

Substance use and misuse policy template

Schools should consider the following points when developing a substance use and misuse policy.

Rationale for the substance use and misuse policy

This should include:

- A substance use and misuse policy which sets out their role in relation to all drug matters, which includes the content and organisation of drug education
- Develop a policy, in consultation with the whole school community
- Providing drugs education and why it is important.

[DfE \(Department for Education\) and ACPO \(Association of Chief Police Officers\) drug advice for schools, Sept 2012](#)

School ethos

This should set out the school's values and beliefs as a context for its approach to substance use and the drugs education programme.

Definitions of 'drugs or substance,' 'use' and 'misuse' in the context of this policy

The definition of drugs given by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime is:

A substance people take to change the way they feel, think, or behave. Here, 'drugs' and 'drug education' is used to refer to:

- all illegal drugs (those controlled by the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971)
- New Psychoactive drugs (former 'legal highs') controlled by New Psychoactive Substance Act, 2016
- all legal drugs, including tobacco, volatile substances (those giving off a gas or vapour which can be inhaled), alkyl nitrites (known as poppers)
- All over the counter and prescription medicines

Substance use is when someone consume drugs or alcohol. Substance use does not always lead to addiction; many people occasionally use alcohol or certain drugs without being addicted. However, substance use always comes with the risk that it might lead to addiction.

Substance misuse /abuse is when a person consumes alcohol or drugs regularly, even though it causes issues in their life. The issues caused by abuse may be related to their job, their personal life, or even their safety. People who abuse drugs and alcohol continue to consume them, regardless of the consequences.

Substance dependency is a full-blown addiction. There are many symptoms of substance dependency, including developing a tolerance for the drug, going through withdrawal symptoms without it, and struggling to cut back on it.

Aims and objectives

The school should clearly state its aims and objectives. It should include:

- a clear statement of the school's view on drug use or misuse and the role of drugs education.
- an outline of the need for a consistent approach to drugs education and managing incidents in line with its pastoral care, child protection and safeguarding policies.

- an outline of the need for procedures and protocols to be in place that the school will evaluate and review in line with all other school policies; and
- the processes of monitoring, evaluation and review to adopt within a defined timeframe.

The roles, responsibilities and legal duties of:

- the Board of Governors.
- the Principal/Headteacher.
- the designated teacher for drugs.
- all staff (teaching and non-teaching); and
- pupils and parents/carers.

Drug's education in the curriculum

Schools should provide:

- information about how they will deliver drugs education.
- links to the pastoral care programme throughout the school.
- Be aware of local services to support young people with substance misuse.
- links with other areas of learning; and
- advice on using external agencies to deliver drugs education.

Procedures for managing suspected-related incidents (appendix 1)

Drug-related incidents include any of the following:

- drugs or drugs paraphernalia found on school premises.
- students in possession of illegal or unauthorised drugs
- Students supplying unauthorised or illegal drugs or students under the influence of drugs or exhibiting signs of intoxication or illness.
- Disclosure of drug use.
- Information which would suggest student(s) involved in substance misuse.
- Illegitimate sale/supply of drugs in the school vicinity.
- Involvement in 'County line' or gang related drug issues where there are any suspicions, observation, disclosures, or discoveries of situations involving illegal and unauthorised drugs (possession, supply or imbibing).

Schools need to.

- define what constitutes an incident from the school's perspective and in line with [DFE and ACPO drug advice for schools, 2012](#)
- provide a range of responses based on the nature of the incident in question, which could involve:
 - pupils,
 - parents or carers, or
 - a member of teaching or non-teaching staff or
 - Safer Schools Officer
- outline the circumstances and procedures for searching and detaining pupils.
- give guidance on confiscating suspected substances.
- advise on handling, storing and disposing of suspected substances; and
- provide links to policy details.

See appendix a for a guidance on how for a positive practice in a substance misuse incident

Confidentiality

Schools should:

- explain to pupils that they can never guarantee confidentiality; and
- pass on any information about suspected criminal activity associated with drugs to the designated teacher, Safer Schools Officer (as necessary), health services as well as other agencies involved.

Disciplinary or pastoral care responses

Schools need to:

- align any response to a drug-related incident with the school's Discipline and Pastoral Care Policy; and consider the pupil's health and well-being when making an appropriate response to a drug-related incident. Referral to Drugs and Alcohol services should be made for the service to recommend appropriate intervention to address the concerns in relation to drugs and alcohol.
- The intervention delivered by the drugs and alcohol service can include:
 - Brief intervention by the drugs and alcohol worker when there is a low risk in relation to substance misuse and it is up to 3 education sessions.
 - Structured intervention by the drugs and alcohol worker when there is a concern of possible dependency to substance use and care plan needs to be drawn. The structured intervention consists of Motivational Interviewing or counselling and are delivered in block of six sessions, which are reviewed and can be extended.
- Information pack is provided to the parents/guardians/carers with regards to advice and guidance on how and where the support can be accessed with regards young people and substance misuse. A flyer can also be provided for parents, outlining further information.
- Drugs Box information sessions provided by drugs and alcohol worker are made available to parents and a referral for this intervention is made by the school to the drugs and alcohol service.
- If there is a reason to permanently exclude rather than that of the substance misuse offer, but the substance misuse is identified as a contributing factor, a referral to the drugs and alcohol service needs to be considered as part of this package of support for this young person.
- If there is a substance misuse incident and the decision is to fixed term exclude, the referral to drugs and alcohol service needs to be considered as part of the reintegration process for the young person
- In various situations where a young person is being excluded for anything other than substance misuse, but there are risk factors associated with parental/family members and substance misuse, a referral to drugs and alcohol service should be considered. This support service can offer support via specialise counselling in relation to the impact this is having on someone else, with regards to their emotional health and well-being.

London Borough of Hillingdon has 2 drugs and alcohol services:

1. **SORTED** – young people service
2. **ARCH** – adult service

The referral for substance misuse support needs to be made to SORTED, however a small number of students might require clinical support in relation

to their substance misuse. In those cases, SORTED will liaise with ARCH to establish the most suitable pathway of treatment for the student.

SORTED interventions:

Brief Intervention
Drugs Box Information session – this programme provides up to 3 one to one educational sessions to explore the student's current knowledge in relation to the substance of concern. During the session education will be provided on all aspects of using the substance, which includes, physical and mental health, impact on social skills, education employment and criminal record.
Structured Intervention
MI (Motivational Interviewing) - the programme consists of minimum 6 one to one sessions for young people identified with problematic substance misuse but not ready to engage in counselling. The aim of the sessions is preparation for change to be able to address their substance misuse.
Specialist Drugs and Alcohol Counselling – the programme consist of minimum of 6 one to one counselling sessions for students identified with problematic substance misuse who are ready to address their substance misuse.
Specialist Drugs and Alcohol Counselling – the programme consist of a minimum of 6 one to one counselling sessions for students identified with family member whose substance misuse impacts on their emotional well being

Guidelines for administering prescribed medication

When schools are responsible for administering prescribed medication, they must refer to the DfE publication Supporting Pupils with Medication Needs, available from www.deni.gov.uk. in a separate policy.

This should include how schools will manage pupils engaged in smoking cessation programmes and who may be using licensed Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) in school. Electronic cigarettes do not constitute NRT, unless they are licensed products that a health professional has specifically prescribed for smoking cessation.

Emergency first aid procedures

School staff should be aware of procedures in the event of a medical emergency. These procedures should be included in appendices.

Staff use of alcohol and smoking on school premises, on school trips and other social events

Schools should refer to:

- the workplace policy on smoking, drugs and alcohol at www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk;
- Don't Mix It: A Guide for Employers on Alcohol at Work from www.hse.gov.uk.
- Drugs Misuse at Work: A Guide for Employers from www.hse.gov.uk.
- the school smoking policy to include use of electronic cigarettes in school and;
- the code of conduct for use of alcohol during school events.

Procedures for communicating to staff, parents or carers or other relevant agencies

Schools should explain how they would communicate:

- the policy to staff, parents or carers and other relevant agencies; and
- information about the school's response to specific incidents to staff, pupils, parents or carers and the media.

See example in (**appendix 2**) of positive practice guides around effective communication, between a variety of different parties involved e.g., parents, young people, schools, and the wider network involved.

Procedures for monitoring and evaluating the policy

Schools should:

- develop criteria for evaluating the success of the policy and associated procedures.
- implement timescales for monitoring and evaluating the policy.
- emphasise the importance of post-incident evaluation and review.
- consider who will be involved in the monitoring and evaluation of the policy and associated procedures; and
- provide resources to gather feedback from pupils, teachers and parents or carers.

Procedures for evaluating the drugs education programme

Schools should evaluate their drugs education programme within school evaluation of the curriculum.

Training

Schools should provide staff training on:

- implementing the school's drug policy.
- delivering drugs education as part of the curriculum; and
- responding to a suspected drug-related incident. They should also provide:
 - training to the Board of Governors; and
 - Information on workshops for parents or carers.

All training can be accessed through the request to the SORTED programme.

Creating a summary policy for inclusion in the school prospectus

Consider including:

- the rationale for the policy.
- the school ethos.
- the aims and objectives of the policy,
- key roles and responsibilities.
- a brief outline of curricular provision.
- an overview of the school's response to a drug-related incident.
- reference to sources of support available in the community; and

Information on where to find a copy of the full support offer.

Brochure/Referrals

<https://rebrand.ly/ADS/Brochure>

<https://rebrand.ly/targetedprogrammes>

Telephone: 01895 277222

Email: targetedprogrammes@hillingdon.gov.uk

Appendix 1

If there are any suspicions, observation, disclosures, or discoveries of situations involving illegal or other unauthorised drugs (possession, supply or imbibing), schools need to:

- define what constitutes an incident from the school's perspective and in line with [DFE and ACPO drug advice for schools, 2012](#)
- provide a range of responses based on the nature of the incident in question, which could involve:
 - pupils,
 - parents or carers, or
 - a member of teaching or non-teaching staff or
 - Safer Schools Officer
- To ensure utmost priority will be placed on safety, meeting any medical emergencies with first aid, and summoning appropriate help before addressing further issues. If in doubt, medical assistance will be sought immediately
- The headteacher or any available member of SLT will be informed of the situation immediately
- Dialogue with the student(s) will be undertaken by the Headteacher or a member of SLT as soon as possible in order to determine facts. The emphasis will be on listening to what people have to say and asking open rather than closed or leading questions. Consideration will be given to separating any students involved in the incident and ensure that a second adult witness is present
The Headteacher or a member of SLT will inform, consult, and involve others, as necessary. Careful attention will be given to respecting the confidentiality of those involved
- Where they have reasonable grounds for suspecting that a student(s) may have an illegal or unauthorised drug, they will be escorted to a senior member of staff who will make every effort to encourage the individual to hand item(s) over voluntarily in the presence of a second member of staff. Where possible the gender of member of staff carrying out a search will correspond to the gender of the student. Where an individual refuses, the Headteacher, or member of staff authorised by them may exercise their statutory power to search the student(s) or their possessions, without consent.
[Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- Staff may search school property, for example school lockers, if they believe that drugs have been stored in there. Prior consent will always be sought, but Individual's made aware that if consent is refused the school may wish to proceed with the search
- Parents/carers will normally be contacted, regardless of whether the result of the search was positive or negative

- Any substance suspected of being a drug will be confiscated. In taking temporary possession of suspected substance, a second adult witness will be present, substances will be sealed in a plastic bag with details of the date, time, and witnesses present. This will be locked in a secure cupboard
- If the substance is suspected of being an illegal drug, the police will be notified immediately in order that they may collect it for identification and then store or dispose of it in line with locally agreed protocols. In most cases, parents will be notified immediately, unless this is not in the best interests of the students.
- A detailed record of the incident will be made by the Headteacher or DSL, with a copy kept only by the Headteacher and DSL. There will be no other copies of the incidents.
- The school will maintain vigilance about drug-related incidents in the local community through contact with police and other relevant agencies.
[Searching, screening and confiscation at school, 2018](#)

Appendix 2

Positive Practice Scenarios

1. Abdul

Overview of the incident:

Abdul is a year 10 student. During lunch time, Abdul and his friends moved away from the main outdoor sitting area towards an outbuilding by the football pitch. The lunch supervisor teacher followed them and found all 4 boys, appearing to be trying to make a joint. All boys are then taken to the year 10 office and their bags are searched. Abdul has a lighter in his bag. Boys admit of purchasing a small bag of cannabis prior to school, but not having intention of using it during school hours. They stated that they were planning to smoke the joint later in the afternoon after school in one of the boy's house. Boys explained that they just wanted to try it and it was the first time they had bought cannabis.

Immediate actions:

- Assess the situation of immediate dangers. I.e., environment, young person, situation, friendships, behaviour etc –
- Report the incident to the Safer Schools Officer (SSO)

Follow up actions:

- Contact the parents to inform about Abduls actions.
- Make a referral to SORTED, with all the information already gathered to enable SORTED to make initial assessment of the level of intervention required.
- SORTED to deliver up to 3 education sessions.
- Parents to be offered an information pack on teenage substance misuse.

2. Julia

Overview of the incident:

Julia is year 11 student and is doing well with her schoolwork. Julia has a group of friends, who were known to be attending school. Julia likes to party with a much older crowd. Julia is late for her morning lesson and appeared to not be herself. When the teacher spoke with her after the lesson it became clear that Julia is under the influence of alcohol.

Immediate actions:

- Assess the situation, environment, young person, and the need for medical attention
- Julia to be moved to a safe place within school e.g., medical room.
- Contact the parents to collect Julia.
- Explore the circumstances of Julia drinking alcohol.

Follow up actions:

- Make a referral to SORTED with all the information gathered to enable SORTED to make initial assessment of the level of intervention required.
- SORTED to provide an intervention to address the substance misuse, which includes counselling.
- Parents to be offered an information pack on teenage substance misuse.
- Referral made to Adolescent Development Services, to support Julia with making better choices bit.ly/targetedprogrammes.

3. Ben

Overview of the incident:

The teacher was notified about some suspicious activities going on in the area by the school sports hall. He found Ben and 2 other students. He saw something being tossed in the corner. When he came closer, the teacher saw a small amount of cannabis in the corner. None of the boys owned up to it being theirs. When in the office their bags are then checked and Ben is found with a razor, lighter and small empty bag of cannabis. The head of year is aware that there are concerns regarding Ben as he regularly gets behaviour points for disruptive behaviour and not participating in the lesson. Ben is known to be friends with older students who are known for association with groups related to drug dealing. Ben denies any cannabis use and states that he was framed.

Immediate actions:

- Headteacher or senior leadership to discuss the incident with the Safer Schools Officer (SSO).

- Gather more information about Ben and his friendships, behaviour etc which could indicate concerns around substance misuse.

Follow up actions:

- Contact the parents to inform about Ben's actions.
- Make a referral to SORTED with all the information to enable SORTED to make an initial assessment of the level of intervention required.
- SORTED to provide motivational interviewing intervention of a minimum of 6 sessions.
- Parents offered information pack on teenage substance misuse.
- Referral to Axis for information sharing axis@hillingdon.gov.uk
- Referrals to Adolescent Development Services to support Ben with making better choices.

4. Alfie

Overview of the incident:

Alfie is a year 9 student. He is a LAC (Looked After Child) young person who regularly goes missing from his foster placement. It was his 3rd school within the last 12 months due to moving foster placement. Alfie is regularly late to school and appears very sleepy and did not engage in lessons. Alfie was late again, and the teacher reported that he could easily smell fresh cannabis on Alfie's clothes. When being asked he admitted of smoking a cannabis joint first thing in the morning. The lighter and razor paper was found in his bag. Alfie openly admitted to smoking cannabis on a regular basis. When asked how he funded the habit he just said he has good friends who share their cannabis with him.

Immediate actions:

- Reported the incident to school Safer schools Officer.
- Gather more information about Alfie and his friendships, behaviour etc which indicated concerns around substance misuse.

Follow up actions:

- Contact the foster parents to inform about Alfie's actions.
- Inform all professionals involved with Alfie about the incident.
- Make a referral to SORTED with all the information gathered to enable SORTED to make initial assessment of the level of intervention required.
- SORTED to provide MI/counselling intervention of min of 6 sessions.
- Foster parents offered information pack on teenage substance misuse.
- Referral to Axis for information sharing.
- Referral to Adolescent Development Services to support Alfie with making better choices, if they are not already working with Alfie

5. Shayne

Overview of the incident:

Shayne is a year 9 student. He regularly gets himself in trouble in the class for not following the teacher's instruction and not submitting the homework. During the maths lesson Shayne was disturbing the class by throwing paper planes across to another student. When asked to stop he carried on the behaviour. The teacher, after several warnings asked him to leave the class. Shayne then picks up his bag, uses inappropriate language towards teacher and leaves the class slamming the doors. Information is reported to the Head of Year. During the discussion with his head of the year, Shayne discloses that his dad's drinking has increased recently, and parents argue regularly.

Immediate actions:

- Assess the situation, environment, young person, and the safeguarding risks
- Follow the procedure for disruptive behaviour as per behaviour school policy.
- Gather more information about Shayne's family situation (allow for a safeguarding understanding of whether a referral to MASH should be made)

Follow up actions:

- Contact parents to inform about Shayne's actions.
- Make a referral to SORTED with all the information gathered to enable SORTED to make initial assessment of the level of intervention required.
- SORTED to provide counselling of min of 6 sessions to support Shayne with the impact of parental substance misuse.
- If there are safeguarding concerns in relation to parental substance misuse, referral to MASH to be made.
- Referral to Adolescent Development Services to support Shayne with making better choices.

Information gathering to support level of risk in relation to student's substance misuse.

Area of concern:	Findings:
What substance does the student use?	
Does the student admit using the substance regularly?	
Is there concern from professionals, parents, and other students regarding student's substance misuse?	
Does the student engage well in education?	
Is the student's appearance a concern for the school?	
Are the friendships of the students a concern? e.g. -older friends	

-friends from outside school	
-friends with association to antisocial behaviour including drug dealing and serious youth violence (SYV)	
Is the student known to Social Care or Early Intervention Service?	
Is the student LAC?	
Is there concern regarding parental or sibling substance misuse?	
Have you contacted the appropriate professionals to share concerns and intelligence to support the child I.e., Axis, MASH? (Provide details)	

Appendix 3

SUPPORT FOLLOWING A PERIOD OF EXCLUSION FOR A SUBSTANCE MISUSE INCIDENT

By signing this contract, the pupil will agree to work with XXXX School to access support. XXX School will ensure this support is accessed without barriers and XXX School will keep the agreement and support in strict confidence. The school will agree to explore support measures to eliminate risks of continuing behaviour.

Pupil's Name:

Dates of Exclusion:

Reason for Exclusion:

On my return to XXXX School I **Name** agree the following:

1. To attend and engage in XXX session with a substance misuse worker, from SORTED on a regular basis at XXXX School.
2. Not to engage in any drug related activity whilst under the jurisdiction of XXXX School.
3. This will include involvement in the purchase, possession, supply, intent to supply, being concerned in supply or consumption of drugs or abuse.
4. Not to use, and/or be under the influence of illegal drugs whilst under the jurisdiction of XXXX School
5. Not to carry any drug paraphernalia such as oversized Rizla cigarette papers.

6. To read the Drugs Policy for XXXX School.

7. I understand that if there is any further involvement with drugs then I may be permanently excluded from XXXX School.

Pupil Signed:

Name:

Teacher Signed:

Named:

Parent Name:

Signed:

Date:

Notes for School:

- This document should not be used with children who are Looked After. In this instance schools should liaise with the Virtual School for advice and guidance.
- Schools must make referrals to Sorted via the following web link: bit.ly/targetedprogrammes
- Sorted are part of Hillingdon's Targeted Programmes. Please ensure your school have considered all programmes that the school can refer students to as a part of their support plan: bit.ly/tpbrochure