Appropriate counselling and support will be available to those pupils perceived to be at risk.

Where a pupil discloses to a member of staff that he/she is taking illegal drugs, the member of staff should make clear to the pupil that the information will be shared with the DSL. Given the seriousness of substance misuse, the pupil will be pointed to sources of confidential information and advice, and to treatment and rehabilitation services available to help those who are misusing substances.

Terminology:

- "Drugs" means controlled drugs including cannabis, Temazepam, LSD, cocaine, Xanax, Valium, Ketamine, amphetamines, ecstasy and heroin and includes both illegal drugs and those that are legal when present in medicinal products of low strengths (and which may be obtained with or without a prescription).
- "Involvement with illegal drugs" includes possession, use, supplying and dealing with illegal controlled drugs or substances resembling illegal controlled drugs.
- "Substances" means all controlled drugs and, in the appropriate context, alcohol, tobacco, cigarettes, smoking paraphernalia, anabolic steroids, and every other substance that, when abused, may damage the health, safety and welfare of a pupil.
- "Reasonable suspicion" means a suspicion based on a cogent reason stated by the High Master, or an authorised Deputy.
- "Satisfied" means "more likely than not" in the opinion of the Principal, or an authorised Deputy.

Supply, etc:

Those who sell or are involved in the sale of illegal drugs, possess them with intent to supply, distribute them, or otherwise encourage others to use them, whether on or off school premises while under school auspices will be expelled.

Other Involvement:



In every other case where the Principal (or an authorised Deputy) is satisfied that there has been involvement in illegal drugs on or off School premises while under School auspices, or where a pupil has tested positively to illegal drugs, the pupil will normally be expelled, as the health and safety of other pupils is directly at risk.

Alternative sanctions, depending on all the circumstances, including the pupil's degree of involvement and at the sole discretion of the Principal (or an authorised Deputy) may include a suspension.

Drug Testing:

As an alternative to expulsion in cases which do not involve supply or encouragement to others to use illegal drugs, the principal (or an authorised Deputy), at their discretion, may permit the pupil to remain at school subject to a regime of testing without suspicion at intervals during the following two years.

Drug testing will not take place during any period of external examinations. Both parents and pupils to whom the regime is offered would be required to sign consent forms describing the way in which the regime would operate. A pupil testing positive to illegal drugs while on this regime would be expelled immediately. All records of drug testing will not be used for any other purpose and will be destroyed when the pupil concerned leaves the School.

• Review Procedure:

A decision to expel or require a pupil to leave will be subject to review by a panel of three governors upon a written request made by the parents in accordance with the Review Procedure.

7 Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed:

- following any serious incident involving pupils and drugs
- following the issue of any new guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) and
- in any event, annually.