

# St Thomas More Catholic High School



## Policy on Drug and Alcohol Education (Use and misuse of Illegal Substances)

Policy Written:

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**Adopted By Local Governing Committee:**

***04 June 2024***

## **St Thomas More Catholic High School Mission Statement**

St. Thomas More Catholic High School is a Catholic school, and as such we strive to follow the example of Jesus Christ in our work, worship and relationships.

### **Our aims are:**

- To be a community based on Christian values, notably Love, Justice, Peace, Truth and Tolerance, and to encourage individuals in their commitment to these ideals.
- To provide a secure, welcoming and ordered environment in which individuals learn to value and respect both themselves and others.
- To give individuals the opportunities to develop their full potential as human beings, and to encourage and challenge them to do so.
- To encourage everyone to strive to do their best and to strive for the highest standards in all areas of activity. To help children grow into confident, open, resourceful young people with a sense of responsibility and of service.

## **Aims of the Policy**

St Thomas More Catholic High School is committed to the health and safety of all its students and will take action to safeguard their wellbeing and believes that as part of the care and welfare of its students it has a duty to:

- Increase students' knowledge and understanding about drugs and alcohol and to clarify their misconceptions.
- Develop students' personal and social skills to enable them to make informed decisions and keep themselves safe and healthy.
- Enable students to explore their own and other people's attitude towards drugs, drug use and drug users.
- Ensure the safety of staff and students when on school site or when on any school trip or visit, residential or otherwise.
- Develop students' understanding of rules and laws
- Raise students' self-esteem and self-awareness
- Explore risks and consequences of their own and others' actions relating to drugs and alcohol
- To enhance young people's decision-making skills more generally, using drug and alcohol education as a vehicle.
- To enable any students who are misusing drugs/ alcohol or who have concerns about the misuse of drugs/ alcohol to seek help.
- To provide up to date, accurate information and to keep in touch with the local picture
- To encourage a Christian understanding for those who experience or are likely to experience substance abuse or its effects.

This policy applies to students, staff, visitors, parents/ carers and partner agencies. It applies on the school premises, during educational visits including residential ones, to students educated offsite and on public/school transport to and from school.

## **Drugs and Alcohol Education.**

The school takes a proactive position on matters relating to the pastoral welfare of its students. In PSHE, which includes Drugs Education, we seek to educate young people towards a healthy lifestyle. This is done by:

- Offering a regularly reviewed and revised programme of teaching
- Creating a community atmosphere which encourages a safe and healthy lifestyle.
- Training and updating staff on a regular basis
- Teaching about substance misuse at an appropriate level in every year group.

## **Sanctions**

The possession, use or supply of illegal drugs/alcohol in the school context, which is defined as on school premises or during any school activity, is totally forbidden. Any such instance will be viewed as an extremely serious disciplinary matter. The governors believe it is essential that parents/ carers and students are clear at the outset about the normal sanction that will be applied in particular instances, as follows: a student who supplies any drugs or other solvents (whether legal or illegal and regardless of the seriousness of the use) on the school premises will be at risk of permanent exclusion for a first offence.

All substance related incidents will be treated as serious breaches of the school's behaviour policy and therefore either suspension or permanent exclusion will be considered as a suitable response. A second offence of being in possession of/ using drugs or alcohol on the school premises (or during any school activity) is likely to result in a permanent exclusion.

Parents/carers should be aware that any concerns or information gathered that their child is using, supplying or bringing any form of illegal substance or any form of drugs' paraphernalia onto the school premises/site, may be shared with the police in the interest of protecting not only the student involved, but every member of the School community.

In working closely with the Local Authority and the Police, the school will allow the police drugs' dogs onto the school site for random or targeted searches.

Definitions of what the school considers to be drugs and alcohol:

- Illegal drugs
- Novel Psychoactive Substances (so called 'legal highs') which includes a vaporizing (vape) device containing cannabis concentrates.
- Volatile Substances
- Alcohol
- Tobacco
- Prescription medication taken by someone for whom it has not been prescribed or which has been taken in a way that does not comply with the school's Supporting Pupils With Medication Policy.
- Paraphernalia associated with any of the above.

## **School procedures to deal with drug and alcohol related incidents.**

### **Procedure for Staff**

In all suspected cases, ensure the health & safety of students concerned as a priority and seek medical advice where necessary from first aider/school health advisor/paramedics.

If you suspect that a student is involved in substance misuse or possession on the premises you should inform a Head of Year or Leadership Team member immediately. If you are

teaching a lesson, use the school's on-call system without delay and a member of the Leadership/Pastoral Team will immediately come to support. Do not personally investigate this concern. Supervise and monitor the student, not allowing contact with other students, until support arrives.

### Procedure for Pastoral and Leadership Team Staff

In the event of an incident involving substance misuse or supply in school we will follow the procedures outlined in the DfE and ACPO drug advice for school publication September 2012.

- The incident will be initially dealt with (and procedures outlined below implemented) by a Head of Year or member of the Leadership Team in school.
- The Deputy Headteacher, Senior Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral) or Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral) will normally inform parents/ carers at the earliest opportunity.
- After discussion with parents/ carers, governors, pastoral staff and, where necessary, Police, the Headteacher will decide upon action to be taken. The interests of the student(s) involved will be balanced against the interests of other school members and the local community.
- The Headteacher reserves the right to exclude any students who bring drugs or alcohol into school, have them on their person, consume them, are under the influence of them or hand them out before, during or after the school day, including during school visits.

### Student Presenting Intoxicated on School Premises - Alcohol/Volatile Substances (Substances not controlled under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, therefore proactive police involvement would not ordinarily be needed)

- If medical emergency: call for medical assistance/ambulance, follow first aid procedures until help arrives.
- If not a medical emergency: keep student calm and under observation.
- Contact parent/ carer on health and safety grounds, and request student's removal if necessary.
- If student displays threatening or disorderly behaviour and Police support is needed, ring 101 or 999 depending on the level of threat.
- Complete a school nurse referral.
- Apply behaviour policy sanctions as appropriate.

### Student Presenting Intoxicated on School Premises – Drugs

- If medical emergency: call for medical assistance/ambulance, follow first aid procedures until help arrives.
- If not a medical emergency: keep student calm and under observation.
- Contact parent/ carer on health and safety grounds, and request student's removal if necessary.
- If student displays threatening or disorderly behaviour and Police support is needed, ring 101 or 999 depending on the level of threat.
- Contact Police, who will support school in any further action regarding the legal aspect.
- Complete a school nurse referral.
- Apply behaviour policy sanctions as appropriate.

#### Student suspected of involvement in drug incident on school premises

- Contact Police, who will collect information and support school in communicating with student(s) and families.
- Coordinate any in-school follow up with Police, who should keep school involved regarding any further investigation or criminal proceedings.
- Complete a school nurse referral.
- Apply behaviour policy sanctions as appropriate.

#### Students suspected of involvement in drug incidents off school premises but during school day

- Contact Police, who will collect information.
- Do not contact parent/ carer without consulting Police. Police will liaise, where appropriate, and support schools in communicating with student(s) and families.
- Coordinate any in-school follow up with Police, who should keep school involved regarding any further investigation or criminal proceedings.
- Complete school nurse referral.
- Apply behaviour policy sanctions as appropriate.

#### Student found in possession of alcohol or tobacco on school premises, on school trip or in vicinity of school, including journey to and from school

- Respond to any health and wellbeing issues (see medical advice above).
- Inform parent/ carer.
- Confiscate and dispose of appropriately within health and safety policy in school.
- Apply behaviour policy sanctions as appropriate.

- Remind the students concerned they may speak to the school nurse in confidence using the text referral service.

Student found in possession of a suspected drug on school premises, on school trip or in vicinity of school, including journey to and from school

- Respond to any health and wellbeing issues (see medical advice above).
- Where at all possible, take possession of the drug involved.
- Secure the drug as evidence.
- **Police action required due to potential criminal offence.**
- Contact Police on 101 to create incident report.
- Police will attend and secure evidence.
- Any arrest should take place off school premises in presence of parent or carer (unless the Officer in Charge is aware of other factors, which would require an on the spot arrest).
- Seek cooperation from student to remain on school premises (if they refuse, update police on 101 using incident number).
- If on a school visit and in a different authority or country be aware that differences may exist in how forces respond.
- Do not contact parent/ carer without consulting Police. Police will liaise, where appropriate, and support schools in communicating with student(s) and families.
- Police should remain in contact with the school and inform of outcome of the criminal proceedings.
- Complete school nurse referral.
- Apply behaviour policy sanctions as appropriate.

Student found supplying suspected illegal drug on school premises

- Where at all possible, take possession of the drug and any monies involved.
- Secure the drug as evidence.
- **Police action required due to potential criminal offence.**
- Contact Police on 101 to create incident report.
- If on a school visit and in a different authority or country be aware that differences may exist in how forces respond.
- Any arrest may take place on school premises due to the nature of the offence and to preserve any evidence during the investigation.
- Seek cooperation from student to remain on school premises (if they refuse, update police on 101 using incident number).
- Do not contact parent/ carer unless Officer in Charge requests.
- Police should remain in contact with the school and inform of outcome of the criminal proceedings.

- Complete school nurse referral.
- Apply behaviour policy sanctions as appropriate.

### Staff member or visitor suspected of involved in drug incident on school premises

- The Law around legal and illegal drugs also applies to all school staff and visitors, including parents/ carers.
- Apply protocols as above. For further support contact Police.

### **The use of outside agencies**

The school actively co-operates with outside agencies such as Community Police, Social Services and young people's support agencies (e.g. PROPS, Clennell Education Solutions) to support and enhance its teaching programme and to support its dealing with drug and alcohol related incidents.

### **Confiscation of property**

The School reserves its right to confiscate, retain or dispose of a student's property (i.e. an item which poses a threat to others/an item which poses a threat to good order for learning/an item against the School's uniform rules/an item which poses a health or safety threat/illegal items). Records of confiscated items will be kept and items will be stored safely and returned to the student and or parent/carer as appropriate – normally at the end of the school day. However, illegal items will be handed over to the police.

### **Searching students**

School staff can search students with their consent for any item. The Head Teacher and authorised staff (Deputy Headteacher, Senior Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral), Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral), Head of Year, Assistant Head of Year) have a 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. Prohibited items are items identified as such in current DfE guidance. ['Searching, Screening, and Confiscation – Advice for schools' DfE July 2022]

At present the "prohibited items" are:

- knives and weapons
- alcohol
- illegal drugs
- stolen items



- tobacco and cigarette papers
- fireworks
- pornographic images
- any article that the member of staff reasonably suspects has been, or is likely to be, used to commit an offence, cause personal injury or damage the property of any person [including the pupil].

Note – school staff will also search pupils who are thought to be in possession of e-cigarettes and vapes as both are considered by the school to be prohibited items (see School Behaviour for Learning and Discipline Policy)

The Headteacher and authorised staff can use such force as is reasonable given the circumstances to conduct a search for these "prohibited items". If the student refuses to cooperate with a search without consent for "prohibited items" they may be referred to the police and/or an appropriate sanction in line with the school's behaviour policy can be applied. A second staff member must be present at all times when such a search is conducted and one of the searchers should be of the same gender as the student whenever possible. Mobile devices can be searched by the Headteacher and authorised staff if content is thought to be inappropriate.

A search must be limited in extent to:

- the removal of and search of outer clothing only i.e. any clothing worn otherwise than wholly next to the skin or immediately over underwear e.g. coat or blazer.
- a student's possessions i.e. goods over which he or she has or appears to have control including bags.
- A search may be conducted on the school site or elsewhere when the student is under the lawful control of the school.
- Safety must be paramount and if the degree of danger/threat posed by a search is unacceptable to a member of staff, then the police should be called.

Prohibited or forbidden items found as a consequence of a search may be confiscated, retained, disposed of or destroyed in line with current DfE guidance . ['Searching, Screening, and Confiscation – Advice for schools' DfE July 2022]

## **Confidentiality**

Where a student is being questioned by a member of staff regarding a suspected drug related incident, no guarantee of confidentiality can be given. This should be made clear to the student at the outset of the conversation.

Information regarding a student's involvement in a drug-related incident may be pertinent to other agencies involved in the student's care e.g. Youth Offending Team, Looked After

Children Team (HIVE). Such information should be shared with according sensitivity and on a need to know basis.

### **Related Policies**

The following related policies are also available on the school website [www.stmacademy.org.uk](http://www.stmacademy.org.uk)

- Health and Safety Policy
- No Smoking Policy
- Behaviour and Discipline Policy