

DRUGS & SUBSTANCE ABUSE POLICY

<p>Policy Owner</p> <p>PPS DSLs</p>	<p>Applies to</p> <p>Prior Park Schools (Trust wide)</p>	<p>Superseded documents</p> <p>Drugs & Substance Abuse Policy v3</p>
<p>Associated documents</p> <p>Safeguarding Policy, Curriculum Policy, PSHE Policy, Personal Development Policy Behaviour Policy, Exclusions Policy, Conducting a Student Search Policy</p>	<p>Review frequency</p> <p>Every three years (unless the legislation/regulations update before this time)</p> <p>Implementation date</p> <p>3 February 2025</p>	<p>Legal Framework</p> <p>Behaviour in schools: advice for headteachers and school staff 2022 Searching, screening and confiscation at school 2018 Searching, screening and confiscation: advice for schools 2022 The Equality Act 2010 KCSIE DfE and ACPO drug advice for schools</p>

This policy is reviewed triennially, or more regularly as required, prior to approval by Trustees, where applicable.

Last reviewed by:	PPS DSLs (Mrs I Burton, Mrs S James and Miss M Porro) and Head of Compliance (Miss E Wickham)
Date last reviewed:	December 2024
Approved by Trustees:	NA Approved by PEB
Date last approved:	3 February 2025
Date for next approval:	February 2028

1. Introduction

Prior Park Schools (PPS) is a family of Christian schools based in Bath and Gibraltar. Prior Park College (PPC) and The Paragon School (TP) are incorporated in England as Prior Park Educational Trust Ltd. Prior Park School Gibraltar (PPSG), is incorporated in Gibraltar as Prior Park School Ltd. Both are companies limited by guarantee and registered charities.

The Prior Park Schools mission, underpinned by shared values, is to steward a thriving family of communities with love for the young people they serve at their heart. These vibrant communities cultivate creativity, foster integrity, and transform lives.

Prior Park Schools Values:

Curiosity - Generosity - Courage

2. Policy Statement

Prior Park Schools does not condone the misuse of drugs or alcohol by members of the any of the school communities nor the illegal supply of these substances. A central assumption in the Prior Park drugs education programme is that all drugs can be harmful to a varying and uncertain degree; that the misuse of legal drugs or the consumption of illegal drugs damages lives and self-respect; and that, in certain cases, the consumption of illegal substances or the abuse of legal drugs can be life-threatening. Members of PPS engaging in drug and substance abuse endanger their position within the school.

The PSHE programme, P4L, General Studies, Assemblies and Tutor time will include sessions relevant to good health and avoidance of harmful substances.

The Paragon's Personal Development programme ensures age-appropriate information is shared with the children when required.

3. Policy Aims

We believe and support the following aims in respect of substance use and misuse:

- To provide accurate information about substances, including alcohol, tobacco, illegal drugs and dangerous substances
- To increase understanding of the implications and possible consequences of use and misuse

- To increase awareness of related health issues
- To provide information about the law and legal consequences of substance abuse
- To generate awareness of the wider social impact of use and abuse of a range of substances (including alcohol and tobacco)
- To enable members of the community to identify sources of appropriate personal support

4. Educational Programme

Through the taught curriculum (including science classes and the pastoral programme), the PSHCE Programme, and occasional lectures and presentations, members of the community will be given information and opportunities to discuss issues.

The school seeks to emphasis a healthy and positive lifestyle, and all PPS sites are a “no smoking” environment.

The school liaises with outside agencies to update and develop its provision.

Key areas of concern are:

- Consumption of alcohol by young people underage or to excess is harmful to health and must be avoided. Students who abuse alcohol and break the Law are in breach the schools’ Behaviour Policy.
- Smoking of tobacco is known to be injurious to health and has no part in a school setting. Students who smoke will be detected and given educational material. Persistent smoking will result in restrictions and discussion of “stop smoking” personal plans, but it is not expected that young people will have established serious addiction. Appropriate sanctions will be applied to deter this harmful activity. Smoking in a building at PPS endangers the community as it is a fire hazard and students who do this face exclusion from school.
- Use of e-cigarettes (also known as “vaping”) exposes people to the health damage of nicotine addiction and smoke inhalation and is unacceptable. Any students who engage in vaping will face sanctions.
- The use of THC and Spice (synthetic cannabinoids) vapes is illegal and poses serious health risks, including impaired learning, memory, and dangerous side effects like hallucinations or seizures. A growing concern is that students may unknowingly use vapes containing these harmful substances, increasing the risk of accidental exposure. These vapes are strictly prohibited. Students caught using, possessing, or distributing them will face disciplinary action in line with this policy and the Behaviour Policy.
- Misuse of items like nitrous oxide, aerosols and volatile adhesives are harmful and can even kill. Harmful substances must not be brought into school or used by PPS students. Students must not seek to misuse substances as such behaviour is high risk. Sanctions will be applied proportion to the danger created by breaking this expectation.
- Synthesised recreational substances pose a huge risk to young people, and we seek to offer up to date guidance so people can avoid such materials. Engaging with such substances is contrary to the expectations of the school.
- Abuse of prescription drugs and painkillers. Students must beware of any dependency on such items.

Tutors are central to the delivery of our educational programme and in routine daily contact with students, being aware of changes in their behaviour and manner.

Experience indicates that the most likely source of information that an issue exists is the students themselves. Students tend to show concern for individuals and the standards of the community, recognising the seriousness of any drugs or substance abuse issue.

All staff, especially those with particular pastoral responsibilities, recognise the need to treat any information with the utmost seriousness and respect, treating it with sensitivity (whilst knowing they can never offer confidentiality and need to pass information, with all due care, to those senior staff in a position to act). It may also be appropriate to engage with external agencies, such as the Police, Project 28 and Children's Services, if a major concern becomes evident.

5. Assessing the Situation and Formal Investigation

Preamble: It is important to grasp that the world of our students (and, indeed, young adults) is one in which the close proximity of a range of illegal drugs and incidents of illegal drugs and incidents of substance abuse can be assumed.

It is possible that students will encounter dealers and users at parties, and experience discussion about social standards on, for example, alcohol, tobacco and illegal drugs. The social acceptability of certain habits may challenge their own view and generate confusion.

Thus, in assessing culpability we must take account of the context and measure our response with care. We cannot tolerate behaviour damaging to individual and to community standards, but we must establish the facts and use authority and power to take disciplinary action to good effect.

Preparing for an Investigation

- A clear plan needs to be formulated, respecting the principles of natural justice. This must include the parents as soon as possible.
- If concerns arise from suspicions, concerns and information from staff/students, it is important that these are shared with parents.
- It is better to act in co-operation with parents at an early stage, giving them a chance to intervene to nip a possible problem in the bud.
- If concerns arise from discovery of substances or physical evidence, the substance must be confiscated and taken to the Deputy Head or Head, who will place it in a sealed container. If a student seems intoxicated, staff should record their impression and seek other staff to further witness. Any intoxicated student must be put in a safe place.
- If concerns suggest a student is in possession of unacceptable substances (including alcohol, tobacco, drugs) he/she may be asked voluntarily to hand over such substances in line with the **Conducting a Student Search policy**.
- A student's possessions can be searched for any item if the student agrees to the search.
- If the student does not agree to the search, staff can still carry out a search for prohibited items and items identified in the school rules.
- Only an authorised member of staff can search a student's possessions when the student and another member of staff are present.
- If there is a serious risk of harm if the search is not conducted immediately, or it is not reasonably practicable to summon another member of staff, the search can be carried out by a single authorised member of staff, but only in extraordinary circumstances.
- All searches must be carried out in line with the Policy on Conducting a Search on a student and confiscation of prohibited items.

Drugs Testing

It is the policy of Prior Park Schools that where a view develops that there is a serious suspicion of the consumption of illegal drugs (or substance abuse) by a member of the community, students and parents must accept the testing for the presence of illegal drugs.

The schools do not endorse a policy of random testing, but it insists on the right to conduct tests on the grounds of serious suspicion.

For student under the age of 18, consent to complete a test must be given by the parent/ guardian, before the test is started, alongside agreement from the student. Students over the age of 18 are able to give full consent themselves.

The schools may use the following tests: a urine, hair or swab test.

The tests will be co-ordinated by the Deputy Head (and/or Head of Boarding at PPC), relevant HsM/ HoH and parents.

In any instance of testing, the dignity of the individuals involved will be upheld at all times and the procedure will follow a clear chain of custody and necessary sensitivity.

Refusal to accept a test, without reasonable excuse, may cause Prior Park Schools to draw an adverse inference and may result in a precautionary non-disciplinary exclusion from school as the issue is discussed.

Negative tests do not necessarily endorse innocence, whilst positive tests may, under certain circumstances, need yet further scrutiny before being taken as definitive evidence. Testing is there to produce information which may or may not be helpful to investigations or those being investigated.

6. Concluding the Investigation

When investigation procedures have been concluded parents/guardians may be invited to a personal meeting with the Head. The student, Tutor and/or Housemaster/Housemistress /Head of House/Deputy Head will attend.

They will explain:

- i) what is alleged
- ii) the evidence
- iii) what the student has said or written
- iv) what the Head believes to be true

Wherever possible we will seek to support a student who has admitted to the use of illegal substances or tested positive for the use of illegal substances. However, involvement with illegal drugs and substance abuse is a serious matter and the Exclusions Policy makes clear the range of sanctions that may be incurred.

In both our Senior Schools' Behaviour Policy makes it clear that;

Drugs are unacceptable. The consumption and/or possession of illegal drugs is not allowed. A breach of this rule breaches the ethos of the school and will almost always result in exclusion. Any attempt to sell illegal drugs is unacceptable. School and Police action will follow. Harmful substances must not be brought into school or used by

students. Students must not seek to misuse substances (such as nitrous oxide, aerosols or adhesives). Any such behaviour has a high risk and is unacceptable.

The School's response will reflect this stance, giving due regard to the details of the offence and the age of the student, but recognising the seriousness of any drugs offence.

The Police will be informed in the following situations:

- i) where cases of pushing or dealing are discovered
- ii) where the Police may wish to take over an investigation because of its potential ramifications
- iii) where involvement by a student goes beyond casual, mis-informed or accidental use
- iv) where substances need investigation/destruction.