



WILSON'S SCHOOL

Drugs Policy

(Including: smoking, vaping and use of alcohol)

Approved by Trustees: Summer 2026

Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Legislation and Statutory Requirements.....	3
3. Definitions	4
4. Drugs and the School Curriculum	4
6. Roles and Responsibilities.....	6
7. Alcohol.....	7
8. Smoking and Vaping.....	7
9. Responding to a Drug Related Medical Emergency	7
10. Responses for Managing Drug Related Incidents	8
11. On Finding Drugs	8
12. Incidents and Sanctions	10
13. Medicines	13
14. Links with Other Policies.....	14
Appendix 1: Useful Organisations	14

1. Introduction

All drugs, both legal and illegal, have the potential to harm but some drugs are more harmful than others. For a small number of people, drugs have serious and far-reaching consequences not only for themselves, but their families, their communities and society in general. For young people in particular, drugs can impact on their education, their relationships with family and friends and prevent them from reaching their full potential.

All young people need to be able to make safe, healthy and responsible decisions about drugs, both legal and illegal. Schools play a central role in helping them make such decisions by: providing education about the risk and effects of drugs; developing their confidence and skills to manage situations involving drugs; creating a safe and supportive learning environment and ensuring that those for whom drugs are a concern receive appropriate support.

However, schools cannot act alone. They are part of a broader prevention picture which includes parents/carers and a range of partner agencies. By working together, we can help young people navigate their way through what is a complex social issue.

Wilson's School has a zero-tolerance policy towards the possession, use or supply of illegal and other unauthorised drugs or substances purporting to be such, or the paraphernalia associated with the use of such substances within the school boundaries and elsewhere as defined below in section 5.

All schools are expected to have a policy which sets out the school's role in relation to drug matters.

1.1 The purpose of the school Drugs Policy (referred to elsewhere as 'the policy') is to:

- Clarify the legal requirements and responsibilities of the school.
- Reinforce and safeguard the health and safety of pupils, staff and others who use the school.
- Clarify the school's approach to drugs for all staff, pupils, trustees, parents/carers, external agencies and the wider community.
- Give guidance on developing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating the drug education programme.
- Enable staff to manage drugs on school premises, and any incidents that occur, with confidence and consistency, and in the best interests of the community.
- Ensure that the response to incidents involving drugs complements the overall approach to drug education and the values and ethos of the school.
- Reinforce the role of the school in contributing to local and national strategies.

2. Legislation and Statutory Requirements

This policy is based on guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) which includes:

- DfE and ACPO (Association of Chief Police Officers) drug advice for schools (2012)
- Restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force, in schools (2026)
- Searching, screening and confiscation: advice for schools (updated 2023)
- Keeping children safe in education (2025/26)
- Personal, social, health and economic education (2021)
- Behaviour in Schools guidance (2024)

It also takes into account:

- Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 (as amended)
- Psychoactive Substances Act (2016)
- Tobacco and Vapes Act (2026)
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (as amended)

3. Definitions

1. The definition of a drug given by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime is:

A substance people take to change the way they feel, think or behave.

2. The terms 'drugs' and 'drug education', unless otherwise stated, is used throughout this document to refer to all drugs as defined below:
 - All illegal drugs (those controlled by the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 (as amended)), including but not limited to, anabolic steroids, cannabis, nitrous oxide, cocaine, ecstasy, mephedrone and heroin.
 - All legal drugs, including alcohol, tobacco and tobacco-related products, such as nicotine replacement therapy (NRT), electronic cigarettes and vape oil.
 - New Psychoactive Substances which are designed to mimic illicit drugs (previously known as 'legal highs') or volatile substances (those giving off a gas or vapour which can be inhaled), ketamine, khat and alkyl nitrites (known as poppers).
 - Prescribed drugs, such as antibiotics, painkillers, antidepressants, antipsychotics, inhalers and stimulants such as Ritalin.
 - Over-the-counter medicines such as paracetamol and cough medicine.
 - Any substance purporting to be any of the above.

4. Drugs and the School Curriculum

The school delivers a curriculum which:

- Promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society.
- Prepares pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

Drug education is an important component of drug prevention and is an important aspect of the school's PSHE curriculum. Its aim is to provide opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge, skills, attitudes and understanding about drugs and appreciate the benefits of a healthy lifestyle, relating this to their own and others' actions.

4.1 The aims of drugs education

To increase pupils' knowledge and understanding and clarify misconceptions about the:

- Short and long-term effects and risks of drugs
- Rules and laws relating to drugs
- Impact of drugs on individuals, families and communities
- Prevalence and acceptability of drug use among peers
- Complex moral, social, emotional and political issues surrounding drugs.

And to:

- Develop of pupils' personal and social skills enabling them to make informed decisions and keep themselves safe and healthy, including:
 - Assessing, avoiding and managing risk
 - Communicating effectively
 - Resisting pressures and proactively seeking help
 - Finding information, help and advice
 - Devising problem-solving and coping strategies
 - Developing self-awareness and self-esteem
- Enable pupils to explore their own and other peoples' attitudes towards drugs, drug use and drug users, including challenging stereotypes, and exploring media and social influences.

4.2 Methodology and resources

Drug education is delivered through a well-planned cross-curricular programme, including assemblies, PSHE, and science lessons.

Drug education is delivered within a safe, secure and supportive learning environment.

Ground rules are set out, and teachers' and pupils' rights to privacy are respected. Boundaries of discussions are made clear in order to foster mutual respect and an environment in which pupils feel comfortable and ready to listen to and discuss each other's opinions.

Distancing techniques can be adopted through role play/anonymous question boxes where appropriate.

Staff are advised to sometimes answer difficult questions on an individual basis.

A variety of teaching resources are outlined in the PSHE scheme of work and are available from the PSHE and RSE Coordinator.

5. Where and to Whom the Policy Applies

This policy applies to all staff, pupils, parents/carers, trustees and partner agencies working in Wilson's School. It includes journeys to and from school, work experience, day and residential trips and courses (see 5.1 below). Pupils must not bring controlled (illegal or unauthorised) drugs, legal drugs for which they have no prescription, cigarettes, e-cigarettes (vapes) or alcohol (or items purporting to be any of these) or the paraphernalia associated with the use of these substances onto the school site at any time.

5.1 Possession or use of drugs away from the school premises

As outlined in the Behaviour in Schools guidance 2024, schools have the power to sanction pupils for misbehaviour outside of the school premises to such an extent as is reasonable.

Conduct outside the school premises, including online conduct, that schools might sanction pupils for misbehaviour includes:

- When taking part in any school-organised or school-related activity
- When travelling to or from school
- When wearing school uniform

- When in some other way identifiable as a pupil at the school
- That could have repercussions for the orderly running of the school
- That poses a threat to another pupil; or
- That could adversely affect the reputation of the school.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

6.1 The role of trustees

The school trustees review this policy in line with the review policy timetable. They are also involved in disciplinary proceedings as appropriate.

6.2 Staff with key responsibility for drugs:

- Tutorial Programme (PSHE) co-ordinated by the PSHE and RSE Coordinator.
- Management of drug related issues in school: Deputy Head responsible for Behaviour.
- Designated Safeguarding Lead where safeguarding issues apply, including the involvement of external agencies.

6.3 All staff (teaching and support):

- All staff should be familiar with the content of the school's drug policy.
- Assess the situation and decide on the appropriate action to be taken.
- Seek advice from and/or notify a member of pastoral staff or SLT at the earliest opportunity if they have concerns about any drug related incident.
- Deal with any emergency procedures to ensure the safety of pupils and staff, if necessary
- Consistently adhere to the safeguarding procedures and the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy within the school.

6.4 Pupils and parents/carers

Parents/carers play a vital role in the prevention of drug misuse. They should:

- Be aware of the school's drugs policy and discuss this with their child.
- Engage fully in the education of their child, regularly discussing pertinent issues relating to drug use with their child.
- Understand and monitor the risks presented to their child of smoking, vaping, alcohol and drug use.
- Be aware of the school's procedures for dealing with drug related incidents as described below.

Pupils and students in years 9 to 13 will read the school's Smoking, Vaping, Alcohol and Drug Policy at the start of each academic year, have the opportunity to ask questions about it and sign a declaration of their fully understanding it.

7. Alcohol

No pupil may bring alcohol to school with the intention of using it themselves or supplying it to other pupils.

8. Smoking and Vaping

No pupil may bring cigarettes or tobacco-related products, such as nicotine replacement therapy (NRT), electronic cigarettes and vape oil, to school with the intention of using them themselves or supplying them to other pupils.

9. Responding to a Drug Related Medical Emergency

The first concern in dealing with a medical emergency involving drugs is the health and safety of the school community. In the case of a medical emergency, appropriate help/first aid should be summoned before other issues are addressed.

The following steps should be observed:

- **Do not send pupil the home** – if necessary, the incident should first be dealt with as a medical emergency, administering first aid and summoning appropriate support.
- If in doubt, call emergency services, for example: an incident involving the consumption of a strong sedative such a Diazepam or Xanax.
- In the event of calling emergency service, place the young person in recovery position, loosen clothing to assist their breathing. The casualty must not be given anything to eat or drink.
- Depending on the circumstances, parents/carers or the police may need to be contacted.
- If the young person is felt to be at risk, the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy will come into effect and Children's Social Care may need to be contacted.

10. Responses for Managing Drug Related Incidents

The school will conduct an investigation to judge the nature and seriousness of each individual incident.

Examples of drug related incidents could involve the following situations:

Suspicion	A pupil, parent/carers or member of staff is thought to be in the possession of or under the influence of a drug, or of supplying a substance
Observation	A pupil demonstrates concerning behaviour, perhaps through their behaviour and actions, conversations or an inappropriate level of knowledge of drugs for their age
Disclosure	A pupil discloses that they, a family member or friend are misusing drugs
Discovery	A member of staff may find a substance or paraphernalia on school premises or from a pupil during a search. This also includes discoveries from pupils via social media

10.1 Searches and confiscation

Searches will be carried out in accordance with the Department for Education's Searching, screening and confiscation: advice for schools (2023).

10.2 Searches of school property

Staff may search school property, for example, pupils' lockers, if they believe drugs or related paraphernalia to be stored there. Prior consent does not need to be sought. If it is, individuals will be made aware that if consent is refused, the school may proceed with a search. Searching and screening pupils is conducted in line with the DfE's Guidance on searching, screening and confiscation.

11. On Finding Drugs

The law permits school staff to take temporary possession of a substance suspected of being an illegal drug for the purposes of preventing an offence from being committed or continued in relation to that drug, providing that all reasonable steps are taken to destroy the drug or deliver it to a person lawfully entitled to take custody of it.

Staff should not attempt to analyse or taste unknown substances.

11.1 In taking temporary possession and disposing of suspected illegal drugs staff 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.
- A member of the Senior Leadership Team should notify the police, who will be asked to collect the substance and then securely store or dispose of it.
- Record details of the incident, including notes of any discussions with the pupil/s. These should include date; time, place and people present. The police incident reference number should also be included.

11.3 Alcohol, tobacco and vapes

Parents/carers will be informed that the alcohol/tobacco/vape has been disposed of. In cases where a disciplinary proceeding is necessary, items will be disposed of once this has taken place. We do not return substances to pupils, parents or carers.

11.4 Volatile substances

Some solvents or hazardous chemicals are legitimately used by school staff or pupils. These substances are stored securely (in line with COSHH regulations) and managed to prevent inappropriate access or use. Arrangements are set out in the school's Health and Safety Policy.

Given the level of danger posed by some volatile substances, when confiscated, the school will arrange for their safe disposal.

11.5 Disposal of drug paraphernalia

Needles or syringes found on school premises will be placed in a sturdy, secure container, using gloves. Used needles and syringes and any other paraphernalia will be disposed of appropriately and not put in domestic waste.

11.6 Police contact

The school reserves the right to contact the police regarding drug issues at any time, in line with Behaviour in Schools guidance (2024).

The law does not require a school to divulge to the police the name of the pupil from whom the drugs were taken, but in the case of an illegal drug the school will normally do so. If formal action is to be taken against a pupil, the police will make arrangements for them to attend a local police station, accompanied by an appropriate adult for interview.

Only in exceptional circumstances should arrest or interviews by police take place at school. An appropriate adult should always be present during police interviews, preferably a parent/carer or, where relevant, duty social worker.

11.7 Legal Drugs

The police will not always be involved in incidents involving legal drugs, but the school will inform trading standards or the police about the inappropriate sale or supply of tobacco, vapes, alcohol, volatile or psychoactive substances to pupils in the school or local area, if these are known.

11.8 Referral and external support

The pastoral team and Senior Leadership Team are responsible for referral to agencies.

Local support services and national helplines/websites are advertised on the school website and in Appendix 1 of this policy. Information is available from HoY for individual pupils or parents as and when required.

11.9 Involvement of parents/carers/visitors

In any incident involving illegal and other unauthorised drugs, the school will normally involve the child's parents/carers and explain how they intend to respond to the incident and to the pupil's needs.

Where the school suspects that doing this might put the child's safety at risk, or if there is any other cause for concern for the child's safety at home, then the school will exercise caution when considering involving parents/carers. In any situation where a pupil may need protection from the possibility of abuse, the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead should be consulted, and local child protection procedures followed.

Parents/carers are encouraged to approach the school if they are concerned about any issue related to drugs and their child and the school will refer parents/carers to other sources of help, for example, specialist drug agencies or family support groups, as required.

If parents/carers are suspected of being under the influence of drugs or alcohol on school premises, staff should attempt to maintain a calm atmosphere and call for a second adult, if necessary. On occasion, a teacher may have concerns about discharging a pupil into the care of a parent/carer. In such instances, the Safeguarding Team will discuss with the parent/carer if alternative arrangements could be made, for example asking another parent/carer to accompany the child home.

12. Incidents and Sanctions

The sanctions outlined in this policy pertain to the possession, use or distribution of drugs, or substances purporting to be drugs within and beyond the school premises. The table provided is illustrative rather than exhaustive and is not intended to encompass all possible scenarios. When deciding on a sanction, the Executive Head considers both aggravating and mitigating factors and takes into consideration all relevant aspects of the incident and all aspects of previous conduct where applicable. While the Code of Conduct takes precedence, the listed sanctions may apply when addressing drug-related issues in isolation.

Incident	First Occasion	Second Occasion	Third occasion
Possession of Class C drugs or substances purporting to be such, or NPS (New Psychoactive Substances)	• Suspension • Substance confiscated and disposed of appropriately. • Parents and pupil understand legal position from Executive Head. • Consequences of second offence made clear. • Incident logged. • Offer to refer pupil to appropriate counselling or other agency. • Drug education assessment by HoY (to ensure curriculum/pastoral programmes address issues raised).	• Permanent exclusion.	
Possession of alcohol or substances purporting to be such	• Suspension. • Substance confiscated and disposed of appropriately. • Consequences of further offences made clear. • Parents notified. • Incident logged.	• Extended suspension. • Substance confiscated and disposed of appropriately. • Drug education assessment by HoY (To ensure curriculum/pastoral programmes address issues raised). • Possible behaviour/health intervention. • Offer to refer pupil to appropriate counselling or other agency.	• Permanent exclusion

		Contractual agreement with parents. Pupil Disciplinary Committee.	
Possession of tobacco products, e-cigarettes, vape oil	Suspension. - Substance confiscated and disposed of appropriately. - Consequences of further offences made clear. - Parents notified. - Incident logged.	Extended suspension. - Substance confiscated and disposed of appropriately. - Drug education assessment by HoY (To ensure curriculum/pastoral programmes address issues raised). - Possible behaviour/health intervention. - Offer to refer pupil to appropriate counselling or other agency. - Contractual agreement with parents. Pupil Disciplinary Committee.	Permanent exclusion
Possession of suspected Class A or B drugs or substances purporting to be such or possession of paraphernalia associated with the use of illegal or unauthorised drugs	Permanent exclusion or where exceptional circumstances apply, extended suspension. - Substance confiscated and disposed of appropriately. - Police contacted and parents notified. - Drug education assessment by HoY (To ensure curriculum/pastoral programmes address issues raised). - Risk assessment to determine immediate health/child protection issues relating to pupil.	Permanent exclusion.	

Social supply of drugs or substances purporting to be such	• Permanent exclusion • Substance confiscated and disposed of appropriately. • Police contacted if deemed appropriate by the Executive Head and parents notified. • Risk assessment for pupil(s) and others in school. • Investigation into any network of illegal drug use / purchase conducted by HoY and SLT.		
Supply for profit of legal or illegal drugs	• Permanent exclusion. • Substance confiscated and disposed of appropriately. • Parents and Police contacted.		

13. Medicines

The school recognises that there are instances where non-controlled drugs and other substances may legitimately be in school.

Some pupils may require medicines that have been prescribed for their medical condition during the school day. Staffing, administration, storage and record keeping procedures are set out in the policy for Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions.

Also set out elsewhere are the circumstances in which a pupil may take non-prescribed/over-the-counter medicines, such as those providing relief from hayfever.

School staff do not give non-prescribed medication to pupils unless supplied with written authorisation by parent/carer.

The sanctions in this policy do not apply to the properly authorised use and possession of prescription and non-prescription medication by a pupil for personal consumption.

13.1 Out of date medicines

Parents/carers will be informed and will be asked to collect and dispose of unused or date-expired medicines. Further details are outlined in the policy for Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions.

14. Links with Other Policies

This policy should be considered in conjunction with the other written policies listed below:

- Code of Conduct
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions
- Health and Safety Policy

School Visits Policy

Appendix 1: Useful Organisations

National Information, Advice and Support Services

Talk to FRANK

Provides confidential information and advice about drugs, legal highs, and substance misuse for young people and parents/carers.

Website: <https://www.talktofrank.com>

Drinkaware

Independent charity providing evidence-based information on alcohol, responsible drinking, and reducing alcohol-related harm.

Website: <https://www.drinkaware.co.uk>

Alcohol Change UK

Works to reduce alcohol-related harm and improve support services for individuals and families affected by alcohol misuse.

Website: <https://alcoholchange.org.uk>

Action on Smoking and Health

Public health charity focused on reducing the health impacts of tobacco, vaping, and nicotine use.

Website: <https://ash.org.uk>

NHS Smokefree

Provides free support, tools, and helpline access for stopping smoking and vaping.

Website: <https://www.nhs.uk/smokefree>

Drinkline

Free and confidential NHS helpline offering support and advice for individuals concerned about alcohol use.

Telephone: 0300 123 1110

Family and Safeguarding Support

ADFAM

Supports families affected by drug or alcohol use, including a directory of local support services.

Website: <https://adfam.org.uk>

Family Lives

Provides confidential support, advice, and helpline services for parents and carers.

Website: <https://www.familylives.org.uk>

Coram Children's Legal Centre

Offers free legal advice and information on children's rights and safeguarding issues.

Website: <https://www.coramclc.org.uk>

National Children's Bureau

Promotes the wellbeing of children and young people and supports best practice in education and safeguarding.

Website: <https://www.ncb.org.uk>

Substance Misuse Treatment and Recovery Services

Cranstoun

Provides treatment, recovery services, and support for individuals affected by substance misuse.

Website: <https://www.cranstoun.org>

Re-Solv

Specialist organisation providing education and support relating to volatile substance and solvent misuse.

Website: <https://www.re-solv.org>

Mentor UK

Focuses on preventing drug and alcohol harm among children and young people through education and support programmes.

Website: <https://mentor-uk.org.uk>