

Earlscliffe (Sussex Summer Schools Ltd)

MISUSE OF DRUGS POLICY (INCLUDING DRUGS TESTING POLICY)

In accordance with its aims, the school seeks to safeguard and promote the welfare of its pupils. Pupils are encouraged to take care of themselves and to take account of the needs of others and the common good. The school is committed to promoting a healthy, safe environment, in which good citizenship and respect for the law can flourish. The school believes that it is important to deliver a clear, consistent moral framework that promotes the integrity of the community, and gives the pupils the understanding and self-confidence to reject illegal drugs and substances. Some staff will have been trained in recognising and responding to the symptoms of drug and substance abuse. The school seeks to protect the health and safety of its members and condones neither the misuse of drugs by members of the school nor the illegal supply of these substances, and appropriate action will be taken against anyone guilty of either misuse or illegal supply. In this context, illegal drugs include cannabis, amphetamines, ecstasy, cocaine, heroin and any other illegal substance, the taking or possession of which constitutes a criminal act in the eyes of the law. The word "drug" is understood to indicate any animal, mineral, vegetable OR so-called 'legal high' product that produces an intoxicating or hallucinating effect.

Amyl nitrite ('poppers') is controlled under the Medicines Act, which means that it is classed as a medicine and so only licensed shops like chemists should sell it. However, retailers get round this by selling the nitrites as room deodorizers rather than inhalants. Earlscliffe does not allow students to possess, use or share nitrites.

The school is aware that it is an offence under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971:

- (a) to supply or offer to supply a controlled drug to another in contravention of the Act
- (b) to be in possession of, or to possess with the intent to supply to another, a controlled drug in contravention of the Act
- (c) knowingly to allow premises to be used for the consumption of some prohibited substance

The school notes that increasing numbers of young people use and misuse drugs, but the School also recognises that larger numbers of young people choose not to use or misuse drugs. Drugs education is part of the Health Education programme and is delivered particularly through PHSE.

- pupils are taught that drugs can be both beneficial and dangerous, and pupils are introduced to basic safety rules;
- pupils are taught about over-the-counter, prescribed, legal and illegal substances, including so-called 'legal highs' and their effects;
- pupils are taught how to make simple choices and exercise basic techniques for resisting peer pressure;
- pupils learn of the benefits which drugs can play in society;

- pupils are helped to a growing awareness of personal responsibility and a deeper knowledge of legal and illegal substances;
- pupils are taught strategies for dealing with situations involving drugs and drug abuse
- pupils are helped to widen and deepen their understanding of health and social issues;
- pupils study the role of the media in influencing attitudes to substance abuse;
- pupils are helped to develop further their awareness of their responsibility for themselves and others.

The school has effective links with the local schools police liaison officer who visits the school annually to speak to both pupils and staff. The school also has links with the Health Education Unit which loans appropriate resources. Concerning confidentiality, pupils should be aware that, although many matters may be discussed in confidence with the appropriate member of staff, information may sometimes need to be forwarded, for example, allegations of any act in contravention of the law. Drugs education, as part of the Health Education programme, is co-ordinated by the Head of Pastoral Care who monitors and evaluates the programme with pupils. Any changes to the drugs education programme are discussed and agreed at the annual policy review.

Education Programme

The School's PSHE programmes focus upon the potential short-term and long-term risks to health from substance abuse. As with the related programmes concerning alcohol and tobacco, the programmes are focused on teaching the importance of young people making healthy, informed choices. They also include an ethical dimension, designed to instil an understanding of wider issues including the importance of complying with the criminal law. The programmes involve all pupils.

Support

If a pupil comes forward and voluntarily identifies him/herself as a drug user and asks for help, or if her/his parents or friends ask for help on her/his behalf, we may, depending upon the circumstances and at the discretion of the Head Teacher, offer her/him the opportunity to reform her/his habit with the support of a drug testing programme and counselling at the parents' expense.

Drug testing is conducted by the Head Teacher or other senior managers in conjunction with the School Nurse. Full details of arrangements will be sent to the parent or guardian after the testing if random testing has taken place, or beforehand where appropriate. If a pupil fails his/her first drug test (so confirming usage of a banned substance), he/she may be allowed to remain at the school only on condition that she/he submits to regular drug testing throughout his/her remaining time at the school, and on the clear understanding that she/he will be expelled immediately on failure of a subsequent drug test, or if there is evidence that a sample has been tampered with in any way.

Parents and students acknowledge by signing the Application Form that the school reserves the right to carry out drug tests.

Investigation

A pupil presenting with symptoms of drug or alcohol intoxication will initially be cared for and assessed by the School Nurse or House Manager on duty, appropriate action will be taken, parents informed and the individual taken to a hospital or clinic for testing or treatment, in accordance with the severity of the situation.

We shall always investigate rumours about involvements in illegal drugs and substances, including questioning a pupil and searching her/his room and/or lockers and personal possessions. We shall inform parents and guardians as a matter of urgency and invite them into school to discuss the matter.

Sanctions

The normal sanction for possession or involvement with drugs is expulsion. Alternative sanctions, when there are mitigating circumstances, could involve suspension and a final warning. Any pupil found offering drugs to another pupil would be expelled, and the matter referred to the Police.

(See Alcohol and Tobacco Policy.)