



## Drugs and Alcohol Policy

### Ermysted's Grammar School

The Governing Body of Ermysted's Grammar School (the 'School') ratified this policy on **27 November 2025**.

#### 1. Introduction

As part of the statutory duty on schools to promote students' wellbeing, schools have a clear role to play in preventing drug misuse as part of their pastoral responsibilities. The School is committed to the health and safety of its pupils and staff and will act promptly to safeguard their well-being.

This policy has been written in light of departmental advice<sup>1</sup> and following due consultation. It is related to other school policies on **Asthma, Allergies and Anaphylaxis, Behaviour, Child Protection, Confidentiality** and **Supporting students with medical conditions** (all available from the School).

This document provides guidance to Governors, staff, parents, carers, pupils and partner agencies on:

- the School's approach to drugs and alcohol or their use for all staff, pupils, governors, parents and carers, external agencies and the community;
- how the School will reinforce and safeguard the health and safety of students and others who use the School premises;
- how students are taught about drugs, alcohol and related issues;
- how staff will manage a drug or alcohol-related issue (if it occurs on the school premises or on a school trip), with confidence and consistency and in the best interests of those involved;
- how the School will respond to instances of drug or alcohol abuse or breaches of current law and / or school rules;
- how the response to an incident involving drugs or alcohol reinforces the values and ethos of the School; and
- how the effectiveness of the drugs and alcohol education programme and the management of incidents involving illegal and other unauthorised drugs will be evaluated.

#### 2. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to the school buildings and grounds and is equally applicable to those using the site at any time, including pupils, staff, governors, adults, visitors and contractors. It covers all offsite school-organised or school-related activities and any occasions when pupils are wearing uniform or in some other way identifiable as members of the school.

A drug is defined as a medicine or other substance which has a physiological effect when ingested or otherwise introduced into the body. For the purposes of this policy, the word 'drug' could relate to any of the following substances:

- medicines
- volatile substances
- alcohol
- tobacco or nicotine based substances
- illegal (controlled) drugs<sup>2</sup>
- 'legal highs' (psychoactive substances) and other unauthorised substances

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<sup>1</sup> [DfE and ACPO drug advice](#) (DfE, 2012)

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix A

### 3. Drugs Prevention

No illegal or unauthorised drugs may be present at any activity taking place under the aegis of the School. The School does not condone the misuse of drugs and alcohol by pupils and staff, nor the illegal supply of these substances. The School actively co-operates with external agencies such as the police and health and drug agencies to deliver its commitment to drugs education and to deal with incidents of substance misuse.

Illegal or unauthorised drugs, as well as tobacco, vaping liquids, alcohol and solvents are not permitted to be brought to, sold, passed on, obtained or consumed on or off the school premises. Anyone found to be breaking this rule will face a range of sanctions, including permanent exclusion.

Medicines may be authorised to be brought on site by pupils or their parents/carers, but only by prior and recorded arrangement in accordance with our **Supporting students with medical conditions** policy.

Alcohol in sealed containers may only be brought on the premises by prior arrangement and for special functions authorised by the governors or via delegated powers. It must be stored and removed from the premises as soon as practicable after the event.

The school site is smoke-free. On extended school activities, including those off-site, adults are expected to refrain from smoking in front of pupils. Where parents or school staff use their own personal vehicle to transport children or young people, other than their own, on school related matters, the vehicle should be smoke-free for the duration of any journey to reduce the risk of damage to health through passive smoking. Equally, in similar situations, drivers should ensure that they remain unimpaired by alcohol, medication or other drugs at all times.

### 4. Drugs Education

The aims of drug education are:

- to provide accurate information;
- to increase understanding about the implications and possible consequences of use and misuse;
- to create an environment where pupils feel able to discuss drug-related issues;
- to minimise the risks that users and potential users face;
- to encourage understanding about related health and wider social issues;
- to enable pupils to identify sources of appropriate personal support; and
- to enable informed choice.

Drug education is delivered primarily through the PSHE programme but also across the wider curriculum. The programme is designed to:

- encourage pupils to gain an understanding of drugs and medicines and their role in modern society;
- dispel myths by providing clear and accurate information;
- allow pupils to explore and challenge their own and others' values and attitudes to drug use; and
- have opportunities to practise and develop their skills which enable them to make healthy and informed choices now and in later life.

Further details may be obtained from the PSHE coordinator or from the sources listed in Appendix B.

#### *Advice, information and referral*

If pupils ask for advice regarding drugs or alcohol misuse, staff will provide honest and unbiased information within the remit of this policy. Staff are aware that individual advice about a student's personal use of substances is not appropriate but that the provision of information about other sources of information/support agencies/help-lines is.

Any concerns relating to individuals will be passed to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, **Mr A Jackson**, or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads, **Ms P Hofman** and **Mr G Barrett**.

### *Confidentiality*

Staff will follow the School's policy on confidentiality issues. Students will also be made aware of the boundaries of confidentiality should they choose to make a disclosure about drug or alcohol use to a member of staff.

### *Attitudes towards harm reduction strategies*

It is not recommended that the safer use of illegal substances be dealt with as part of the School's general teaching programme although this might be touched upon in the curriculum relating to e.g. transmission of disease. However, this may be a strategy used by some outside agencies, to which students may be referred if found to be already experimenting. It may be appropriate for outside agencies to use this approach with the school with smaller groups who have clearly identified needs.

### *Parental awareness*

The School acknowledges that it will gain more support from parents around drug and alcohol education if parents are kept informed of what issues are covered in drug and alcohol education and are provided with appropriate information on drugs, the misuse of alcohol and sources of help and support. The School will make this information available as and when it believes appropriate.

The School is not required to inform parents before a search takes place, or to seek their consent to search a pupil. Although there is no legal obligation to do so, the School would normally inform parents where alcohol, illegal drugs or potentially harmful substances are found, unless there are reasonable grounds to believe that doing so would place the pupil at risk of harm.

## 5. Managing people under the influence of alcohol or drugs

Irrespective of the nature of the incident, the School will exercise its duty of care regarding anyone involved in the use of drugs, alcohol or other substances and will act in such a way as to ensure their health and well-being.

Where there is a perceived risk to others in school, all reasonable steps will be taken to reduce this threat. This may include reasonable restraint, contacting the police or other appropriate measures.

The school will offer support and guidance to students and to others where their behaviour is detrimental to themselves or the care of others. This may include referral to outside agencies that can provide suitable care, guidance and support.

## 6. Investigating drug- or alcohol-related incidents

Drugs or alcohol-related incidents can generally be placed into one of three categories:

- rumours of use or dealing on or off the School premises;
- actual use or dealing on or off the School premises, possibly requiring a first aid response;
- disclosures of personal or others' use from a student or parent and requests for help and support.

If there is any evidence or suspicion that there is unauthorised pupil involvement with legal or illegal drugs (possession, using, supplying or intending to supply), then further investigation may be necessary. Responsibility for initiating any further investigations rests with the Headteacher, who may delegate the investigation to a senior member of staff.

Every effort will be made to ensure that investigations are conducted fairly and with as much openness towards the affected pupil as the circumstances may reasonably allow. In such cases, careful written records will be made by the Headteacher or senior member of staff investigating. The Headteacher will be kept fully informed.

### *Searching and confiscation*

The Headteacher and members of staff so authorised by the Headteacher have the statutory power to search pupils or their possessions without consent, where they have reasonable grounds for suspecting that the pupil may have a 'prohibited item' (see the **Behaviour Policy** for details).

When searching for, or taking temporary possession and disposing of, suspected controlled drugs, the School aims to:

- ensure that a second 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. Where staff are unsure as to the legal status of a substance and have reason to believe it may be a controlled drug, they should treat it as such;
- store the sample in a secure location, such as a safe or other lockable container with access limited to senior members of staff;
- notify the police, who will advise of further action, unless there is a good reason not to. The government's guidance for schools on drugs<sup>3</sup> states that in determining what is a 'good reason' for not delivering controlled drugs to the police, the member of staff should consider all relevant circumstances and use their professional judgement to determine whether they can safely dispose of a seized item. The law does not require a school to divulge to the police the name of the pupil(s) from whom the drugs were taken but it is advisable to do so.
- inform parents/carers, unless this is not in the best interests of the pupil(s); and
- record full details of the incident, including the police incident reference number, if necessary.

The following must also be borne in mind:

- There is no legal requirement to make or keep a record of a search;
- Schools' general power to discipline, as set out in Section 91 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, enables a member of staff to confiscate, retain or dispose of a pupil's property as a disciplinary penalty, where it is reasonable to do so;
- Any substance suspected of being a drug may be confiscated. Should staff come into possession of an illicit substance, with a view to ensuring its disposal, they have a legal exemption as an appropriate adult under section 5 of The Misuse of Drugs Act to do so without compromising their position.

### *7. Responding to drug- or alcohol-related incidents*

Drug incidents will be dealt with fairly with the well-being, health and safety of the whole school community being paramount, as well as acknowledging the pastoral needs of an individual pupil. Responses will vary according to the circumstances. Each incident will be considered individually, and actions will follow the school's Behaviour Policy. Procedures will be consistently applied but will also take account of the circumstances of the individual case.

DfE guidance states that schools have no legal obligation to report an incident to the police. However, it is highly likely that the police will be involved in the investigation of any incident involving the use or suspected use of illegal drugs. The police will be involved when the incident concerns allegations of the supply of illegal drugs. Decisions on whether incidents are reported to the police will be made by the Headteacher.

Suspension is a possible response to a drug or alcohol incident but would always be considered alongside the provision of support for the student in addressing a possible drug or alcohol problem. Permanent exclusion will be considered in serious cases and in all cases where a student has been involved in supplying drugs to others. All incidents relating to alcohol or drug use will be recorded, including details of the incident and actions taken; this information will be logged on the student's file.

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<sup>3</sup> [DfE and ACPO drug advice](#) (DfE, 2012)

#### 8. Policy evaluation and review

The implementation of this policy will be monitored and evaluated by the Governing Body. The governor designated with responsibility for drugs education is **Dr S Humphrey**.

The policy will be reviewed every three years, or whenever there is a significant change in national guidance on the handling of alcohol and/or illegal drugs in schools.

## Appendix A: Drug Classifications

The main pieces of legislation controlling drugs use are the Medicines Act (1968), the Misuse of Drugs Act (1971; amended 2004) and the Psychoactive Substances Act (2016).

The Misuse of Drugs Act (MDA) divides drugs into three classes as below<sup>4</sup>. Class A drugs are treated by the law as the most dangerous.

- **Class A:** These include cocaine and crack, ecstasy, heroin, LSD, methadone, methamphetamine (crystal meth), fresh and prepared magic mushrooms.
- **Class B:** These include amphetamine (not methamphetamine), barbiturates, codeine, ketamine, synthetic cannabinoids such as Spice and cannabis. All cathinone derivatives, including mephedrone, methylone, methadone and MDPV were brought under control as Class B substances in 2010.
- **Class C:** These include anabolic steroids, minor tranquillisers or benzodiazepines, GBL and GHB, khat and BZP.

Offences under the Misuse of Drugs Act can include:

- Possession of a controlled drug.
- Possession with intent to supply another person.
- Production, cultivation or manufacture of controlled drugs.
- Supplying another person with a controlled drug.
- Offering to supply another person with a controlled drug.
- Import or export of controlled drugs.
- Allowing premises you occupy or manage to be used for the consumption of certain controlled drugs (smoking of cannabis or opium but not use of other controlled drugs) or supply or production of any controlled drug.
- Certain controlled drugs such as amphetamines, barbiturates, methadone, minor tranquillisers and occasionally heroin can be obtained through a legitimate doctor's prescription. In such cases their possession is not illegal.

Maximum penalties under the Misuse of Drugs Act:

	<b>Drug class</b>	<b>Possession</b>	<b>Supply</b>
•	Class A	7 years + fine	Life + fine
•	Class B	5 years + fine	14 years + fine
•	Class C	2 years + fine	14 years + fine

### Psychoactive Substances Act 2016

The Psychoactive Substances Act received Royal Assent on 28 January 2016. The act applies across the UK and came into force on 26 May 2016. The act makes it an offence to produce, supply, offer to supply, possess with intent to supply, possess on custodial premises, import or export psychoactive substances; that is, any substance intended for human consumption that is capable of producing a psychoactive effect. The maximum sentence will be 7 years' imprisonment.

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<sup>4</sup> Drugs penalties (<https://www.gov.uk/penalties-drug-possession-dealing>)

## Appendix B: Useful Organisations

**Addaction** is one of the UK's largest specialist drug and alcohol treatment charities. As well as adult services, they provide services specifically tailored to the needs of young people and their parents. The Skills for Life project supports young people with drug misusing parents.

Website: [www.addaction.org.uk](http://www.addaction.org.uk)

**ADFAM** offers information to families of drug and alcohol users, and the website has a database of local family support services. Tel: 020 7553 7640

Email: [admin@adfam.org.uk](mailto:admin@adfam.org.uk)

Website: [www.adfam.org.uk](http://www.adfam.org.uk)

**Alcohol Concern** works to reduce the incidence and costs of alcohol-related harm and to increase the range and quality of services available to people with alcohol-related problems Tel: 020 7264 0510.

Email: [contact@alcoholconcern.org.uk](mailto:contact@alcoholconcern.org.uk)

Website: [www.alcoholconcern.org.uk](http://www.alcoholconcern.org.uk)

**ASH** (Action on Smoking and Health) A campaigning public health charity aiming to reduce the health problems caused by tobacco. Tel: 020 7739 5902

Email: [enquiries@ash.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@ash.org.uk)

Website: [www.ash.org.uk](http://www.ash.org.uk)

**Children's Legal Centre** operates a free and confidential legal advice and information service covering all aspects of law and policy affecting children and young people. Tel: 01206 877910

Email: [clc@essex.ac.uk](mailto:clc@essex.ac.uk)

Website: [www.childrenslegalcentre.com](http://www.childrenslegalcentre.com)

**Children's Rights Alliance for England** - A charity working to improve the lives and status of all children in England through the fullest implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Email: [info@crae.org.uk](mailto:info@crae.org.uk)

Website: [www.crae.org.uk](http://www.crae.org.uk)

**Drinkaware** - An independent charity that promotes responsible drinking through innovative ways to challenge the national drinking culture, helping reduce alcohol misuse and minimise alcohol related harm. Tel: 020 7307 7450

Website: [www.drinkaware.co.uk/](http://www.drinkaware.co.uk/)

**Drinkline** - A free and confidential helpline for anyone who is concerned about their own or someone else's drinking. Tel: 0800 917 8282 (lines are open 24 hours a day)

**Drug Education Forum** – this website contains several useful papers and briefing sheets for use by practitioners:

Website: [www.drugeducationforum.com/](http://www.drugeducationforum.com/)

**DrugScope** is a centre of expertise on illegal drugs, aiming to inform policy development and reduce drug-related risk. The website includes detailed drug information and access to the Information and Library Service. DrugScope also hosts the Drug Education Practitioners Forum. Tel: 020 7520 7550

Email: [info@drugscope.org.uk](mailto:info@drugscope.org.uk)

Website: [www.drugscope.org.uk](http://www.drugscope.org.uk)

**FRANK** is the national drugs awareness campaign aiming to raise awareness amongst young people of the risks of illegal drugs, and to provide information and advice. It also provides support to parents/carers, helping to give them the skills and confidence to communicate with their children about drugs. Helpline: 0800 776600

Email: [frank@talktofrank.com](mailto:frank@talktofrank.com)

Website: [www.talktofrank.com](http://www.talktofrank.com)

**Mentor UK** is a non-government organisation with a focus on protecting the health and wellbeing of children and young people to reduce the damage that drugs can do to their lives. Tel: 020 7739 8494.

Email [admin@mentoruk.org](mailto:admin@mentoruk.org)

Website: [www.mentoruk.org.uk](http://www.mentoruk.org.uk)

**National Children's Bureau** promotes the interests and well-being of all children and young people across every aspect of their lives. Tel: 020 7843 6000

Website: [www.ncb.org.uk](http://www.ncb.org.uk)

**Family Lives** - A charity offering support and information to anyone parenting a child or teenager. It runs a free-phone helpline and courses for parents, and develops innovative projects. Tel: 0800 800 2222

Website: <http://familylives.org.uk/>

**Re-Solv** (Society for the Prevention of Solvent and Volatile Substance Abuse) A national charity providing information for teachers, other professionals, parents and young people. Tel: 01785 817885 Information line: 01785 810762

Email: [information@re-solv.org](mailto:information@re-solv.org)

Website: [www.re-solv.org](http://www.re-solv.org)

**Smokefree** - NHS Smoking Helpline: 0800 169 0 169

Website: <http://smokefree.nhs.uk>

**Stars National Initiative** offers support for anyone working with children, young people and families affected by parental drug and alcohol misuse.

Website: [www.starsnationalinitiative.org.uk](http://www.starsnationalinitiative.org.uk)

**Youth Offending Teams** – Local Youth Offending Teams are multi-agency teams and are the responsibility of the local authority, who have a statutory duty to [prevent offending by young people under the age of 18.

Website: <https://www.gov.uk/youth-offending-team>