



## THE MARK WAY SCHOOL

### DRUGS POLICY

This policy is under continuous review by the Senior Leadership Team because of the changing drugs scene both nationally and locally.

#### **Ethos of the school**

The philosophy of the school is to provide a supportive and nurturing environment in which all pupils are enabled to develop their learning and personal skills. The school strives to prepare them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences they may encounter in their future lives and this policy has been written in accordance with this philosophy.

#### **Rationale**

It is our aim to help all pupils to be able to take their place safely in a world where a wide range of drugs exists. We recognise that some drugs have beneficial medicinal effects, but also that every drug has potential harm. For this reason, all drugs need appropriate and responsible care and management. In order to be able to make informed choices, staff and pupils need to understand the nature of drugs, their social and legal status, their uses and effects.

#### **Definition of a drug**

A drug is a substance that affects the way in which the body functions physically, emotionally or mentally. This definition includes illegal substances and legal substances such as alcohol and tobacco, volatile substances, over the counter and prescription medicines.

#### **Aims of the policy**

- To support the school's endeavour to maintain the safety and well-being of all pupils and staff
- To clarify legal responsibilities, entitlement and obligations
- To support all the members of the school community by providing clear guidance and procedures on drug related issues to ensure clarity and consistency
- To develop a whole school approach to drug education in the context of the curriculum of the school

#### **Policy background**

This policy has been written with reference to national and LA guidelines and been informed by relevant research data.

## **Drugs on school premises**

The legal definition of premises of a school includes everything within the property boundaries including buildings, outbuildings, playgrounds, fields and 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. Please refer to our "Supporting Pupils with Medical Needs Policy" for further information regarding this.

### **• Alcohol**

No alcohol will be consumed during the course of a normal school day. Pupils and visitors under the effects of alcohol will be asked to leave the premises and return later for the safety of the whole school. Parents will be asked to collect their young person.

### **• Smoking and Vaping**

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

Staff are required to smoke or vape away from the school site, they are requested to not smoke on the corner by the school as school staff are role models for the children.

### **• Illegal drugs**

No illegal drugs are allowed to be brought on to, or used on school premises. Any that are found will be reported to the police. Any person found in possession of illegal drugs will additionally be reported to the police.

Site staff will do check of the school site to ensure it is safe and no drug paraphernalia has been left on the school site.

### **• Solvents**

The school will ensure that potentially hazardous substances are stored safely, and pupils will be supervised if it is necessary that they come into contact with them in the course of their work. Pupils are not permitted to be in possession of sniffable products

### **• County Lines**

The school is very aware of the dangers present to our young people in relation to County Lines. The school's PSHE curriculum and mental health support seeks to provide support for our young people and raise awareness of this form of exploitation. The school's open culture promotes this to all our young people and we

encourage them to tell us when they do not feel safe. The school will support them in accessing the appropriate agencies to keep them safe.

### • **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 of drugs on school premises
- Individuals disclosing information about their drug use
- Rumours of parents, staff or pupils using drugs
- Reports of parents, staff or pupils using drugs

The school is aware of its legal responsibilities in regard to drug related incidents and in responding to incidents, seeks to work in line with local and national guidance as outlined in The Right Responses. A member of the SMT 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 assessing the situation and will be reported to the Headteacher. All incidents and responses will be recorded within 24 hours.

Appropriate support will be offered to those with substance related problems. Talking with an individual about a drug related incident will have as its purpose to confirm or reject suspicions or allegations, rather than conduct a wider investigation.

Appropriate support agencies will be referred to in order to support and educate young people who are thought to be at risk of possible drug use and abuse.

### **Individuals in possession of drugs**

If any pupil 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 the police. Illegal substances will be handed to the police as soon as possible and not stored. Parents will normally be informed (for a student) and other professionals such as the LA, Youth Crime Prevention Service, Police, GP, Social Care will be informed or consulted as appropriate.

### **Confidentiality**

Complete secrecy can never be promised to a pupil, though information given in confidence will not generally be disclosed to anyone else. In particular, if a pupil 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 ensure the pupil comes to no serious harm if this is considered a risk. Regarding disclosures, staff need to carefully define and communicate the boundaries of confidentiality offered.

### **Support for pupils**

At our school, the welfare of the pupil is paramount. We maintain that constructive strategies that enable pupils to continue to benefit from continued education are preferable to exclusion.

Following actions to preserve safety, the health & emotional needs of pupils will be considered. Support is available through the pastoral system, to ensure a caring

response to pupils in distress. Interventions will be considered if the school feels a pupil is showing signs which indicate particular risks of, or from, involvement with drugs, whether their own or their parents'/carers'. Such interventions may include consultation with parents/carers and other agencies, possible case conferences and subsequent referral. Permanent exclusion from school will rarely be considered as permanently excluded pupils become significantly more vulnerable to drugs than those within formal schooling.

Drugs education will be delivered in accordance with PSHE Association guidelines. This will be taught during daily PSHE sessions with Tutors. Students in Year 10 and 11 will work towards AQA PSE Entry Level Certificate. This will be delivered during one PSHE lesson each week.

### **If concerns are raised:**

Parents/carers, students and staff should inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL or DDSLs) if they are concerned about a young person in relation to drug abuse.

The Headteacher reserves the right to search student belongings if they have reason to believe that they are carrying offensive weapons or illegal substances. Similarly, students may encounter physical intervention if they present a danger to themselves or other members of the community; the school would avoid this at all costs as it is distressing for the young person and the staff involved and the school's ethos is it should always be avoided.

Searches of student belongings will be carried out by the Headteacher with another member of staff present. The school will never carry out any search of a student's body in any way shape or form as the school would not perceive this as appropriate or safe. The school would always seek to avoid this scenario as the school recognises this is an invasion of privacy.

If inappropriate articles are brought in to school or used inappropriately, they will be confiscated and kept in the school for collection at the end of the day, possibly by a parent/carer. If these items are dangerous or illegal, they may be handed to the Police for safe disposal.

We aim to inform parents/carers if this is the case as soon as practical.

The Mark Way School works closely with other agencies. If students are involved with any activity, which breaks the law the police may be involved in the confiscation of items, Restorative Justice Conferencing, group work and education as well as links with home. Parents/Carers will always be informed when the police are involved and given the opportunity to attend any interviews.

Similarly, the police will be involved if any student is suspected of having contact with an illegal substance. This includes possession, using or dealing in them. In such cases, the police will decide what course of action should be taken.

### **Reviewing this policy**

This policy was reviewed by the DHT in Autumn 2024. It will be reviewed in Autumn 2026 or earlier if required.