

# THE WENSLEYDALE SCHOOL AND SIXTH FORM DRUG EDUCATION POLICY

## I. Statutory Obligations

Every school has a statutory responsibility to have:

to deliver drug education through the relevant programmes of study within the PSHE and Science National Curriculum

to prepare all students for the responsibilities of adult life

Parents/Carers do not have a right to withdraw their children from Drug education lessons there is a national expectation that all schools will be actively engaged in the National Healthy Schools Programme, within which a school can extend and develop on existing drug education provision and involve a wider cross-section of its school community.

The Wensleydale School and Sixth Form recognises that it also has its part to play in meeting national and local drug education targets as identified in Young and Yorkshire Plan

These include:

- having an up-to-date drug education policy consistent with DfE guidelines
- having an effective implementation process for the drug education policy with
- subsequent monitoring and evaluation strategies
- having an effective and developmental drug education programme in each key
- stage
- ensuring that Parents/Carers are provided with appropriate drug education
- information which is relevant to their children's age if they wish
- for all young people identified as being vulnerable to receive the appropriate education, advice, information and support on substance misuse both in and out of schools.

In addition we see drug education as a core component of an effective PSHE programme.

This policy applies to all students who attend The Wensleydale School and Sixth form and includes all students attending "off-site" courses, work experience, visits and trips.

## 2. Statement of Policy on Drug Education, Substance Use and Misuse

In response to our shared concerns at a local and national level, we wish to state that as part of our care for the welfare of our students, The Wensleydale School and Sixth Form believes it has a duty to inform and educate young people on the consequences of drug use and misuse. The school takes a proactive stance on this matter, believing that health education can be a vital part of the PSHE education of every student.

Fundamental to our school's values and practice, is the principle of sharing the responsibility for education of young people with Parents/Carers, by keeping them informed and involved at all times. Effective communication and cooperation is essential to the successful implementation of this policy.

Whilst we acknowledge that the numbers of young people who use and misuse substances is rising, it is seen as important to recognise that the larger numbers of young people are choosing not to use or misuse substances. We will continue to support their differing needs.

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The school condones neither the misuse of drugs and alcohol by any member of the school, nor the illegal supply of these substances

The school is committed to the health and safety of all of its members and will take action to safeguard their well-being

The school acknowledges the importance of its pastoral role in the welfare of young people and, encouraged by the general ethos of the school, will seek to support the particular needs of individual or groups of students.

### 3. Definitions of Drugs Terms

Our drug education policy and programme of study recognises that drug taking covers a broad spectrum in our society from medicinal drug taking, for example on prescription, to socially accepted recreational drug use, such as alcohol, through to problematic and chaotic drug taking which frequently involves a drug dependency, often using illegal drugs. We also recognise that our society has an ambivalent attitude to drug taking and drug takers and that young people frequently receive very mixed and often contradictory, messages. As such it is important that we are clear and consistent in our use of language.

When we think of the words 'drugs' we often have images of illegal substances such as heroin, cocaine, ecstasy and cannabis. At The Wensleydale School and Sixth Form we take a broader view of drugs - be they legal or illegal - including alcohol, tobacco and medicines or drugs such as 'poppers', solvents and unprocessed magic mushrooms, of which it is not illegal to be in possession. We include energy drinks in this category

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'***.

**The word 'drug' is used to include all mood-altering substances including alcohol, tobacco, medicines, illegal drugs and other substances such as solvents and 'poppers'.**

'Drug taking' involves the consumption of any drug.

'Drug use' is drug taking through which harm may or may not occur.

'Drug misuse' is drug taking, which harms health or functioning. It may include physical or psychological dependence or be part of a wider spectrum of problematic or harmful behaviour.

### 4. Drug Education and Educational Aims\*

At The Wensleydale School and Sixth Form, our practical definition of drug education is 'the acquisition of knowledge, understanding and skills and exploration of attitudes and values which will enable young people to make informed decisions about their own, and other people's, use of drugs.

Our educational approach focuses on provision of accurate and balanced information. It accepts that there are different views about drug use and encourages young people to explore a range of views, to develop their own opinions and also to challenge

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stereotypes. In terms of skill development an educational approach helps young people develop a range of relevant personal and social skills so they can make their own informed decisions about their own, and other people's, drug use.

We believe and support 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 skills
- provide accurate information about substances
- increase understanding about the implications and possible consequences of use and misuse
- widen understanding about related health and social issues, for example sex and sexuality, crime, HIV and AIDS.

At The Wensleydale School and Sixth Form, these aims are fulfilled through:

- aspects of the students' experiences in the taught curriculum
- the informal curriculum and through opportunities for extra-curricular activities the taught curriculum mainly through PSHE, Science and English but other opportunities to reinforce learning will occur in other parts of the curriculum.

### **5. Inclusion**

#### **Drug Education**

Mainstream schools and special schools have a duty to ensure that students with special educational needs and learning difficulties are properly included in drug education programmes. The programme includes a variety of teaching methods that cater for the range of attainment levels of students and their diverse learning styles. In The Wensleydale School and Sixth Form, this involves focussing on developing students' self-confidence and skills to manage medicines, stay safe, understand and manage feelings and enable students to seek help and support when they need it.

#### **Our policy on specific matters:**

Students who use alternative methods of communication - some students have physical, visual or hearing impairments.

Students with learning difficulties are not excluded from the programme. Using appropriate methods, they will experience most of the basic content.

Students with autism will require individual teaching to meet their specific needs. Teaching Assistants will be used to help with the programme if needed.

### **6. A Whole School Approach**

A whole school approach will be encouraged. Drug education actively involves the whole school community. All groups who make up the school community have rights and responsibilities regarding drugs. In particular:

**The Senior Leadership Team (SLT)** who will endeavour to support the provision and development of drug education in line with this policy by providing leadership and adequate resourcing.

The Assistant Headteacher will maintain an overview of drug education provision and have overall responsibility for its development. This will include keeping up to date with

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developments and good practice, developing the provision to meet students' needs, providing support and resources for staff, arranging staff training, liaison with outside agencies and monitoring and evaluation.

### 7. Teaching staff

Drug education is best led by teachers rather than outside experts. Teachers have an understanding of their students, develop a dialogue with them and are accessible on an ongoing basis. Teacher led drug education also avoids the situation whereby drugs are sensationalised and seen by students as something teachers cannot talk about.

Teachers may not have detailed knowledge of drugs. Whilst it is helpful if they have some knowledge about drugs, they do not need to be 'walking encyclopaedias' to successfully teach drug education. Drug education is not just about factual information and many teaching packages include activities which contain relevant drug information for use with students. Students may sometimes know more about certain drugs than their teachers but this can be put to good use in lessons. If teachers need to know a specific piece of information, they can always find out later, possibly by involving students in research. More important than detailed factual information, is feeling confident, developing trust with students and having the teaching skills to allow students to explore and discuss the many complex issues involved.

All teachers are involved in the school's drug education provision. Some teach drug education through the PSHE programme and some through science and other curriculum areas. All teachers play an important pastoral role by offering support to students. Any teacher can be approached by a student who experiences a difficulty regarding drug education issues. Teachers will be consulted about the school's approach to drug education and aided in their work by provision of resources, background information, support and advice from experienced members of staff and access to appropriate training.

It may be necessary to organise a study day to deliver Drugs and Alcohol Education where the Vertical Tutor programme does not reach the statutory requirements.

**Non-teaching staff** may be involved in a supportive role in some drug education lessons and also play an important, informal pastoral support role with students. They will have access to information about the drug education programme and be supported in their pastoral role.

The school may need to ensure the confidence and competence of staff to carry out their role through the provision of whole school training and its commitment to the statutory requirements.

**Governors** have responsibilities for school policies. They will be consulted about the drug education provision and policy and have regular reports at Governor's meetings.

**Parents/Carers** have a legal right to view this policy and to have information about the school's drug education provision. The school will seek and take account of parent/ carer views and endeavour to adopt a partnership approach with parents/carers. This will periodically include information/education workshops for parents/carers and support for parents/carers to provide drug education for their own children. The school's approach to drug education will encourage dialogue between parents/carers and their children.

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**The Healthy Child Service:** this service can play a key role in supporting the teacher in drug education both in terms of advice, input into lessons, provision of pastoral support for students and resources. The school will work in ongoing consultation and partnership with the 5-19 Healthy Child Service although the teacher may remain the main provider of drug education in the classroom.

**Outside agencies and speakers** may be involved in inputting to drug education lessons and as points of referral as support services for students. The school actively cooperates with other agencies appropriate to student needs to enhance the quality of its drug education provision delivery. Visitors who support the school will also be informed of the values held within this policy. The school will work in partnership with them and jointly plan their input in drug education lessons.

At The Wensleydale School and Sixth Form we involve our Police liaison officer and the Prevent service in our drug education programme.

**Students** have an entitlement to age and circumstance appropriate drug education and to pastoral support. They will be actively consulted about their drug education needs and their views will be central to developing the provision. Discussion of drug related issues and concerns should be encouraged through the school council.

Drug and Alcohol Education is delivered through the PSHE programme at Key Stage 3 and 4 and the through the tutor programme and via specific age-appropriate events at Key Stage 5.

### **Methodology and resources**

A wide range of teaching methods may be used so that students can actively participate in their own learning. This includes use of quizzes, case studies, research, role play, video, small group discussion and use of appropriate guest speakers. Occasional use of drama productions is used. Teaching is conducted in a safe learning environment through the use of ground rules and distancing techniques so that students are not put on the spot or expected to discuss their own personal issues in class. Teaching resources are selected on the basis of their appropriateness to students.

### **Answering students' questions**

The school believes that students should have opportunities to have their genuine questions answered in a sensible and matter-of-fact manner. However, occasionally a student may ask a particularly explicit, difficult or embarrassing question in class. Teachers will use their skill and discretion to decide about whether to answer questions in class and, if so, how. They will establish clear parameters of what is appropriate and inappropriate in class by discussing ground rules with students and by taking an approach that encourages students to be mature and sensible.

If a teacher does not know the answer to a question they will acknowledge this and suggest that they and students research the answer to the question later. If a question is too explicit or inappropriate to answer in class at that moment, teachers will acknowledge it and attend to it later with the student who asked it. If a question is too personal, teachers will remind students about the ground rules and if necessary point

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out appropriate sources of support. If a teacher is concerned that a student is at risk they will follow the school's child protection procedures.

### **Monitoring and evaluation**

The programme may be evaluated by the Assistant Headteacher (Behaviour and Attitude, Personal Development). The views of students and teachers who deliver the programme are used to make changes and improvements to the programme on an ongoing basis.

## **8. Pastoral Support for Students who Experience Difficulties**

### **The nature of support available to students**

The school takes its role in the promotion of student welfare seriously. Staff endeavour to make themselves approachable and to provide caring and sensitive pastoral support for students in a number of ways. Staff may be approached for help on an individual basis and through the tutorial/ pastoral system. They offer a listening ear and, where appropriate, information and advice. Where appropriate, students are referred to outside helping agencies. The school will keep up to date about the development of local services and national help lines for young people promote their existence to students and endeavour to form working relationships with local agencies that are relevant to student needs.

### **Confidentiality and informing parents/carers**

School staff cannot promise absolute confidentiality if approached by a student for help. Staff must make this clear to students. Child protection procedures must be followed when any disclosures are made.

It is very rare for a student to request absolute confidentiality. If they do, in situations other than those involving child protection issues, staff must make a careful judgement about whether or not a third party needs to be informed. This judgement will be based upon:

- the seriousness of the situation and the degree of harm that the student may be experiencing
- The student's age, maturity and competence to make their own decisions

Where it is clear that a student would benefit from the involvement of a third party, staff should seek the consent of the student to do so. If appropriate, staff might inform the third party together with the student. Unless clearly inappropriate, students will always be encouraged to talk to their Parent/Carer.

Staff will be given regular opportunities to develop their thinking and skills in delivery of drug education through regular updates.

## **PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING AND REPORTING INCIDENTS**

**This applies on school premises, off site with any of our students whilst representing The Wensleydale School and Sixth Form during work experience, off site courses, or on trips or visits.**

A suspected drug related incident is described as:

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Suspect drugs found on the school premises

A student suspected of being in possession of drugs  
A student found to be in possession of drugs

A student is suspected of being under the influence of drugs

When an incident occurs the member of staff involved should:

Make the situation safe

Send for support.

Administer first aid if necessary

If an illegal drug is found it should be secured in a safe place until dealt with by the Police

Report the incident to the Designated Senior Lead (DSL), (Mrs Brosnan) or the Headteacher

The incident will, in the first instance, be reported to a senior teacher and then to the Head teacher. The Parents/Carers of the students(s) concerned will also be contacted and made aware of the situation. The incident will be recorded by the teacher involved and by a senior teacher and a copy will be retained for the school's confidential file. The Governors will also be informed.

The school has a zero tolerance approach to drugs. If a student is found in possession of drugs, using drugs, or dealing drugs in school, in school uniform and/or on the way to and from school, whilst representing the school at any event or location where the school can be identified or on the premises, the Headteacher will permanently exclude the student concerned and notify the Police.

Senior staff are permitted to search students' clothing or possessions if there is sufficient suspicion of illegal substances. It is also acceptable to ask the students to empty pockets and school bags. Staff may search school property such as lockers.

**Date of Policy:** July 2021

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