



## Alcohol, Smoking and Illegal Drugs Policy - Pupils

This policy applies to all pupils and staff of Abbot's Hill, including EYFS and should be read in conjunction with the Behaviour Policy and the Exclusion Policy

Abbot's Hill School condones neither the misuse of drugs and alcohol by members of the school, nor the illegal supply of these substances. As a result, pupils may find themselves suspended or excluded if an incident occurs.

Abbot's Hill School is committed to the health and safety of its members and will take action to safeguard their well-being.

Abbot's Hill School acknowledges the importance of its pastoral role in the welfare of its pupils, to inform and educate them on the consequences of drug use and misuse.

### Aims

Abbot's Hill School believes and supports the following educational aims in respect of substance use and misuse:

- To ensure compliance with the criminal law;
- To enable pupils to make healthy, informed choices by increasing knowledge, challenging attitudes and developing and practicing skills;
- To provide accurate information about substances;
- To increase understanding about the implications and possible consequences of use and misuse.
- To encourage an understanding for those experiencing or likely to experience substance use;
- To widen understanding about related health and social issues, e.g. sex and sexuality, crime, HIV and AIDS;
- To seek to minimise the risks that users and potential users face;
- To enable young people to identify sources of appropriate personal support.

These aims are fulfilled through aspects of the pupils' experiences in the taught curriculum, the informal curriculum and through opportunities for extra-curricular activities. Abbot's Hill School delivers education on alcohol, smoking and drug use in the taught curriculum mainly through PSHCEE and science. We hope to influence pupils to make the right choices but we also recognise that disciplinary sanctions are sometimes necessary.

Abbot's Hill School is committed to maintaining the school as a 'drug and smoking free zone'.

### Counselling

All members of staff have some pastoral responsibility and in this capacity may have the opportunity to counsel individuals who are, or have been, involved in some form of drug abuse, or who are concerned about their friends. We realise that, when it occurs, drug abuse may be a symptom of other psychological, emotional or spiritual needs, and every effort is made to enable pupils to talk about these – either to someone in school or to someone outside.

Within Abbot's Hill School, the Class Teachers/Form Tutors, Heads of Year/Phase Leaders, School Counsellors, School Nurse, Head of Pupil Progress & Welfare, Head of Prep and Deputy Head all have a special part to play in this.

## **Discipline**

We recognise that some pupils may still be tempted, because of their immaturity and the pressures of society, to ignore the information and advice offered. Therefore, in order to protect the community as a whole, we apply the following disciplinary code for any incidents of drug use.

### **a) Smoking**

Smoking is forbidden both on school premises and while pupils are under school control (including while they are travelling to and from school). Pupils are also forbidden to bring smoking materials onto school premises. A first offence will result in a short suspension. A second offence results in a longer suspension. The above sanctions apply not only to those found smoking but those found in the company of smokers. If a pupil is caught smoking on a school trip she is likely to be sent home immediately at parental cost.

### **b) Alcohol**

Pupils are forbidden to drink or possess alcohol on school premises. This ban includes alcopops. Whilst under school control pupils are forbidden to visit licensed premises or to purchase alcohol. If caught, a suspension will be imposed immediately. If a pupil is caught drinking alcohol on a school trip she is likely to be sent home immediately at parental cost.

### **c) Illegal drugs**

Anyone involved in buying, selling, possessing or using drugs (except under medical advice) may forfeit the right to remain at the school.

In disciplining students, our main concerns will be:

- To deal severely with those who may be supplying drugs to others and/or encouraging others in drug abuse;
- To provide appropriate disincentives so that pupils may be discouraged from experimenting with drugs;
- To provide appropriate support for those who may have been involved in drug abuse and wish to stop.

A person who volunteers an admission to having been involved in drug abuse could reasonably expect to be treated more leniently than someone who is caught in the act.

The normal punishments are as follows:

- Exclusion in the case of someone found to be in possession of and/or using drugs in school.
- Exclusion in the case of someone found selling drugs to others.
- Suspension in the case of someone found using drugs outside of school, pending a decision about her future as a pupil of Abbot's Hill School. In the case of someone found to be using drugs as a first offence, it may be possible to allow her to return to school after a period of suspension if she is anxious not to use drugs again and is prepared to undertake counselling. The understanding would be that if she were found to be taking drugs on a further occasion, she would then be asked to leave at once. However, if there is evidence that the person is actively promoting drug use amongst her peers, it will lead to exclusion, even if it is a first offence.

The school cannot rely on hearsay and rumour or changes in a pupil's demeanour and behaviour as evidence of drug taking, but, if it has reasonable grounds for being suspicious that a pupil may be using drugs, the school will take actions.

#### **d) Legal Highs**

As part of the school's drugs' education policy, students will be educated about the development and dangers of legal highs. Students involved in buying, selling, possessing or using legal highs will be subject to the same procedures as those involved in illegal drugs.

#### **Legal Issues**

1. Any suspected substance found in school must be put into a sealed container in the presence of a witness, preferably the Deputy Head or the Head. Although there are no statutory requirements to do so, the Secretary for State would expect the police to be informed when illegal drugs are found on a pupil or on school premises. The responsibility for deciding whether or not to report an incident rests with the Head. The police need to be informed at this point:

- in cases of pushing or dealing
- where class A drugs are involved; cocaine, heroin, LSD, ecstasy, methadone, morphine, opium and pethidine
- where a separate police investigation is likely

In such cases it would be expected that the police would be informed before the school made any detailed investigation.

It is not permissible for the school to retain the substance as this would constitute an offence against the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971. With Amendment 2014 nor is it permissible for staff to try to analyse or to taste an unidentified substance.

It is expected that staff involve senior management as soon as possible rather than seeking to investigate an issue by themselves. In investigating drug issues it is important that no unacceptable stress is caused to the innocent.

The Head or Deputy Head will notify parents as soon as possible of any investigation taking place.

If a witness or suspect shows signs of distress she should be offered the opportunity to have another member of staff present or to speak to her parents on the telephone or have them present. It is essential in any case for a suspect to have an adult "friend" (Form Tutor, Head of Year) present during any interviews. It is considered good practice to get any witness to give, initial and date a written version of any information they provide.

In the case of a suspect, it is considered best practice to:

- explain that answers to questions will be noted down and considered carefully;
- explain what has been alleged and, unless good reason for confidentiality, by whom;
- read over notes, ask if correct, initial notes date and time;
- tell pupil of next stages;
- if a pupil wishes to make a statement this should be done in the presence of an additional adult;
- if parents have not been present earlier and if a suspect has admitted a serious breach which is likely to lead to exclusion, parents must be asked to attend without delay.

2. On suspicion, searches of a pupil's desk or locker may be made. A witness should also be present. Pupils may be asked to hand over substances voluntarily, for example, by turning out their pockets or bag. However, physical searches of pupils are not allowed by law. If a pupil refuses to turn out her pockets, etc, the DfE advice is that the police should be called. This decision should only be taken by the Head.

3. If parents choose to accuse the school of not behaving appropriately, the courts will apply the principles of natural justice, i.e:

- the pupil is not pre-judged;
- the procedures are fair, unbiased and impartial;
- all investigations that appear necessary are carried out;
- measures are taken to ensure the well-being of the pupil(s);
- the pupil and parents are given the opportunity to be heard;
- in the case of expulsion, the pupil and parents are informed of an appeal or complaints mechanism.

Abbot's Hill School reserves the right to ask the School Nurse to carry out testing for illegal drugs. This will require the authorisation of the Head.

### **Warning signs that might suggest drug misuse**

- Decline in school performance
- Unwillingness to take part in activities previously enjoyed
- Unusual outbreaks of temper
- Marked mood swings, restlessness and irritability
- Staying out more, perhaps with a new group of friends
- Excessive spending or borrowing of money
- Reduced interest in personal appearance
- Excessive tiredness without obvious cause
- Lack of appetite
- Heavy use of scent, perfume etc.
- Wearing sunglasses to conceal dilated or constricted pupil

(Ref: Handbook of School Health, p.135)

### **The Law relating to Drugs**

Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 is the principal law governing illegal drugs. The drugs it covers are divided into three classes, (A), (B) and (C).

Principal drugs include:

**Class A:** Opium, heroin, methadone, cocaine, crack, LSD, ecstasy, possessed "Magic Mushrooms" and any Class B drug prepared for injection, cannabis oil.

**Class B:** Amphetamines, barbiturates, cannabis, codeine

**Class C:** Tranquilisers, some painkillers, most anabolic steroids, GHB, Ketamine

### **Premises**

It is an offence knowingly to allow premises for which you are responsible to be used for smoking cannabis or opium or the production or supply of controlled drugs.

This means that, if a member of staff knows that cannabis is being smoked by a pupil on school premises and he or she does nothing to stop it, that member of staff commits an offence.

Knowing that another person is in possession of a controlled drug on school premises offered for supply to another, the person responsible for the premises commits an offence unless he or she acts to stop it.

### **Confiscation**

It is legal to confiscate an illegal drug in order to prevent an offence being committed and then to destroy or hand it to the police.

It is illegal to retain the drug, i.e. it must either be disposed of or handed as soon as possible to the police.

### **Disposal**

Schools are allowed to dispose of illegal drugs. Witnesses should be present and the action recorded. A drug may be handed to the police, but the law does not require this.

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**Headmistress**