

Presdales School



'Achievement for All'

Title	DRUGS AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE POLICY
Version	January 2026
Author/Title	Sara Miller Deputy Head Pastoral
Committee Responsible	Students Committee
Trustee Link	Maddie Waller
Date approved by Committee	February 2026
Date approved by Full Trust Body	NA
Trust Board Review Date	Spring 1: 2028
SLT Review Date	Spring 1: 2028

Enquiries & comments

Any enquiries and comments about this publication may be made to:

Telephone: 01920 462210 / **Email:** admin@presdales.herts.sch.uk

Address: Hoe Lane, Ware, Hertfordshire SG12 9NX

1. Policy Statement

The Board of Trustees and staff of Presdales School are committed to ensuring the health, safety and welfare of its staff, employees and students. The School aims to provide a healthy learning environment and to promote healthy lifestyles amongst the whole school community. As such, we do not under any circumstances condone use or supply by students, on the premises or on the way to or from school, of illegal and legal substances.

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, crackers, rolling papers, filters, matches, lighters and pipes etc. (this list is not exhaustive)

Drugs on school premises

The legal definition of school premises includes everything within the property boundaries including buildings, outbuildings, fields and also extends to include other settings such as vehicles, boats, marquees or any venue managed by the school at the time e.g. premises of a school trip or visit.

- Medicines
The school has a policy/ procedure for the administration of medicines that must be followed for everyone’s safety. We follow procedures recommended by Hertfordshire Health and Safety guidelines.
- Alcohol
Any adult (or staff, students, parents, carers and visitors) under the influence 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 remove their children from the school and will be encouraged to seek immediate medical support.
- Smoking
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, this also applies to vaping and the use of e-cigarettes they will be confiscated and parents informed, and will be sanctioned according to the Behaviour for learning policy.
- Illegal drugs and Psychoactive substances
No illegal drugs, Psychoactive substances or Drugs Paraphernalia are allowed to be brought onto, or used on school premises. Bringing any such items onto school premises is considered a serious breach of this policy. Seeking to influence or glamorise illegal drug use or the use of Psychoactive substances in person on school premises is also considered a serious breach of this drugs policy.
- 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.

2. Policy Aims

We support the following educational aims in respect of substance use and misuse.

- To provide accurate information about substances.
- To increase understanding about the implications and possible consequences of use and misuse.
- To encourage understanding for those involved in difficult situations related to substance abuse.
- To widen understanding about related health and social issues, e.g. mental health issues, HIV/AIDS, crime
- To enable young people to identify sources of appropriate personal support; to give students opportunities to develop and the ability to communicate, assert themselves and take responsible decisions; to help them to identify risks and help others, thereby enhancing their competence and self-esteem.

3. How these Aims will be Fulfilled

These aims will be fulfilled through aspects of students' experiences in the taught curriculum, the informal curriculum and through opportunities for extra-curricular activities. We deliver in the taught curriculum mainly through PSHE and Science areas, but other opportunities to reinforce learning occur in other parts of the teaching programme.

4. The Role of Outside Agencies

The School actively co-operates with other agencies such as Community Police, Social Services, LEA and Health and Drug Agencies to deliver its commitment to Drugs Education and to deal with incidents of substance use and misuse.

5. Guidance for Staff

The School will consider each substance incident individually and recognises that a variety of responses will be necessary to deal with incidents. The School will consider very carefully the implications of any action it may take. It seeks to balance the interests of the students involved, of the other school members and the local community.

Responses to drug related incidents

A drug incident may be any of the following:

- Finding drugs, or related paraphernalia, on school premises
- Possession of drugs by an individual on school premises
- Use of drugs by an individual on school premises
- Supply or "giving away" drugs on school premises
- Individuals disclosing information about their drug use
- Students reports of parents, staff or students using drugs
- Hiding drugs in or around the school premises for later collection (by themselves or third parties)
- Glamourising or encouraging the use of drugs and other substances

Students disclosing information to staff about drug abuse, whether on or off school premises should be informed that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

A teacher who suspects or is informed of a student's involvement with drugs should inform the appropriate Assistant or Deputy Head who will inform the Headteacher.

Drug Misuse outside the school premises

In line with the schools Behaviour for learning policy, the school may impose sanctions on a student for misusing drugs outside school 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:

- Could 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.

Students involved in drug use may be referred to relevant support agencies or to professional counsellors.

Staff encountering a student in an obviously distressed state should have regard primarily for the individual's or group's welfare and call for a qualified First Aider. Staff may also act according to any training in first aid which has been completed. The Police Community Support Officer may be called upon to advise the school in the case of an incident, or to have a substance forensically identified. There is no legal obligation to inform police of isolated incidents but supply or suspected supply of controlled drugs on the school premises must be reported. Police may interview students on school premises, in the presence of a responsible adult, with the Headteachers agreement and provided that efforts have been made to inform the student's parents.

In line with Department of Education guidance on the power to search, we will consider that all students have a right to expect a reasonable level of personal privacy, under Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights. Any 'interference' with this right by us will be justified and proportionate.

We will only search a student if we have good reason to, considering that, for the student, it could infringe upon their wellbeing and rights in several different ways. For example:

- Physical loss of privacy when clothes, bags, or possessions are searched
- Loss of a sense of security, if they feel they are being monitored and searched without reason
- The impact to a student's dignity or reputation if they are unduly searched or suspected of possessing prohibited items

Only the Headteacher and members of staff authorised by the Headteacher have the power to search a student for a prohibited or banned item, regardless of whether the student agrees (sections 550ZA and 550ZB of the Education Act 1996) A search can take place if

- The student agrees to the search, or
- The authorised staff member has 'reasonable grounds' to suspect that the student may have a prohibited or banned item

Under law:

- The person carrying out the search must be the same sex as the student being searched
- There must be another member of staff present as a witness to the search - they don't have to be the same sex as the student

The only exception is if:

- The searcher reasonably believes that there is a risk of serious harm being caused to a person if a search isn't carried out urgently and
- It's not reasonably practical to summon another member of staff (to carry out the search or act as a witness) within the time available

When an authorised staff member conducts a search without a witness, they should immediately report it to another member of staff, and make sure that a record is kept.

If a teacher has reasonable cause to believe that a student is in possession of an illegal substance, and the student refuses to reveal the contents of their bag or pockets, the police should be called in to take over the investigation.

Strip searches

School staff are not allowed to conduct a strip search for any student. Whilst a strip search can be carried out by the police, we would not allow this to take place on school site without a parent/carer/responsible adult consenting to the strip search and being present with the student at the time of the strip search.

The police can only carry out a strip search if they:

- Think this is necessary to remove an item related to a criminal offence, and
- Reasonably consider the student might have concealed such an item

Teachers should confiscate alcohol, any items associated with smoking including vaping, or solvents discovered in the possession of a student. They should inform the Head of Year who will normally inform parents immediately by phone or email. Graduated sanctions will be applied, as outlined in the Behaviour for learning policy.

When removing suspicious substances from unattended bags, lockers or other places, staff should obtain, as a witness, another responsible adult, ideally a member of the Senior Leadership Team. Teachers discovering suspected controlled drugs should bag the article and deposit it with a member of SLT as a matter of priority, recording the date, time, place and circumstances of the find. If possible, have the witness countersign the report.

Needles and syringes should be handled only by adults taking account of Health and Safety procedure.

On Educational Visits, staff should follow the principles outlined above with the Group Leader taking the role of the SLT member. If practicable, the Group Leader may liaise with the designated member of SLT by telephone for advice. A decision about appropriate sanctions may be deferred until the return to school; alternatively, the Group Leader may decide to send a student in clear breach of the Policy home.

Any student in possession of illegal substances and also legal substances such as: alcohol, tobacco, volatile substances, over the counter or prescription medicines and new psychoactive substances on school premises will likely be given a fixed term or permanent exclusion. Any involvement in the supply or the giving away of illegal substances, or legal highs is exceptionally serious and is likely to lead to permanent exclusion.

6. The Role of the Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- The policy and its implementation.
- Sending a student involved in an incident home or to hospital.
- Informing parents in line with LEA guidelines.
- Arranging for the disposal or collection by police of suspected controlled drugs.
- Determining sanctions according to the nature of the offence, or in appropriate cases inviting the involvement of professionally trained counsellors.

- Liaising with the media.
- Liaising with the Police and other outside agencies.

This policy will be used in conjunction with the Behaviour for Learning Policy.