



# FOREST SCHOOL

## SUBSTANCE EDUCATION AND MANAGEMENT POLICY

v1.0

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## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 This policy is intended for Governors, teachers, parents, carers, guardians and pupils. It is designed to give all parties a clear statement of the School's approach to substance education and management, its stance on the use of harmful substances by pupils at Forest School and the relationship between the School, the pupils and parents.
- 1.2 At Forest, we take any pupil's involvement with harmful or illegal substances very seriously.
- 1.3 Our school rules make it clear we have realistic expectations that pupils will not involve themselves in the use of illegal substances as part of their responsibility to themselves and others, and it is our safeguarding responsibility to all pupils to maintain that line.
- 1.4 In some cases, pupils' behaviour in relation to illegal substances will put them in territory where their place at Forest is immediately brought into question. Following an investigation, a serious sanction will ensue, and a pupil may be supported to leave the School and make a fresh start elsewhere.
- 1.5 However, we always look at incidents involving harmful or illegal substances on a case-by-case basis and, in some specific circumstances, the school may decide to follow a pastoral route.
- 1.6 This Policy will explain the circumstances in which these different approaches might be taken within Forest's framework of outstanding pastoral care.
- 1.7 This policy should be read in conjunction with:

Mental Health Policy (senior school)

School Rules

Behaviour Policy

Visitor and Site Security Policy

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Safe Handling, Searches, Contact and Restraints Policy

## 2 The Disciplinary Approach

- 2.1 The school will conduct a full investigation; however, permanent exclusion is the likely outcome in circumstances where it is established that any of the following criteria apply:
  - A. A pupil was or is in possession of harmful or illegal substances whilst at School.

- B. A pupil was or is in possession of harmful or illegal substances on the journey to and from School;
- C. A pupil was or is in possession of harmful or illegal substances whilst deemed to be under the responsibility of the School. This includes all school trips and school events.
- D. A pupil has offered (for sale or otherwise) harmful or illegal substances to other pupils – whether at School, on the journey to and from School, under the responsibility of the School or at any other time, including evenings, weekends and holidays.
- E. A pupil was or is abusing substances while at School, on the journey to and from School, or is deemed under the responsibility of the School, or in circumstances related to (G);
- F. A pupil has not co-operated honestly during an investigation into an incident involving or alleging the use/sale of substances;
- G. The pupils' conduct or actions have the potential to threaten the reputation of the School. This may include actions or conduct which takes place outside School or not in term time.

2.2 Details on the procedure for permanent exclusion can be found in the School's behaviour Policy.

2.3 Any incident in School where a pupil is suspected of involvement with harmful or illegal drugs, possession of harmful or illegal drugs or carrying materials used in substance or alcohol abuse, will be immediately investigated by the School and the parents or guardians contacted as soon as possible.

2.4 Any pupil who is found to have offered (for sale or otherwise) harmful or illegal substances to other pupils will usually be referred to the police. Criminal law treats supplying (or intending to supply) illegal drugs extremely seriously, and "dealing" includes giving drugs to friends with or without payment. Looking after drugs for someone and then giving them back can also lead to a charge of "supplying" drugs.

2.5 All cases suspected to involve substance abuse will be dealt with as a matter of urgency and will be reported to the relevant Head of Section and the Deputy Head Pastoral. The School will consider each case individually. Further deliberations will, at all times, seek to balance the interest of the pupils involved and those of the other members of the School community. When the facts of the situation are established, the parents will be given an indication whether the School expects to treat the case as a disciplinary and pastoral matter or solely as a pastoral matter, and to understand whether permanent exclusion is a possible outcome.

2.6 The School will continue to work with the pupil and his or her family to support them pastorally even if the disciplinary approach has had to be followed.

### 3 The Pastoral Approach

3.1 Under the following circumstances, the school will regard involvement with harmful or illegal drugs predominantly as a pastoral matter:

- When parents or pupils approach the School to share their concerns about, suspicions of or knowledge of their child's experimentation with alcohol abuse or drug abuse,

particularly where this is accompanied by adverse changes in their child's behaviour or motivation;

- Drug or under-age alcohol possession for personal use (and not involving the supply of drugs to others or the purchase from any member of the Forest community) when a pupil is not under the responsibility of the School, when brought to the attention of the School by the pupil involved, other concerned pupils, parents or the Police;
  - When the pupil genuinely wants the support and help of the School, in conjunction with parents and external agencies, to reject substance abuse and alter their conduct in order to fulfil the aims and ethos of the School
  - When the School judges that there is no significant threat to the reputation of the School in following the Pastoral strand of the Substance Education and Management Policy.
- 3.2 The School will also contact parents directly if a pupil's conduct or performance at School suggests that, in our experience, substance abuse or other inappropriate lifestyle choices may be undermining their prospects of remaining safe, healthy and achieving their potential, or those of other members of the Forest School community. The action of contacting parents should be seen as one among many usual, monitoring actions which are the very core of effective pastoral care. At times, we will share information with parents on a non-prejudice basis. This means that we have received some information pertaining to the use of harmful or illegal substances without irrefutable proof. We share this with parents in good faith and expect them to follow-up the matter with their child. Our experience suggests that non-prejudice sharing of information can be extremely effective in terms of early intervention. In such cases, we encourage an ongoing dialogue between the school and home.
- 3.3 Under these circumstances, the school will offer support via Tutor, Head of House and Head of Section. The Head of Section will meet with the pupil's parents and an action plan will be agreed including timeframes for review. We may recommend a referral to our Counselling service. Alternatively, we may recommend a referral to an external agency. The Medical Centre will provide additional support and liaise with medical professionals, as necessary. In rare cases, pupils may be admitted to a specialist centre. The school will continue to liaise with the education team in that setting. Furthermore, upon discharge, the school will work closely with medical professionals and the parents to re-integrate the pupil back into school life.
- 3.4 If, after significant support, the pupil's behaviour, performance and engagement deteriorates, he or she may be better supported in a different setting or, ultimately, subject to the disciplinary approach of this policy.

## 4 Substance Education

4.1 We believe that the purpose of substance education should be to give pupils the knowledge, skills and attitudes to appreciate the benefits of a healthy life-style and to relate these to their own actions now and in the future.

4.2 Substance education takes place in the following activities:

- PSHEE lessons, delivered by experienced staff members and addressing the cognitive, social and emotional factors associated with substance use;
  - Specialist lectures and presentations;
  - Parent Events
  - The Biology Department's curriculum
  - Other lessons, both within and outside the formal curriculum, in extra-curricular activities and through the School's pastoral system (e.g. tutorials and assemblies) and
- 4.3 All teaching staff are expected to be mindful of the effective management of incidents involving substance abuse, as part of their statutory duty to safeguard pupils. This includes being alert to the signs that suggest possible involvement and how to respond appropriately to pupils seeking advice and help.

### **Appendix 1**

#### **Personal Searches**

The School's Safe Handling, Searches, Contact and Restraint Policy details the statutory guidance and appropriate procedures for staff undertaking personal searches of pupils.

#### **Taking temporary possession of suspected illegal substances**

- The law permits school staff to take temporary possession of a substance suspected of being an illegal drug
- When taking temporary possession, two members of staff should be present
- Seal sample in a plastic bag (include date and time of seizure and witness present)
- The Police will be notified and arrangements will be made for them to come to school as soon as possible.
- Meanwhile, the Deputy Head Pastoral will store the item in a secure location

## Appendix 2

### Useful Contacts;

#### FRANK

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

**0300 123 6600 (helpline)**

This support agency provides confidential advice 24 hours a day to parents as well as pupils. They can give information on services in the local area including counselling and specialist clinics.

#### ADFAM

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

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

This is a charity aimed at supporting the families and friends on drug users.

#### Childline

**0800 11 11 11**

Free 24-hour helpline for children of young people in trouble or in danger

#### Families Anonymous

**0845 1200 660**

[www.famanon.org.uk](http://www.famanon.org.uk)

A global fellowship of families and friends affected by another's abuse of substances – organises a network of support groups for parents of drug users.

#### Young Minds

**0808 802 5544 (Parent helpline)**

Free confidential helpline providing information and advice for any adult with concerns about the mental health of a young person