

Dixons City Academy

Policy Documentation

Policy: Drugs, Alcohol and Substances Use and Misuse

**Responsibility for Review:
Vice Principal - Ethos & Aspiration &
Academy Nurse**

Date of Last Review: February 2017

Drugs and Substances – Use and Misuse

Statement of Policy:

The Academy believes that the use and misuse of drugs and substances constitutes a major threat to individuals, families and the wider community. Education can play a key role in ensuring that young people know the risks and consequences of drug taking and are provided with the knowledge and skills to resist. The essential aims are to give students facts, emphasise the benefits of a healthy lifestyle and give them the knowledge and skills to make informed and responsible choices now and later in life.

The aims are:

- to create an environment within the Academy which is totally free from illegal drugs, cigarettes and dangerous materials
- to achieve this the Academy will neither accept nor condone the misuse of drugs and alcohol by members of the Academy, nor the illegal supply of these substances
- the Academy is committed to the health and safety of its members and will take action to safeguard their well-being
- the Academy acknowledges the importance of its pastoral role in the welfare of young people and, through the ethos of the Academy, will seek to persuade students in need of support to come forward

Procedures

The Principal retains the responsibility for deciding how to respond to particular incidents, taking account of such factors as the age of the student concerned; whether the incident involved one student or a group of students; and whether there is particular peer group pressure. The fact that certain behaviour could constitute a violation of the criminal law should not, in itself, be taken as automatically leading to the exclusion of a student.

In cases where it is clear that a student is selling or otherwise supplying drugs and the health and safety of other students is directly at risk, the student will be permanently excluded. When it is clear that a student is in possession of drugs, but not selling them, the Principal may decide that he/she should be excluded. Fixed term exclusions will be appropriate in some cases and permanent exclusion may be warranted as a final sanction when all other reasonable steps have been taken. Only the Principal, or the Vice Principal acting in the Principal's absence, has the power to exclude a student either for a fixed term or permanently. In both cases the Academy will take steps to ensure that the excluded student has access to professional support and advice from health and social services, including early intervention services.

In response to our shared concerns at a local and national level, the Academy wishes to state that, as part of its care for the welfare of its students, it believes it has a duty to inform and educate young people about the consequences of drug use and misuse. The Academy takes a pro-active stance on this matter, believing that health education is a vital part of the personal, social and health education of every student and this is integrated into the Personal Development Studies programme for every year.

Fundamental to the Academy's values and practices is the principle of sharing the responsibility for the education of young people with parents, by keeping them informed and involved at all times. Effective communication and co-operation is essential to the successful implementation of this policy.

If a student is identified by the Academy as having experimented with illegal drugs or as being at particular risk of doing so, appropriate counselling and support within the Academy's general pastoral arrangements will be provided. There will be a programme of mentoring for at-risk students, involving an older student or a staff member offering encouragement, advice and support to the student. This approach, sensitively handled, will be to avoid glamorising the status of the at-risk student in the eyes of his or her peers.

Where a student discloses to a teacher that he/she is taking drugs, the teacher will make clear to the student that he/she cannot offer a guarantee of confidentiality, given the seriousness of the drug misuse. The teacher will pass the information to the Vice Principal, who will put in place the appropriate strategy for that individual and record the incident with the Academy's Drugs Education Co-ordinator.

The Law on Drugs

It is an offence under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971:

- to supply or offer to supply a controlled drug to another in contravention of the Act
- to be in possession of, or to possess with intent to supply to another, a controlled drug in contravention of the Act; it is a defence to the offence of possession that, knowing or suspecting it to be a controlled drug, the accused took possession of it for the purposes of preventing another from committing or continuing to commit an offence and that as soon as possible after taking it, he took all such steps as were reasonably open to him to destroy the drug or to deliver it into the custody of a person lawfully entitled to take custody of it
- for the occupier or someone concerned in the management of any premises knowingly to permit or suffer on those premises the smoking of cannabis, or the production, attempted production, supply, attempted supply, or offering to supply of any controlled drug

Dealing with Illegal Drugs

The Academy will liaise closely with its local Police force to ensure that there is an agreed policy for dealing with the range of incidents, which might arise involving illegal drugs. The Police Liaison Officers provide recurrent training for staff relative to drugs issues and also awareness sessions for parents. The Police will be contacted in the case of a suspect substance being found, and may attend to identify the substance without prejudice to the individual in possession. The law permits staff to take temporary possession of a substance suspected of being a controlled drug for the purpose of protecting a student from harm and from committing the offence of possession. They should hand the substance to the Police who will be able to identify whether it is an illegal drug. Academy staff should not attempt to analyse or taste an unidentified substance.

It is open to a member of staff to search a student's desk or locker where he/she has reasonable concern to believe it contains unlawful items, including illegal drugs. Where students are suspected of concealing illegal drugs on their person, every effort should be first made to secure the voluntary production of any unlawful substances, for example by asking them to turn out their pockets. If the student refuses, the Police should be called in to deal with the situation. Intimate physical searches should never be made by a teacher. The Police may interview students on premises, with the Principal's agreement and provided efforts have been made to inform the student's parents. The Police and Criminal Act 1984 and its Code of Practice set out procedures in respect of the detention, treatment and questioning of young people by Police officers which should be observed when children are interviewed on premises.

Where a teacher is told, or is aware, of possible activity **outside** Academy premises, the Police will be informed in the interests of safeguarding the health and safety of young people in the area. This would include not only information about the supply of illegal drugs but also, for example, evidence that a local shopkeeper was selling alcohol, cigarettes or solvents to students in contravention of the law.

Whilst the Academy acknowledges that the numbers of young people who use and misuse substances is rising, it is seen as important to recognise that a large number of young people are choosing not to use or misuse substances. The Academy will continue to provide guidance.

The Academy believes and supports the following educational aims in respect of substance use and misuse:

- to enable students to make healthy, informed choices by increasing knowledge, challenging attitudes and developing and practising social, communication and assertiveness skills
- to provide accurate information about substances and their potential dangers
- to increase an understanding about the implications and possible consequences of use and misuse
- to widen understanding about related health and social issues, e.g. sex and sexuality, crime, HIV and AIDS
- to enable young people to identify sources of appropriate personal support
- to create a supportive, non-judgemental atmosphere whereby students feel confident in raising concerns and seeking help
- to provide appropriate regular INSET for all staff

A: OBJECTIVES

i. Increasing knowledge, changing attitudes and enhancing skills

- to provide opportunities for students to acquire knowledge and understanding about the dangers of drug misuse and the reasons why people use drugs
- to provide opportunities for students to be equipped with the knowledge, attitudes and appropriate personal and social skills they need to avoid the problematic use of drugs
- to provide opportunities for students to work with younger peers in developing knowledge and understanding about the dangers of drugs, through 'Peer Education' sessions

ii. Behaviour

- to prevent young people from engaging in drug and alcohol misuse
- to discourage the onset of first use for those who do experiment at any time
- to enable any students who are misusing drugs or who have concerns about the misuse of drugs to seek help
- to promote the student's self-esteem so that they are less likely to be exploited or to exploit others
- to enhance personal initiative and the acceptance of responsibility more generally, as well as developing assertiveness in appropriate situations

iii. Personal, Social, Health & Economic Education (PSHEE)

- to increase knowledge of social and personal issues relating to drugs in line with the Qualifications & Curriculum Authority (QCA) standards
- to enhance young people's decision-making skills more generally, using drugs education as a vehicle
- to enhance later parenting skills in relation to prevention of drug misuse when students reach adulthood

B. CONTEXT

- drug and alcohol awareness education should be provided in the broader context of the teaching of health, personal, social and citizenship education as part of a student's life skills and preparation for adulthood
- it should aim to involve parents and encourage them to take an interest and share responsibility for their children's drug awareness
- it should be delivered in context of the Academy as part of the community
- it should take account of the age, sex and cultural/social background of the students at which it is targeted
- it should take account of the local circumstances and culture of the community
- it should provide factual and accurate information backed up with consistent advice
- it should aim to teach students the necessary social and personal skills described in A.i. above
- it should give younger students the chance to discuss drugs issues with their older peers who have been trained in Drugs Peer-led Education
- when planning for school trips and activities outside school, parents and students should be aware of clear rules on drug use