



# **Watling Academy**

## **Drugs Policy**

### **May 2025**

# 1. Rationale

At Watling Academy, we are committed to fostering a nurturing and supportive educational environment where every student can thrive both academically and personally. We recognise that part of our responsibility is to educate our students about the risks and consequences associated with drug use, empowering them to make informed and responsible choices throughout their lives.

Understanding the impact of drugs on physical, emotional, and mental health is crucial. We aim to equip our students with the knowledge and skills to resist peer pressure, make decisions that reflect their values, and understand the legal implications of drug use. Our proactive approach includes comprehensive education on the dangers of illegal and unauthorised drugs, emphasising the benefits of a healthy lifestyle.

We prioritize the health and well-being of our students above all. Therefore, Watling Academy maintains a strict no-drug policy both in school and at any event where students represent our school. By promoting positive behaviours such as respect for one's own body, self-control, and mutual respect among peers, we reinforce a school culture that supports all students in making choices that lead to healthy and productive lives.

# 2. Aims of Policy

- 2.1 Clarify the legal requirements and responsibilities of the school.
- 2.2 Reinforce and safeguard the health and safety of students and others who use the school
- 2.3 Clarify the school's approach to drugs for all staff, students, governors, parents/carers external agencies and the wider community
- 2.4 Give guidance on developing, implementing and monitoring the drug education programme
- 2.5 Enable staff to manage drugs on the school premises, and any incidents that occur, with confidence and consistency, and in the best interests of those involved
- 2.6 Ensure that the response to incidents involving drugs complements the overall approach to drug education and the values and ethos of the school.
- 2.7 Respond appropriately, considering the individual case and circumstances
- 2.8 Provide a basis for evaluating the effectiveness of the school's Drug Education Programme and the management of incidents involving illegal and other unauthorised drugs
- 2.9 Reinforce the role of the school in contributing to local and national strategies
- 2.10 Support the mental health of students dealing with drug issues.

# 3. Definition of a Drug

A drug is a substance that affects the way in which the body functions physically, emotionally or mentally. For purposes of this policy, by 'drugs' we are referring to illegal substances and also, legal substances such as alcohol, tobacco, volatile substances, over the counter or prescription medicines and new psychoactive substances. By Drugs Paraphernalia we mean items such as cannabis grinders, rolling papers, filters, matches, lighters and pipes etc.

## 4. Boundaries

The possession or use of prohibited substances on Watling Academy's site is absolutely forbidden.

The

"School site" (as defined) will apply in the following situations:

- 4.1** All school grounds, inside and outside the school designated buildings.
- 4.2** Other designated premises, if students are part educated at partner institutions.
- 4.3** Educational trips and journeys (residential and non-residential).
- 4.4** Work experience placements.
- 4.5** Journeys to and from the school (where the school has a duty of care and responsibility).

## 5. Drugs on School Premises

### 5.1 Medicines

All medicines that students may need to take during the school day must be given to our onsite first aider. In instances in which a student needs to keep their medication with them such as inhalers and epipens, our lead first aider will speak with students about this.

### 5.2 Alcohol

No alcohol may be brought on to school premises or consumed during the course of a school day. Any adult (or staff, students, parents, carers and visitors) under the effects of alcohol will be asked to leave the premises and return at a later date for the safety of the whole school. Parents will be asked to collect their children from the school and will be encouraged to seek immediate medical support.

### 5.3 Smoking and Vaping

School premises are a no smoking site at all times. Students are not permitted to bring to school smoking materials, including matches and lighters. In the interests of health and safety, should a student be found in possession of any of these on school premises, they will be confiscated and parents informed.

We recognise the evolution of vaping products, including disposable vapes and devices designed to look like everyday objects (e.g., USB sticks, pens, or cosmetics). The use or possession of any such devices containing nicotine or other substances (including THC) is strictly prohibited and will be treated as a serious breach of the Drugs Policy. Vaping equipment will be subject to the same search, confiscation and sanction processes as other prohibited items.

Smoking on or within 200m of the school premises will result in a serious consequence. This also applies to 'vaping' and the use of electronic cigarettes.

### 5.4 Illegal drugs

No illegal drugs, new psychoactive substances or drugs paraphernalia are allowed to be brought on to or used on school premises. Bringing any such items onto school premises is considered a serious breach of this drugs policy. Seeking to influence or glamorise illegal drug use or the use of psychoactive substances either in person on school premises or via social networking sites is also considered a serious breach of this drugs policy.

## 5.5 Solvents

The school will ensure that potentially hazardous substances it authorises are stored safely, and students will be supervised if it is necessary that they come into contact with them in the course of their work. Students are not permitted to be in possession of solvents. Bringing solvents or hazardous substances onto school premises is considered a serious breach of this drugs policy.

# 6. Response to drug related incidents

## 6.1 A drug incident may be any of the following:

- 6.1.1 Finding drugs, or related paraphernalia, on school premises
- 6.1.2 Possession of drugs by any individual on school premises
- 6.1.3 Use of drugs by any individual on school premises
- 6.1.4 Supply of or intent to supply drugs on school premises
- 6.1.5 Individuals disclosing information about their drug use
- 6.1.6 Student reports of parents, staff or other students using drugs
- 6.1.7 Hiding drugs in or around the school premises for later collection (by themselves or by third parties)
- 6.1.8 Glamorising or encouraging the use of drugs and other substances
- 6.1.9 Involvement in 'county line' or gang-related drug issues
- 6.1.10 Suspected drug use or influence during school-related activities off premises, such as educational trips or sports events.
- 6.1.11 Discovery of drugs or paraphernalia in student lockers, bags, or personal belongings.

Any response to drug related incidents needs to balance the needs of the individual student concerned with the wider school community.

Exclusion from school is not an automatic response to a drug incident but permanent exclusion is considered in serious cases where:

- There is a serious breach or persistent breaches of our Drugs and/or Behaviour Policies
- Allowing a student to remain in Watling Academy would seriously harm the education, safety or welfare of the student or others in the school

A member of the SLT will (normally) be responsible for co-ordinating the management of drug-related incidents, offering sources of support and liaising with outside agencies. Incidents will be dealt with after making an assessment of the situation and will be reported to the Headteacher.

## 6.2 Drug Misuse outside the school premises

In line with the Trust's suspension and exclusion policy the school may impose sanctions on a student for misusing drugs outside schools when students are:

- taking part in any school-organised or school-related activity or
- travelling to or from school or
- in some way identifiable as a student at the school.

The school may also impose sanctions on a student for misusing drugs at any time, whether or not

the conditions above apply, if the misuse:

- would have repercussions for the orderly running of the school or
- poses a threat to another student or member of the public or
- could adversely affect the reputation of the school.

If any student or adult on school premises is found in possession of an unauthorised drug it will be confiscated, if possible. If the drug is suspected to be illegal, the school will contact a police officer for discussion and advice. Illegal substances will be handed to the police to be legally destroyed as soon as possible and not stored. Parents and Carers will be informed (unless for safeguarding reasons this is not in the best interests of the student) and other professionals such as the local authority, Young Offenders Service, Aquarius, Police, GP, Social Services will be informed or consulted as appropriate.

### **6.3 Confidentiality**

Watling Academy will always seek to work with parents and carers when information or allegations of drug use are made. There may be occasions when, for safeguarding reasons, this may not be appropriate (please refer to our Child Protection and Confidentiality policies for more information on this).

Complete confidentiality can never be promised to a student though information given in confidence will not generally be disclosed to anyone else. In particular if a student chooses to disclose that they are using a drug without medical authorisation, this information will not be used against them. However, action will be taken to try to ensure the student comes to no serious harm if this is considered a risk. Regarding disclosures staff will follow the advice given in the Child Protection policy, and at the annual safeguarding training.

### **6.4 Support for students and staff**

At our school the welfare of the student is paramount and intervention will be made if the school feels a student is showing signs which indicate particular risks of, or from, involvement with drugs, whether their own or the involvement of their parents'/carers'. We believe that early intervention, where possible, is significant. Such interventions may include:

- Support and advice in school (Counsellor, First Aid Lead, Head of Year, Pastoral Assistant, DSL, Tutor, Inclusion and Attendance Officer)
- Referral to specialist outside agencies for support, e.g. TELUS
- Working with the Police

Training and advice will also be given to staff in how to recognise and report any incidents that may involve drugs.

We aim to adopt a trauma-informed and restorative approach wherever appropriate. This includes supporting students through reintegration meetings, offering opportunities to reflect and restore relationships, and understanding potential underlying causes of drug-related behaviour such as adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) or mental health difficulties. Our support strategy seeks to rebuild trust and connection, not just enforce compliance.

## Right to Search

In line with legislation (DfE Searching, Screening and confiscation, July 2022) the staff at Watling Academy reserve the right to search students if they have reason to believe that they are carrying offensive weapons, illegal substances or anything that is illegal or dangerous. Searches will be carried out by Heads of Year or members of the Senior Leadership Team and Parents and Carers will always be informed when this has happened. Searches may be made of students outer clothing, pockets, possessions and lockers.

## 7. The Aims of Drug Education

Drug education is a major component of drug prevention. Drug prevention aims to: Minimise the number of young people engaging in drug use.

- Delay the age of onset of first use; reduce the harm caused by drugs.
- Enable those who have concerns about drugs to seek help.

The aim of drug education is to provide opportunities for students 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.

Drug education is an important aspect of the curriculum at Watling. It should:

### 7.1 Increase students' knowledge and understanding and clarify misconceptions about:

- the short and long-term effects and risks of drugs
- the rules and laws relating to drugs
- the impact of drugs on individuals, families and communities
- the prevalence and acceptability of drug use among peers
- the complex moral, social, emotional and political issues surrounding drugs.

### 7.2 Develop students' personal and social skills to make informed decisions and keep themselves safe and healthy, including:

- provide the information and support for students to be able to make lifestyle choice
- draw attention to the effect that peers can have upon the decisions that we make and the need to take a considered approach to this
- enable students to develop self-awareness and realise the power they have to determine their own lives
- help students establish the difference between fact, opinion and belief.
- assessing, avoiding and managing risk
- finding information, help and advice
- devising problem-solving and coping strategies
- developing self-awareness and self-esteem.

**7.3** enable students to explore their own and other peoples' attitudes towards drugs, drug use and drug users, including challenging stereotypes, and exploring media and social influences.

## 8. Drug Education in the curriculum

Drug education is an entitlement for every student and is supported by Section 351, of the Education Act 1996 which requires every school to provide a balanced curriculum which:

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

Drug education is delivered through a well-planned Wellbeing (PSHE) provision. Watling uses the Wellbeing and the Science Curriculum for all phases as the basis for developing drug education. In addition to Wellbeing lessons, tutorials provide an effective context for drug education because they focus on developing skills and exploring attitudes as well as learning about healthy and safe lifestyles.

### 8.1 Integration Within Wellbeing

Many of the skills and attitudes developed and explored through drug education are common to other aspects of Wellbeing and mental health. For example, skills to resist pressure to use drugs are applicable to personal safety and relationship education. Links between drugs and other areas of Wellbeing, for example, emotional health and wellbeing and sex and relationship education, should also be made. This is particularly relevant to young people as their use of drugs, especially alcohol, can have an impact on their relationships and on sexual activity and sexual health.

### 8.2 Contribution of Wellbeing Education

Wellbeing lessons can contribute to drug education by, for example, providing opportunities for students to:

- Understand rules and laws and how they relate to rights and responsibilities.
- Consider different points of view.
- Explore moral, social and cultural issues.
- Discuss and debate topical issues.

Opportunities to develop these skills and discuss drug related issues arise in, amongst others, Wellbeing lessons and Tutorial sessions.

Drugs education is taught within the Wellbeing curriculum every year from year 7 to 11, going into further detail and the effects.

- Year 7 - learning about it within their Health and Puberty unit
- Year 8 – Drugs and alcohol unit
- Year 9 – Peer influence, substance use and gangs
- Year 10 – Exploring Influence unit

- Year 11 – Independence unit

## 9. Managing a Drugs related incident

Defining a drug-related incident – please refer to page 3 for what constitutes a drug-related incident.

If there are any suspicions, observations, disclosures or discoveries of situations involving illegal and other unauthorised drugs (possession, supply or imbibing):

(i) Utmost priority will be placed on safety, meeting any medical emergencies with first aid and summoning appropriate help before addressing further issues. If in doubt, medical assistance will be sought immediately.

The Headteacher or an available member of SLT will be informed of the situation immediately. Dialogue with the student(s) will be undertaken by the Headteacher or a member of SLT as soon as possible in order to determine the facts. The emphasis will be on listening to what people have to say and asking open rather than closed or leading questions. Consideration will be given to separating any students involved in the incident and ensuring that a second adult witness is present.

(ii) The Headteacher or a member of SLT will inform, consult and involve others as necessary. Careful attention will be given to respecting the confidentiality of those involved.

(iii) Where they have reasonable grounds for suspecting that a student(s) may have an illegal or unauthorised drug, they will be escorted to a senior member of staff who will make every effort to encourage the individual to hand the item(s) over voluntarily, in the presence of a second member of staff.

(iv) Staff may search school property, for example, students' lockers, if they believe drugs to be stored there. Prior consent will always be sought. Individuals will be made aware that if consent is refused the school may wish to proceed with a search.

(v) After any search involving students, parents/carers will normally be contacted by the school, regardless of whether the result of the search was positive or negative.

(vi) Any substance suspected of being a drug will be confiscated. In taking temporary possession of a suspected substance, a second adult witness will be present, the sample will be sealed in a plastic bag with details of the date, time and witness present and then locked in the security cupboard.

If the substance is suspected to be an illegal drug, the police will be notified immediately, in order that they may collect it for identification and then store or dispose of it in line with locally agreed protocols. In the majority of cases, parents will be notified immediately unless this is not in the best interests of the student.

(vii) A detailed record of the incident will be made by the Headteacher or DSL. A



copy of the record will be kept by the Headteacher and DSL. There will be no other copies of the incidents.

(viii) The school will maintain vigilance about drug-related incidents in the local community through contact with police and other relevant agencies

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## **Appendix 1: Watling Academy support and sanctions for drug-related incidents.**

### **Smoking or possession of smoking paraphernalia (including e-cigs and/or shisha pens).**

In the event of a student smoking or being in the possession of smoking paraphernalia an investigation will be conducted and a summary form presented to the Headteacher. Mitigating factors may be taken into consideration but the standard sanction is likely to be suspension from school. Additional support may be provided on the students return, this may include sharing of supportive information or mentoring from the school Health and Wellbeing lead.

### **Alcohol**

In the event of a student being under the influence or being in the possession of alcohol an investigation will be conducted and a summary form presented to the Headteacher. Mitigating factors may be taken into consideration but the standard sanction is likely to be suspension from school. Additional support may be provided on the students return, this may include sharing of supportive information or mentoring from the school Health and Wellbeing lead.

### **Illegal Drugs (including legal highs such as NPS)**

In the event of a student being under the influence or being in the possession of drugs an investigation will be conducted and a summary form presented to the Headteacher. Consideration will be given to the class of drug and quantity the student has. The sanction range is likely to range from suspension to permanent exclusion. Additional support may be provided on the students return, this may include sharing of supportive information, the involvement of external agencies or mentoring from the school Health and Wellbeing lead. Police involvement will be sought by the school.

## **Multiple incidents**

Should a student continue to be under the influence of smoking or possession of smoking paraphernalia, alcohol or illegal drugs then previous suspensions will be taken in to account and a longer suspension or permanent exclusion considered. The school will continue to work with the student and their parents / carers to ensure they receive the support they need.

## **Supply**

In the event of a student supplying smoking paraphernalia or alcohol then an investigation will be conducted, and a summary form presented to the Headteacher. Mitigating factors may be taken into consideration but the standard sanction is likely to be suspension from the school. Should the student continue to supply these items then they are at risk of permanent exclusion and the Police may be involved.

Should a student supply illegal drugs (including 'legal highs') an investigation will be conducted, and a summary form presented to the Headteacher. The sanction range for supplying will range from suspension to permanent exclusion, the Police will be contacted. Consideration of the class of drug, the quantity involved and if it was a first offence will form the basis of any decision. It is important to note, a first-time offence could result in a permanent exclusion.

## **Reintegration**

Any student returning to the school after a suspension will have a re-integration meeting with the Head of year and/or Assistant/Deputy Headteacher, parents / carers. The meeting will focus on how to support the student best and may include further interventions.