



The purpose of this policy is to deter students from using illegal drugs or substances at any time and to prevent the abuse of legal substances. This policy reflects a clear understanding that drugs and substances can be widely available and the school therefore strives to achieve a culture which is opposed to the misuse of drugs; in order to do this, we need a partnership between home and school which requires trust, openness and communication.

For the purpose of this policy, *substance misuse* refers to any misuse of legal and illegal substances including:

- controlled drugs
- substances intended to resemble drugs
- legal drugs which can be purchased such as medication
- psychoactive substances such as 'legal highs'
- performance enhancing drugs and anabolic steroids
- products that are marketed for other uses which can be misused e.g., volatile substances

Substance misuse at any time is incompatible with membership of the community of The National Mathematics and Science College. The UK laws of the land must be observed regarding these matters, and any form of law-breaking, whenever or wherever committed, may endanger a student's place in the College. Any substance that is legal and misused, as well as any illegal substance, may be dealt with in a similar fashion. We believe that misuse of illegal and legal substances is incompatible with the working requirements of College life for all its members.

College life and our college community extends beyond the campus. Students of The National Mathematics and Science College may not use, possess or supply these substances at any time; either at College or away from College or during holiday periods when in the care of the College or otherwise representing or being associated with the College. To maintain the welfare of our community, action will be taken with any individual who misuses substances. We seek to encourage a culture, opposed to the misuse of substances, by open education, guidance, warning and disciplinary sanctions. Welfare issues are as important as issues of College discipline and involve the good of others in the community as well as of an individual member of it.

## **Implementation of the Policy**

### **Prevention through education**

Specific education for students in alcohol and drug-related issues comes via school resources, PSHE and Biology. Staff receive specific training as appropriate. Wherever possible, the College will provide general information for parents through online resources or workshops. Staff will be regularly updated on developments in substance misuse to ensure that informed observations and discussions can take place. Professional support for students and general guidance can be accessed via the pastoral team.

Support of those involved in substance misuse who remain within the school may take place in College, but there may be referrals outside of College also following the College's commitment to collaborate with appropriate outside agencies.

### **Suspicion of possession, supply or misuse and recognising the signs**

If a student is suspected of being under the influence of drugs on College premises, the student's safety and that of other people around them is the College's first priority. First Aid would be administered if needed and any appropriate support summoned. Parents, an ambulance, or the police may need to be contacted. If the student is felt to be at risk, the Safeguarding Policy will come into effect and social services may need to be contacted.

Concern may originate from anybody, but would usually go via the Houseparent, who would always make it known to the Assistant Principal or the Principal. Such concern may, where appropriate, involve parents and will result in a thorough and open-minded investigation.

If demeanour or changed patterns of work or behaviour result in reasonable concern about substance misuse which the student denies then sample tests may be carried out under appropriate conditions. Beyond changes in patterns of work or behaviour, other concerns may result in suspicion of substance misuse such as: finding certain items of equipment, unusual behaviour on a particular occasion, or information received from concerned individuals.

### **Ascertaining 'at risk' students**

The National Mathematics and Science College prioritises the welfare of all students and staff will be familiar with how to identify 'at risk' students in order to safeguard their welfare. Symptoms signifying drug association could include: mood swings; bodily changes such as weight loss; regularly going off site; changes in mental wellbeing; significant changes in academic or social behaviour patterns.

A student may be at risk if a combination of the following issues is present:

- lack of allegiance to the College;
- peer influence and acquaintances who use drugs;
- challenging classroom conduct;
- social or academic difficulties;
- difficulties in the school or home environment;
- an approving outlook towards drug use.

### **Investigation into misuse**

Once it has been established that there are reasonable grounds to suspect that a student is misusing substances, the Assistant Principal will be responsible for further investigation and it may be decided that the student is required to take a test. The Assistant Principal will ensure that all investigations are carried out with as much fairness and openness towards the affected student.

Parents will, wherever possible and appropriate, be informed when a test is administered, and will be offered the opportunity to be present. The procedure may change from time to time as dictated by experience and scientific developments in the testing procedure itself. It is a requirement that urine samples will be collected then this will be done under conditions of the strictest hygiene and care, whilst maintaining the privacy and dignity of the student. The staff member conducting the test will inform the relevant persons of the result.

Failure to agree to the testing process places an impossible obstacle in the way of the College fulfilling its welfare obligations. In such an event, the test which has been missed or refused will be deemed to have been positive. If the test is proven to have been tampered with, the test will also be deemed to be positive.

Investigation may also involve searches of students' person, possessions, desks, studies or living areas, and may involve the police. Such searches will always be carried out in the presence of another member of staff, and, wherever possible, the student involved. Any interviews will be carried out with careful preparation, and with respect for the rights and needs of the students involved.

### **Authority to carry out testing**

All parents are required to give permission for such testing on a student's admission to the school.

### **Action following misuse**

If a test is positive or an admission is received from the student, then the student will become involved in a programme, which will involve both appropriate sanctions and support, and will usually include being randomly tested thereafter. A repeated positive test for illegal drugs will, under normal circumstances, almost certainly result in the student being required to leave the College.

Where it is not possible to carry out testing, due to the nature of the substance that may have been misused, but where sufficient evidence suggests misuse, the student will become involved with an appropriate programme of sanction and support.

The College is committed to working with those who make mistakes and, whenever possible, to keeping them within the community unless:

- Mistakes are repeated
- The first mistake is so serious that proper punishment leaves no possibility other than leaving the College
- if the mistake is so damaging to the individual concerned or to others that continued membership of the community poses an unacceptable risk;
- or if a mistake is part of a series of other serious disciplinary misdemeanours.

In such cases, the most caring support that can be offered is requiring that they leave the College.

It is the College's policy to inform the police of any case of serious drug abuse and to give the authorities assistance during the course of any subsequent enquiries. Unless the offence is one of dealing, or is at a significant level, or unless the drug involved is a Class A drug, it has been agreed by the College and the local police force that the police will exercise their discretion not to arrest on condition that the student concerned is willing to be interviewed for the purpose of intelligence gathering, if required. Such interviews will be conducted without a member of staff present and any evidence so gathered would be inadmissible in any subsequent criminal proceedings.

### **Investigation into suspicion of supply or possession**

The Principal and appropriate members of staff have a statutory power under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to search students or their possessions, without consent, where they have reasonable grounds for suspecting the student may have a 'prohibited item', which includes illegal drugs. College staff can seize any prohibited item found as a result of a search. They can also seize any item, however found, which they consider harmful or detrimental to College discipline (e.g. so called legal highs).

Where controlled drugs are found, these will be delivered to the police as soon as possible, but may be disposed of if the person thinks there is a good reason to do so. In deciding what is a 'good reason', the staff member will take into account all the circumstances and use their professional judgment to determine whether they can safely dispose of a seized article. Where staff are unsure as to the legal status of a substance and have reason to believe it may be a controlled drug they will treat it as such.

In taking temporary possession and disposing of suspected controlled drugs, the school will:

- ensure a second adult witness is present;
- seal the sample in a plastic bag and include details of the date and time of the seizure/find and witness present;
- store it in a secure location;
- notify the police immediately, who will collect it and then store or dispose of it.

The law does not require a school to divulge to the police the name of the student(s) from whom the drugs were taken but the school will do so if it is deemed appropriate given the nature of the specific situation. If doing so, the school will:

- record full details of the incident, including the police incident reference number;
- inform parents/carers, unless this is not in the best interests of the student;
- identify any safeguarding concerns and develop a support and disciplinary response.

### **Categories of controlled drugs**

All controlled drugs are put into one of three categories according to how hazardous they are. Class A drugs are most dangerous. These drugs include cocaine, ecstasy and heroin. Class B drugs are less dangerous, but they can still damage if misused. Class B drugs include, cannabis, speed and some amphetamines.

Class C drugs are less dangerous than Class A and Class B. They are still branded as prohibited and can be harmful. Class C drugs include ketamine and some tranquilisers.

### **Confidentiality**

Details of tests will be kept confidentially. The records will not be used for any other purpose.

**Principal**

**Dr Andy Kemp**

Date of Review: Feb 2022

Date of Next Review: Feb 2024

# Appendix

**Permission example**

**Permission**

I/We have read the school’s policy and application documents. I/We give permission for our daughter/son to provide a urine sample for testing illegal drugs.

Signed.....

Name(s) of parent(s).....

Name of student.....

Date.....