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DRUGS AND DRUG TESTING POLICY

(Related Policies: Safeguarding, Alcohol and Tobacco/e-cigarette, Confidentiality, Medications)

INTRODUCTION

At Woldingham, we are committed to promoting a healthy, safe environment, in which good citizenship and respect for the law can flourish. We believe that it is important to deliver a clear, consistent moral framework that promotes the integrity of our community and gives all of our students the understanding and self-confidence to reject illegal drugs and substances.

EDUCATION PROGRAMME

We have extensive health education and Thrive (SMSC) programmes at Woldingham that focus upon the potential short-term and long-term risks to health from drug and substance abuse. As with our related programmes concerning alcohol and tobacco, they concentrate on teaching the importance of young people making healthy, informed choices. However, they also include an ethical dimension, designed to instil an understanding of the importance of complying with the criminal law. Our programmes involve students of all ages and continue throughout their time at the school. They extend across the curriculum, involving Health Education, Thrive (SMSC), Science and Drama lessons. We also have assemblies on the topic and talks from visiting speakers to cover the serious risks from abuse of illegal substances (and from alcohol and tobacco).

Our medical staff play an active role in promoting greater awareness about the risks involved and will offer informed medical advice. Students can discuss their individual worries about drugs or substances with any member of the Pastoral team. They can also refer themselves to the medical staff and to the school counsellor for individual guidance, without fearing sanctions or adverse report. We are also very conscious of the importance of working together with parents and guardians together to promote the well-being of our students.

PROCEDURES

Woldingham makes stringent efforts to deter drug-taking. The school's THRIVE course includes a programme designed to prevent the introduction of illegal drugs and substances at school, to warn girls of the dangers to their physical and mental health and to make abundantly clear what sanctions apply if the rules are disobeyed. Key members of pastoral staff, including residential teams and Health Centre staff, will be given training, as necessary, to enable them to recognise and manage situations involving drug/substance abuse. Domestic Services and Grounds Staff are also aware of

the importance of reporting drugs/substance paraphernalia. In this context, illegal substances mean cannabis, amphetamines, ecstasy, cocaine, heroin and any other illegal substance, the taking of which constitutes a criminal act in the eyes of the law. It also refers to the possession, use and supply of controlled drugs, volatile substances and the paraphernalia of drugs or substances intended to resemble drugs.

LEGAL DRUGS

Young people are becoming increasingly aware of and, in some cases using, New Psychoactive Substances (NPSs) or 'legal highs'. These are designed to mimic the effects of illegal drugs but are structurally different enough to avoid being classified as illegal substances under the Misuse of Drugs Act. Some of these NPSs have now been re-classified as illegal drugs; for those that remain 'legal', these substances are not always safe to use and often contain controlled drugs making them illegal to possess. 'Legal' NPSs are included in this policy as unauthorised and will be treated as such. If there is any uncertainty about what the substance is, it will be treated as a controlled drug.

In the following section we explain the action that will be taken at Woldingham if there is reason to believe a student is in breach of drug-related regulations.

EVIDENCE OF MISUSE

Any student who is found to possess or to use drugs, and/or is in possession of drugs' paraphernalia at school or whilst on a school trip or local exeat; who supplies drugs or incites others to use them at school, may be expelled.

SUSPICION OF MISUSE

Suspicion of misuse may arise from behavioural signs, giving rise to deterioration in a student's welfare and/or performance. It may also arise from suspected involvement in a drug related incident. The Head may then decide to ask the student to have a 'rapid' urine test. All staff should be alert to signs of drug misuse. Such signs include a decline in performance in schoolwork, marked swings in mood, excessive tiredness, a lack of interest in physical appearance and an unwillingness to take part in school activities.

If a member of staff has reason to suspect that a student is misusing and/or is under the influence of drugs he/she must report the situation through the girl's Head of Year or directly to the Senior Deputy Head or to the Head, who will decide if further investigation is warranted.

SEARCHES [\(See also DFE Searching, Screening and Confiscation at School July 2022\)](#)

If a member of staff has reason to suspect that that a girl is under the influence of, is in possession of, or has stored drugs/substances or related paraphernalia a search may be conducted as follows:

- a personal search including outer clothing and inside pockets: and/or
- a search of school property e.g. bedroom furniture, common room/PE lockers: and/or
- a search of personal belongings e.g. luggage, bag, pencil case, car.

Two members of staff will be present during any search which will be conducted in the presence of the student and will be conducted in such a manner as to minimise embarrassment or distress. Parents will be informed in advance where possible, but it should be noted that we may need to conduct an immediate search and it may not be possible to contact parents in time. Following a search, whether anything is found or not, a written record will be made of:

- the student searched;
- who was present for the search;
- date, time and place of search;
- reason for the search;
- outcome and any follow-up action.

URINE TESTING

There will be no random testing, except as outlined in the paragraph below, **Discipline Following Misuse** i.e. when a student has admitted to/previous misuse.

Every effort will be made to inform parents in advance of the test, but, as timing is of critical importance, it may not always be possible.

PROCEDURE FOR URINE TESTING

(Full details of the testing procedure are available from the Health Centre)

The site for sample collection will be the Health Centre, which will provide a discreet area with a wash basin, lavatory and the necessary equipment:

Collection of the samples will be carried out in the School's Health Centre at that time. A female member of staff, chosen by the student, will accompany her at the Health Centre. Although every effort will be made to maintain privacy and dignity, it will be necessary to ensure that the sample is not interfered with or contaminated in any way.

If the test proves negative, no further sanction will be implemented (unless there is other evidence of misuse – see 'evidence of misuse' paragraph). The school, in conjunction with parents, will pursue other avenues to resolve the problem which aroused suspicion. If a student refuses to give her consent, she will be warned that the school may proceed as if there had been a positive test.

DISCIPLINE FOLLOWING MISUSE

If the only firm evidence that a student has been taking controlled drugs is a positive urine test, a range of sanctions may be applied. Depending on the circumstances, and at the discretion of the Head, she may be allowed to return to school and will be given appropriate guidance and support. The student will also be under obligation to undergo further random tests during the rest of her career at the school. Any further positive test may lead to her immediate expulsion.

If the first sample is test positive, the sample will be retained in case the result is challenged. If the first sample is test negative, the sample will be destroyed.

CHANGE IN THE PROCEDURE

It may be necessary to change the procedure from time to time. Any changes shall be authorised only by the Head and shall come into force on the date designated by him (which may be immediate). The amended procedure will be published as soon as practicable but no later than the beginning of the term following the date the changes were made.

RESULTS OF THE TEST

Results of the test will be communicated to the Head and/or Senior Deputy Head. The student and her parents will also be informed. Should further tests then be required this fact will be known only to those people.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Records of the testing will not be used for any other purpose.

CHARGING FOR THE TEST

The school will cover the cost of a first test required if it is negative. Otherwise, the fee must be borne by the parents.