



# WELSHPOOL HIGH SCHOOL

## SUBSTANCE MISUSE POLICY

**DATE REVIEWED;**      **March 2023**

**DATE FOR REVIEW;**    **March 2025**

**SIGNED** \_\_\_\_\_

**Chair of Governing Body**

**DATE:** 27/04/2023

**SIGNED** \_\_\_\_\_

**Headteacher**

**DATE:** 27/04/2023

## 1. OVERVIEW

The Welsh Assembly Government's strategy 'Working Together to Reduce Harm' is underpinned by the following four main aims;

- Reducing the harm to individuals (particularly children and young people), their families and wider communities from the misuse of drugs and alcohol, whilst not stigmatising substance misuse.
- Improving the availability of education, prevention and treatment services and related support, with a greater priority given than under the previous strategy to those related to alcohol.
- Making better use of resources – supporting evidence based decision making, improving treatment outcomes, developing the skills base of partners and service providers by giving a greater focus to workforce development and joining up agencies and services more effectively in line with 'Making the Connections'.
- Embedding the core Welsh Assembly Government values of sustainability, equality and diversity, support for the Welsh language and developing user focussed services and a rights basis for children and young people in both the development and delivery of the strategy.

Effective substance misuse education enables children and young people to make responsible well-informed choices about their lives. This policy should be read and applied alongside the **Welsh Assembly Government Circular 17/02 'Substance Misuse: Children and Young People'** which replaces circular 54/95.

## DEFINITION OF A SUBSTANCE

For the purposes of this policy statement the word "substances" includes all mood and performance changing substances, both legal and illegal, and including prescribed drugs, alcohol, tobacco and vaporisers, and solvents.

### ***Medicines***

Many drugs are lawfully carried as medicines. Section 11 of the Health and Safety Manual is adhered to in relation to the administration of medicine kept in the main office. Painkillers are not administered to pupils unless specifically requested by parents/carers. If pupils supply prescription drugs or medicines to others in school, they are acting unlawfully and so this policy applies.

This guidance sets out to:

- Clarify the school's responsibilities and the legal requirements.
- Provide clear guidelines, which will enable staff to respond sensitively and confidentially to pupils, associated with the possession or use of substances on school premises.
- Help school staff by providing clarity regarding incidents, protocols and sanctions.
- Help school staff to support pupils.
- Explain to the whole community the school's approach to substances.

- Give curriculum guidance on developing, implementing and monitoring substance misuse education.
- Ensure that the school's ethos and values are reflected in substance misuse education and in response to incidents.
- Create a basis for evaluation.

The development of a policy should include:

- Lessons in science and PSE will give all pupils the chance to learn about substance misuse, including the dangers and consequences of such use.
- We recognise that fear-arousing approaches are generally ineffective.
- Pupils who bring substances to school or use substances in a way that affects their behaviour in school may be subject to school sanctions. We normally inform and involve parents in any instances of substance misuse. External agencies may be informed.
- Exclusion, including permanent exclusion, is a possible response to the dealing of substances on school premises, repeated usage or misuse that threatens severely the health and safety of others.
- Although recognising that pupils who abuse substances risk permanent harm to themselves, our main aim must be to help and counsel, not to punish.

## **POLICY**

### **Staff Responsibility**

The Headteacher and governing body has ultimate responsibility for implementation of the policy. At Welshpool High School the responsible staff members are the Deputy Head Teacher and Head of Upper/Lower School.

### **Curriculum Issues**

The approaches used for substance misuse education should provide opportunities for issues to be explored as well as information to be gained. Largely, education about substance misuse takes place in PSE and Science lessons.

Learning providers should provide opportunities, where appropriate, for pupils to develop and apply Personal and Social Education (PSE) across the curriculum.

In PSE, pupils should be given opportunities to promote their health and emotional well-being and moral and spiritual development; to become active citizens and promote sustainable development and global citizenship; and to prepare for lifelong learning. For 14–19 pupils, this is a part of their Learning Core entitlement and is a requirement at Key Stage 4.

Evidence from research on the effectiveness of substance misuse education shows that no single method is effective alone and multi faceted sustained approaches are more productive.

The methods used should:

- Identify clear learning outcomes.
- Emphasise enquiry and investigation rather than formal presentations.
- Offer structured opportunities for discussion in pairs and groups of various sizes.
- Involve an appropriate balance of planned learning activities, including questionnaires, games, surveys, role-play, case study and discussion.
- Allow for graphic as well as written and oral responses.
- Stimulate interest and motivation without resorting to sensationalism.

Research shows that pupils value approaches that provide:

- Consistent accurate information presented simply and clearly.
- Informative and accessible reading material.
- Access to peers and credible adult experts, in addition to teachers/youth workers.
- Stimulating and enjoyable tasks.
- Appropriate challenges in an atmosphere, where they feel secure enough to play a full and active part.

Evidence suggests that substance misuse education is not effective when it relies solely upon:

- Stand-alone or one off talks and sessions which are not part of a whole organisation programme.
- Fear arousing approaches. Reliance on using this approach alone has been shown to lack credibility and may at worst glamorise substance misuse. Research has shown such approaches are not effective, particularly in the long term.
- Information only. Evidence shows that information approaches alone will not change behaviour. Information does have a role as part of a broader life skills approach.
- Single messages e.g. just say no. Such approaches may limit open, honest debate and discussion, which are building blocks of effective substance misuse education.

### **Procedures for dealing with an incident**

Staff who become aware of difficulties or incidents involving pupils and drugs should inform the responsible staff member/specific named contact. The responsible staff member will then notify the head teacher. The response will depend on the type and degree of risk, with some situations requiring immediate action. Exemplars from WAG guidance include:

**Immediate action is needed when there is a clear risk to safety, for example:**

- An adult collecting a pupil appears to be under the influence of drink or drugs;

*Action: apply locally agreed child protection procedures as outlined in the safeguarding policy, involve the police if adult is aggressive.*

- A pupil/adult appears ill or unsafe as a result of substance misuse;  
*Action: consider obtaining medical advice, note relevant facts and inform parent/carer/police.*
- Substances are being supplied on, or near premises;  
*Action: contact police.*
- There is ready access to controlled drugs;  
*Action: contact police.*
- The premise has potentially hazardous substance misuse related litter e.g needles, syringes;  
*Action: arrange safe removal of litter according to Health and Safety policy; involve police if related to illegal substance misuse.*
- Substance misusers behaving aggressively;  
*Action: seek urgent police assistance to remove.*
- A pupil discloses that they are misusing drugs or their parent or other family members are misusing drugs;  
*Action: contact social services or specialist substance misuse service for advice on how to respond.*

**Less immediate action e.g. observation, interview, consultation with other agencies, continued monitoring, may be appropriate when there are for example:**

- Generalised allegations or concerns about a particular pupil or family;
- Refuted/inconsistent disclosures;
- Concerns but no evidence of substance misuse or related harmful or criminal conduct (such as supply of drugs or other harmful substances);
- Concerns but no evidence of immediate risk to safety.

**Actions requiring referral to other organisations include:**

- Investigation of criminal activity, including searching persons or personal property.
- Apart from immediate first aid, any health or medical emergency which should be attended by appropriate medical personnel.
- Assessment and providing support and services to vulnerable or troubled pupils and families are matters for social services.
- Counselling and drug treatment programmes require trained staff, normally accessible through social services, health or specialist substance misuse services.

**Guidance on use of outside Speakers**

‘How should outside speakers be used?’ The answer is ‘with great care’.

Contributions from outside speakers or theatre groups are no substitute for a properly resourced teacher led programme. They may enrich a programme if:

- The input is part of a programme and jointly planned with the teacher.

- The approach compliments that of the school programme.
- The teacher is present so they can follow up the input at a later stage. As long as the teacher is present, there is no requirement for visitors to have a police check.
- The speaker has experience and expertise in drug education and working with young people.
- The outside speaker can offer something specific and useful that teachers cannot (such as information about helping services pupils can use or knowledge about the law and the consequences of breaking the law in this area).

*'Employing ex-addicts as spearheads for prevention campaigns in the belief that their evidence is especially real, is often misconceived. The enticing and implicit message, "I've been there man, so I know" is alluring, containing as it does the hidden conceit that the only way you ever really know is to "go there". The central involvement of ex-addicts in educational campaigns may give a subtle kudos and credence to the very activity it is wished to discourage'.*

*'Drug Scenes', Royal College of Psychiatrists 1987*

This is true now as it was in 1987, so check carefully before involving outside speakers. What can they really offer that teachers cannot? What will they say and do? How will it be integrated into the school drug education programme and how will it be followed up? Don't accept offers from outside speakers if you are not completely sure of their value and competence. In the past many schools have called upon a range of visitors to tell pupils about the horrors of drug use. In many cases this has not been relevant to the pupils concerned and has been of little educational value. In a few cases it has been detrimental to pupils' attitudes and has caused serious issues between parents and school.

This checklist is for use by learning providers and visiting agencies to help with the joint planning of PSE sessions.

Planning points	
The school and the visitor have agreed the aims, content and approach of inputs by the visitor.	
<b>The school has .....</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• checked that the work of the agency or visitor is known to them and considered appropriate in respect of safeguarding /child protection procedures.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• made the visitor aware of and familiar with any relevant school policies.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• planned for the visitor to be supervised/actively supported by a teacher at all times throughout the visit so any follow up questions or concerns can be dealt with effectively.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• explained how the visit fits into the PSE programme e.g. any preparatory work/follow up work to be done.</li> </ul>	
Provided information on:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the number of sessions expected</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the age of the pupils in each session</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the number of pupils in each session(s)</li> </ul>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>any additional learning needs of pupils</li> </ul>		
<b>The following have been agreed:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the date and time of the visit</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>where the speaker will be met, at what time and by who</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the name of the class teacher(s) who will be present at the session(s)</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>where the session(s) will take place</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the number of sessions, timings and durations for each</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>relevant school timings e.g. registration, assembly, breaks, lunch etc.</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>what school resources are required by the speaker</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>where resources can be accessed. e.g. video, TV, DVD player</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>what resources the speaker will provide</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>arrangements for collecting feedback from the session(s) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>from pupils</li> <li>from teaching staff</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>arrangements for jointly evaluating the session(s)</li> </ul>		
<b>Signed</b>	<b>School:</b>	
	<b>Visitor:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>		

## Contact with Parents

### Searching Pupils in School

It is possible that the Headteacher will authorise a search of pupil property [person, bags or lockers] if there has been the suspicion that illegal substances, objects or alcohols have been brought onto the school site. There should be a reasonable attempt to contact parents to inform them that a search has taken place.

Parents do not have the right to prevent such a search nor to delay it unduly. The police are limited in their powers to detain a person in advance of a search.

### Contact with Police

Although schools should endeavour not to criminalise pupils unless absolutely necessary, any appropriate and relevant information will be passed on to the police.

When information is passed to the police, a search should be requested and it should be stressed that wherever possible plain clothed officers or family protection officers should attend. Only as a last resort, or if there is a need to conduct the search swiftly, should uniformed officers attend the school site.

On attending, officers should be briefed as to the nature of the allegation and the confidence in the source of information. They should be escorted to the room in which the search is to take place.

If the pupil is already detained, they should then be escorted to this room for the search to be conducted. If the parents are not present a member of school staff (teaching or non-teaching) must be present throughout the search. Note that although some questioning associated with the search is allowed, no formal interview must be permitted unless parents are present. It is very unlikely that such an interview would take place on school premises.

If the pupil must be collected from a teaching room or other area within the school, wherever possible this should be done by two adults. Staff should be wary of any attempt of the pupil to escape to jettison drugs, or attempt to pass drugs to any other pupil either in the classroom or on the way to the search.

### **Awareness**

This protocol should be communicated to all staff who may make initial contact with the police. Such contact should normally be limited to:

The Headteacher

The Deputy or an Assistant Headteacher

The child protection lead

### **Out of School Procedures**

The school has no role in dealing with drug incidents outside school hours and premises other than:

- On school trips and visits, when the same rules and procedures should be applied as far as is reasonable and practicable.
- To the extent that the effect of some substances may persist into school time.
- By passing information onto relevant agencies when the safety or well being of pupils is threatened.
- To assist police in preventing the use of land surrounding the school for drug trading.

On residential trips with sixth form pupils, staff must not allow pupils to use alcohol or smoke/vape.

### **Procedure for Dealing with pupils after an incident**

Drugs and alcohol affect behaviour. The fact that drugs or alcohol have caused a pupil to behave inappropriately will not be seen as a mitigating factor – the behaviour will be punished using the normal range of school sanctions.

It would be normal practice to contact the police according to the agreed protocol if a search is required or if there is a concern about dealing in illegal drugs. In cases of possession, the police should be contacted.



Exclusion may be an appropriate punishment for using alcohol or drugs on school premises, but each case will depend on circumstances. Longer exclusions could be used for situations where accompanying behaviour was disruptive to the classes or systems of the school or for second or subsequent offences.

Pupils found to be dealing or swapping drugs are likely to be permanently excluded from school. It is important to remember that a pupil who supplies a small quantity of drugs to a friend is still guilty of a serious criminal offence, but this may, on first offence, be punished by fixed term exclusion.

It is not the role of the school to provide medical care to those under the influence of drink or drugs, but advice may be sought in some instances. If a pupil is at risk because of impaired mental state, parents should be contacted and required to take control of their child. Failing that, any emergency contact could be asked to assist. Failing that, social services and police can be called for advice.

A pupil must not be released to walk, cycle or catch the bus home if there is concern about mental impairment resulting from drink or drugs. If necessary, reasonable force may be used to restrain the pupil. Any employee is authorised to use force in these circumstances.

### **Informing parents**

Parents should be informed of any drug related incident unless

- There are child protection concerns.
- It would interfere with a school investigation.
- It would interfere with a police investigation.
- It could result in greater harm to the pupil for another reason.

Parents would normally be contacted directly by telephone in the event of proven drug usage. If it is suspected but not proven, the agreed police protocol should be implemented.

### **Procedure for Dealing with Adults (not staff)**

The school is not able to release pupils into the care of other adults where there is a possibility of harm to that pupil. Where there is evidence that parents or carers arriving at school to collect their children are under the influence of drugs or alcohol, either social services or the police will be contacted in line with the school's child protection policy.

Where any member of the school community, staff, parent or visitor is or appears to be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs on the school premises without the prior agreement of the head teacher, they will be asked to leave immediately and action taken to ensure their safety, with supervision if necessary. Where illegal substances are involved, the police will be informed.

## **Media Contact**

It is important that staff do not report incidents and/or issues concerning drug misuse to the local press and media generally. The Head teacher, in consultation with the LA and Governors will deal personally with all media matters. All media enquiries need to be referred to the County Council's press office.

## **Review**

It is recommended that this policy should be reviewed every two years, in line with the school policy review schedule.

**Appendix A**

**Incident Record Sheet**

School: .....

<b>Date of incident:</b>	<b>Date &amp; time reported:</b>	<b>By whom reported:</b>
<b>Pupils involved:</b>	<b>Dates of birth:</b>	<b>Home contact No.</b>
<b>Description of incident:</b>		
<b>Action taken: (see check list attached)</b>	<b>By whom:</b>	<b>Date &amp; time:</b>

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<b>Date of incident:</b>	<b>Contact No.</b>	<b>By whom:</b>	<b>Date &amp; time of contact:</b>	<b>Date &amp; time of response:</b>
<b>Ambulance</b>				
<b>GP</b>				
<b>Police</b>				
<b>Social Services</b>				
<b>LA</b>				
<b>PDAC</b>				
<b>Youth Offending Team</b>				
<b>Health Promotion Officers</b>				
<b>Environmental Health</b>				

**Pupil interview report:**

**Check that the following details are recorded in writing:**

Pupil's name, date of birth and home address

Parent or carer contact details

Date, time and place of interview

Names and status of all others present

Clear record of the content of the interview

Separate record of any action to be taken, by whom and by when, including details of any other personnel to be involved

The record of the interview should be signed and dated by the responsible parties, including at least one witness.