Thomas Telford Multi School Trust

Drugs and Substance Abuse Policy

Redhill Primary Academy

and

Thomas Telford Primary Free School

Signed

Mr Raj Samra
Chair of Governors
September 2026

Drug and Substance Abuse Policy

Our children are growing up in a society where drug use and misuse have become increasingly common. Every school therefore has a responsibility to consider its response to drugs. The Department for Education (DfE) advises all schools and academies to have an up-to-date drugs policy, consistent with national and local guidance.

We believe it is important to equip our children with the knowledge and skills to make informed and healthy decisions about medicines, substances and their wellbeing. This policy should be read in conjunction with our Science, Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHCE) and Equality Policies.

What are drugs?

The definition of drugs used in this policy is the definition given by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime: "A substance people take to change the way they feel, think or behave." This refers to all drugs:

- Illegal Psychoactive Substances/new psychoactive substances (Psychoactive Substances Act, 2016)
- Legal drugs, alcohol, tobacco, e-cigarettes, volatile substances (solvents)poppers,
- Misuse of over the counter and prescription medicines
- Illegal drugs (those controlled by the Misuse of Drugs Act, 1971) including ecstasy, cannabis, crack/cocaine, heroin and LSD, khat
- Other drugs such as anabolic steroids

Throughout this policy, the term 'drugs' is used to refer to all of the above.

Definition of other key words

'Drug use' describes any drug taking. Any drug use can potentially lead to harm, including through intoxication, breach of the law or school rules, or future health problems.

'Drug misuse' is drug taking which leads to social, psychological, physical or legal problems through intoxication, regular excessive consumption and/or dependence.

Aims

We take a positive and proactive approach to the issue of drugs and this policy aims to:

- Give a clear view on the use of drugs in school and the responsibilities of the school and legal requirements.
- Provide information so that everyone is clear about the schools' overall.
- approach to drugs and its procedures should an incident occur.
- Give information about drugs education.
- Give guidance to teachers, support staff and visitors about drugs education.

Approach to tackling drugs

We take a whole school approach to drugs through:

- A planned drugs education programme through PSHCE.
- Carefully considered responses to drug-related incidents informed and supported by the views of the whole school community.
- Clear rules and sanctions related to drugs understood by the whole school community.
- Access to specialist support and advice when required.

- Training and support for staff.
- Completing a Child and Family Help Assessment as soon as we, the young person or their family, have a worry regarding drug-related issues.

Principles of drug education

It is important for children to:

- Know that all medicines are drugs but not all drugs are medicines.
- Know that all substances can be harmful if not used properly.
- Know about different types of medicine and that some people need them to lead a normal life.
- Know and understand simple safety rules about medicines, tablets, solvents and household substances.
- Know that there are over the counter, prescribed, legal and illegal substances and have some understanding of their effects.
- Know how to make appropriate choices and practice strategies for resisting pressure from friends and others.
- Know the important and beneficial part that drugs play in our society.
- Have opportunities to examine attitudes and values relating to drugs.
- Identify sources of appropriate personal support.

Strategies for teaching about drugs

Drugs education is part of our PSHCE scheme of work, and it is taught in a progressive way appropriate to the age and needs of the children. Children are taught about drugs through a variety of teaching styles and approaches which encourage them to take responsibility for themselves, their actions and their learning, e.g. discussion, role-play, brainstorming. They are given opportunities to succeed, to reflect and evaluate their understanding and response to drugs. Children are encouraged to be positive about themselves and their achievements are valued.
Our long-term plan clearly indicates when drug education should be taught. It is part of our Personal Social Health Education curriculum and is often delivered through science. In Key Stage One the children complete a block titled 'Healthy Me' where the children learn about the importance and dangers of medicine. In Key Stage Two, children learn about drugs through various curriculum subjects. Science lessons teach and promote healthy living by allowing the children to learn about the effects drugs can have on your body. It is covered in a unit called 'Animals, including humans', to help pupils recognise the impact of diet, exercise, drugs and lifestyle on the way their body's function.

Children will require the following:

Knowledge and understanding

- The schools' rules relating to medicines.
- Basic information about how the body works and ways of looking after the body.
- The role of medicines (both prescribed and over the counter) in promoting health and the reasons people use them.
- Understanding that all drugs can be harmful if not used properly.
- Simple safety rules about medicines and other substances used in the home, including solvents.
- Consideration of alcohol and tobacco, their general effects on the body and on behaviour.
- People who are involved with medicines (such as health professionals, pharmacists, shopkeepers).
- People who can help children when they have questions or concerns.

Skills

- Communicating feelings such as concerns about illness and taking medicines.

- Following simple safety instructions.
- When and how to get help from adults.

Attitudes

- Valuing one's body and recognising its uniqueness.
- Attitudes towards medicines, health professionals and hospitals.
- Attitudes towards the use of alcohol and cigarettes.
- Responses to media and advertising presentations of medicines, alcohol and smoking.

Relationship skills

Throughout the curriculum activities are planned to promote relationship skills.
We use PSHCE, assembly times, our A Valued Me programme and Friendship week to explore what makes a good friend and to develop better communication skills. The content may include the following:

- To value our friends.
- Coping with the loss of a friend.
- Making new friends.
- Being friendly towards each other.
- Helping friends in difficult situations.
- Listening skills.
- Developing assertive behaviour skills.
- Saying 'no', resisting persuasion.
- What is bullying.
- Ensuring that you know when to seek support from a trusted adult.

Decision making skills

In order to make informed decisions we need to increase children's knowledge and understanding of drugs and explore the skills of decision making. Within the Foundation Stage and the Key Stage 1/2 curriculum we will include guidance on:

- Using drugs positively, ie. antibiotics, etc.
- The risks and consequences of drug taking.
- The influences of media persuasion techniques, e.g. advertising by tobacco and alcohol companies linked to sport/clothing.
- Looking at consequences and alternatives.
- Taking responsibility for yourself.

Developing health skills

We have agreed we have a responsibility to increase children's awareness of safety and promote a healthy lifestyle. Within the curriculum we will explore:

- The benefits of exercise.
- The benefits of a healthy diet.
- The challenge and excitement available through recreation and leisure.

Values and attitudes

The curriculum requires academies to promote positive attitudes through drug education. These will include consideration for other people's values and opinions on drugs as well as opportunities to reflect upon our own. We agree we also need to challenge stereotypes of drug users and raise awareness of community issues concerning drugs. We will address these through PSHCE and assembly times by exploring:

- Peer group pressure and way of resisting.
- Ways of expressing and sharing feelings.
- Listening to others and sharing opinions.
- Sharing problems.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The PSHCE Leader is responsible for monitoring the impact of the teaching of drug education and for ensuring, along with the Headteacher, that drugs issues are handled in the spirit embodied in this document.
This policy is considered by staff, taking advice from relevant authorities, and in the light of any incident which may occur related to drugs or any new findings from educational or health research.

Staff Training

When reviewing the policy, the Headteacher may be aware of issues where staff would benefit from training, either for individuals or for the whole staff. These will be included in the staff training programme. Staff new to the school are made aware of this policy as part of their induction process.

Resources

Outside speakers/specialists or organisations may be invited to deliver aspects of drugs education as part of our PSHCE scheme of work. The School uses guidance from the DfE and ACPO drug advice for schools, September 2012.

Links with Outside Agencies

- Police – through Community Police Officer
- Education Service, Drug and Alcohol Education
- School Nurse

The schools' position on legally available substances on site.

Tobacco and Vaping

The schools operate a no smoking or vaping policy at all times throughout the building and grounds. This policy applies to children, staff, parents and visitors. Smoking or vaping is not permitted on the premises when the building is hired by outside persons or organisations. The school recognises that vaping products, nicotine pouches and other emerging nicotine delivery systems present health and safeguarding risks to children.

Alcohol

The Headteacher must be consulted and permission obtained before arranging any functions at which alcohol may be consumed. Alcohol may not be consumed at any function where pupils are present unless parents are also present.

If parents are contributing items containing alcohol to fundraising events, then we ask that an adult bring them into school. Similarly prizes containing alcohol are only handed over to adults.

No licence is needed by the school to offer alcohol at events or to store alcohol on the premises. If alcohol is to be sold on the premises, an occasional licence or special permission will be obtained in accordance with the law.

Solvents

We recognise that many ordinary substances lend themselves to misuse and therefore need to be carefully stored and managed. Low odour/safe versions of equipment such as whiteboard markers and glues are purchased where possible. Unsuitable substances brought to school by children will be confiscated and parents contacted.

Medication

There are occasions when some legal drugs (prescribed) are authorised for use in school and/or on school trips. The School has a policy for the administration of medication. This policy is used in conjunction with Medication in schools T&W guidance. Parents and carers must inform the school where this is needed and pupils must not be responsible for the safety of their own medication, unless previously agreed, this must be handed in to the school to be kept securely until needed in line with the above policy.

Responding to drug related incidents in the schools

We acknowledge pastoral responsibility and seek to work closely with families and support agencies. We consider each drug incident individually and recognise that a variety of responses are necessary to deal with incidents appropriately. We consider very carefully the implications of any action we may take and seek to balance the interests of the pupils involved, their parents, other school members and the local community.

Drug misuse, drug supply and exposure to drugs may be indicators of abuse, neglect, child criminal exploitation, county lines activity, serious violence or other safeguarding concerns.

The range of responses includes:

- The Headteacher, who is the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or deputy in their absence, will be informed immediately.
- All situations will be carefully considered before deciding a response.
- Permanent exclusion **will not be** the automatic response and will only be considered in the most serious cases.
- Before any decision to permanently exclude is made, the school will offer a Child and Family Early Help Assessment to ascertain if any additional support is needed.
- The health and safety needs of the pupil will always come first, whilst also taking account of the health and safety needs of the school as a whole.
- Parents/carers will be involved at an early stage and throughout any investigation (unless this would not be in the pupil's best interest)
- Decisions about the sanction will depend on whether the offence is one of a series or a first event, previous support has been offered to the pupil and whether the pupil was in possession or supplying. Any extenuating circumstances will also be taken into consideration.
- The Headteacher in consultation with DSL (or deputy in their absence) will decide whether a disciplinary and/or counselling response should follow.
- Incidents will be reported to the Chair of Governors.

Procedures for managing incidents

- Reporting a drug-related incident

All drug-related incidents are reported, in the first instance, to the Headteacher who is the DSL (or deputy in their absence). Although there is no legal obligation to report an incident involving drugs to the police, every incident will be assessed individually, and appropriate steps will be taken. The school will always inform police immediately about any incident involving the sale of drugs. The school will contact Trading Standards about the sale of tobacco, vapes, alcohol and solvents to under-age pupils, from local shops.

- Recording the drug-related incident

All drug-related safeguarding concerns will be recorded on CPOMS in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures.

In all drug-related incidents, the Headteacher who is the DSL (or deputy in their absence) will decide on the responses, including the use of sanctions and/or counselling and support. However only the Headteacher has the authority to suspend a pupil either for a fixed period or permanently exclude.

- Medical emergencies when a pupil is unconscious as a result of drugs use

Staff with first aid qualifications should be called immediately but the pupil must not be left alone. The pupil will be placed in the recovery position and an ambulance called. Parents/carers will be informed and called to the school. An assessment of the incident is started, including finding out whether a substance has been taken, and evidence gathered.

- Intoxication, when a pupil is under the influence of a drug

The pupil will be removed to a quiet room and not left alone. The first aider and DSL (or deputy in their absence) will be called. The pupil will be helped to calm down and medical assistance sought. Parents/carers will be informed and called to the school. In most cases, the pupil will then be taken home with the absence C coded as a special circumstance if a fixed term suspension is not considered appropriate.

- Discovery/observation

This refers to situations when a pupil is discovered using, supplying or holding a substance that is not permitted on school premises and which is described in this policy (suspected or confirmed).

If the substance is suspected to be illegal, staff can take temporary possession of it:

- it will be confiscated, **in the presence of a second member of staff as witness**
- the sample will be sealed in a plastic bag with details of the date and time of the seizure/find and witness present and stored in a secure location (e.g. a safe or lockable container) with access limited to the Headteacher
- the pupil(s) will be supervised within a safe space in school and an investigation undertaken, pending advice from the police
- details of the incident will be recorded, including the police incident reference number
- the pupil’s parents/carers will be asked to come into the school, unless it is not in the best interests of the child to inform them
- the pupil(s) involved will be isolated whilst investigations are carried out.

If the substance is legal (but unauthorised in school) it will be disposed of or handed to the parent/carer.

- Searches

Staff are allowed to confiscate pupil's property where reasonable to do so, including substances, whether controlled or not.
If a member of staff has reasonable grounds for suspecting that a pupil is carrying illegal drugs on them or in their personal property, they will ask the pupil to voluntarily produce the substance, in the presence of two members of staff. When a search is required, any staff involved must be authorised by the Headteacher to undertake it and, wherever possible, should be the same sex as the pupil. (Screening, Searching and Confiscation Advice for Schools, DfE, 2023) The search will take place in school or where staff have lawful control of pupils.
We will keep a record of the search and inform parent/carers if a substance is found, although there is no legal requirement to do this or to inform parents/carers before or after a search.

- Dealing with drug-taking materials

School site staff make regular checks of the school grounds and know how to deal with drug-taking materials, including needles, in line with health and safety advice.
Pupils are taught what to do if they come across needles on the school premises and know not to touch needles and to inform a member of staff immediately.

- Disclosure

When a pupil discloses to a member of staff that he/she has been using drugs or is concerned about someone else's drug use.
In these situations, staff will be non-judgmental and caring and will show concern for the pupil's welfare. Pupils know that teachers cannot promise total confidentiality if safeguarding concerns are raised and/or if further support is to be considered such as referral to a drug service or counselling service. Information about the pupil will only be given to key staff and no-one else unless the pupil gives their consent. The DSL (or deputy in their absence) will coordinate the most appropriate support including referral to specialist services.

- Suspicion/rumour

Staff should not assume use of drugs on the basis of rumours or behaviour alone. However, if there is a suspicion, evidence will be collected over a period of time before a decision is made to question the pupil(s) involved.

- Intoxicated parents/carers

Our school's rules for drugs apply to all people who are on the school premises, and we expect that parents/carers will adhere to these rules. If a parent/carer comes to the school and appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol, they will be asked to leave. If they have come to collect their child, we will sensitively offer to phone for someone else to collect. If we are concerned that a pupil is in imminent danger, we will contact emergency services on 999. We will also follow our Child Protection procedures if we are concerned about risk of harm.

- Needs of pupils

We are sensitive to the needs of pupils whose parent/carers or family members have problems with drugs. Where problems are observed or suspected or a pupil discloses problems, we will assess the pupil's welfare and support needs and offer a Child and Family Early Help assessment. The school will also involve external support for the child if needed.

Parental substance misuse may place children at increased risk of neglect, emotional harm, domestic abuse and other safeguarding concerns.

Children affected by substance misuse, whether through their own behaviour or through the behaviour of family members, may experience emotional wellbeing or mental health difficulties. Appropriate support and referrals will be considered where necessary.

Child Criminal Exploitation/County Lines

The school recognises that pupils may be subjected to peer pressure, coercion, intimidation or exploitation relating to substances. When speaking with pupils and responding to any incidents involving drugs, staff will be vigilant to the pupil's vulnerability to criminal exploitation and particularly County Lines. Any concerns about a young person such as erratic school attendance and/or changes in their attitude and engagement with learning; unexplained or disproportionate access to money/expensive items; pupil being reported as missing; or where staff become aware that a pupil has several mobile phones could indicate the pupil is a victim of exploitation and must be shared with the DSL ((or deputy in their absence). Such concerns will be managed in accordance with safeguarding procedures

The local governing body of the schools recognises that pupils who are not accessing school due to low levels of attendance or exclusion are at greater risk of all forms of exploitation. Any attendance issues will be addressed in line with the school's Attendance Policy. Furthermore, any fixed-term suspension will be for the shortest time necessary and in line with our Relationships and Behaviour Policy. Permanent exclusion will be the last resort and only in the most serious of circumstances where no other option is available.

Confidentiality

Pupils need to be able to talk in confidence to staff without fear of being judged or told off. The welfare of young people will be central to our policy and practice; however, teachers cannot promise total confidentiality, and this is made clear to pupils through the PSHCE programme.

If a pupil discloses to a member of staff he/she is taking drugs or is concerned about drugs, they will refer the pupil to the DSL (or deputy in their absence) and appropriate support will be offered e.g. referral to a specialist agency. This information is given only to the DSL who is the Headteacher.

If staff are concerned that a child’s safety is at risk, they will follow the school's child protection procedures.

Working with Parents/Carers

We believe that parents/carers have an important role in supporting their child’s drug education. We involve parents/carers through a range of activities, such as:
 Giving information about what is taught.
 Giving information about drugs and local sources of help.

A copy of this policy is on the school website with hard copies available on request.

Parents/carers will be informed immediately if their child has been involved in a drug-related incident. However, there may be some exceptional situations where involving the parents may put the young person at risk of abuse and, in these exceptional cases, the school will exercise some caution. The decision will be taken by the Headteacher who the DSL with the child’s welfare the priority.

Involving Police

In most cases a drug-related incident will be a school matter, rather than a police matter. However, we work closely with community police and will contact them immediately if an illegal (or suspected illegal) drug has been found or illegal drug dealing is taking place. We will only call 999 in an emergency.

Reviewing the policy

This policy is reviewed every two years in line with school protocols. If an exceptional incident should occur, the policy is reviewed in the light of that incident.

Disseminating the policy

The policy is on the school's website and drawn to the attention of parents/carers and staff on an annual basis. New staff are familiarised with it as part of their induction.

Staff should refer to current guidance from Talk to Frank, the NHS, Police and local safeguarding partners regarding current substances, trends and risks.

Useful resources

http://www.PSHCE-association.org.uk- information and teaching resources

http://www.telford.gov.uk- Information for parents, advice, support networks (drug and alcohol misuse)

Family Connect Safeguarding Advisor 01952 385385- Child Protection

Honest information about drugs | FRANK Talk to Frank

NHS England » Substance misuse and gambling support NHS advice and support