

WOODHOUSE ACADEMY

DRUGS, ALCOHOL, VAPING AND SUBSTANCE MISUSE

POLICY

Reviewed: Summer 2026
To be reviewed: Summer 2028

1. Statement of Commitment

Woodhouse Academy is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all pupils. The school recognises that the misuse of drugs, alcohol, tobacco, vaping products and other substances can significantly affect children's physical health, mental health, wellbeing, attendance, behaviour, educational achievement and future life opportunities. The school adopts a safeguarding-led, educational and preventative approach. The welfare of the child will always remain paramount.

2. Legal Framework

This policy has been developed with reference to:

- **Statutory Guidance**
 - Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE)
 - Working Together to Safeguard Children
 - Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
 - Misuse of Drugs Act 1971
 - Children Act 2004
 - Education and Inspections Act 2006
 - Equality Act 2010
 - Human Rights Act 1998
- **Department for Education Guidance**
 - Searching, Screening and Confiscation
 - Behaviour in Schools
 - Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Guidance
 - Relationships, Sex and Health Education Guidance
- **Local Guidance**
 - Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Procedures
 - Staffordshire County Council Safeguarding Guidance
 - Staffordshire PSHE Guidance
 - Staffordshire Early Help Strategy

3. Aims

The aims of this policy are to:

- Safeguard pupils from harm.
- Promote healthy lifestyles.
- Educate pupils about substance misuse risks.
- Provide clear procedures for staff.
- Ensure compliance with statutory guidance
- Support early intervention
- Promote effective partnership with parents and external agencies

- Maintain a safe learning environment

4. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, substances include:

- Legal Substances
 - Alcohol
 - Tobacco products
 - Cigarettes
 - Vapes and e-cigarettes
 - Nicotine pouches
 - Energy drinks where prohibited by school rules
- Medicines
 - Prescription medication
 - Over-the-counter medication
 - Homeopathic remedies
- Illegal Drugs
 - Any substance controlled under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971
 - Novel Psychoactive Substances
 - Substances designed to mimic illegal drugs
- Volatile Substances
 - Including aerosols, solvents, gases and fuels.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Governing Body/Safeguarding Link Governor	• Ensure compliance with statutory requirements • Monitor patterns and trends through safeguarding reports • Challenge and support leaders appropriately • Ensure staff receive suitable training
Principal	• Ensure consistent application • Determine disciplinary outcomes • Liaise with governors • Ensure staff training is undertaken
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	• Lead safeguarding responses • Assess risk • Maintain records • Liaise with Staffordshire Children's Services • Make referrals where required • Coordinate support plans
All staff	• Report concerns immediately • Follow safeguarding procedures • Deliver preventative education • Maintain confidentiality appropriately

6. Prevention and Education

Drug, alcohol and substance misuse education forms part of the school's wider safeguarding curriculum. Education will be delivered through:

- PSHE
- Science
- Assemblies
- Tutor Time

Teaching will be age-appropriate and cover:

- Physical risks
- Mental health impacts
- Peer pressure
- Decision-making skills
- Criminal exploitation risks
- County Lines awareness
- Vaping risks
- Sources of support

7. Prohibited Activities

The following are prohibited:

- Possessing drugs
- Using drugs
- Supplying drugs
- Attempting to supply drugs
- Possessing drug paraphernalia
- Possessing alcohol
- Possessing vaping equipment
- Being under the influence of substances

These restrictions apply:

- On school premises
- On educational visits
- During transport arranged by the school
- During all school activities

8. Managing drug-related incidents

A drug-related incident may involve actual, suspected or alleged possession, use, supply, disclosure or exposure to drugs or other substances, whether on or off the school site where there is a safeguarding impact on the pupil or wider school community.

The school may investigate and respond to incidents occurring outside school where the behaviour could affect the safety, welfare or reputation of the school community.

Incidents may include:

- Disclosure by a pupil
- Possession of substances
- Discovery of substances
- Suspicion of use

- Intoxication
- Supply or suspected supply
- Drug-related social media activity

All incidents will be treated seriously and investigated proportionately.

9. Searching, screening and confiscating

Authorised staff may search pupils where there are reasonable grounds for suspicion.

Searches will:

- Follow DfE guidance.
- Be proportionate.
- Respect dignity.
- Be appropriately recorded.

Staff must not:

- taste or smell unknown substances
- put themselves at risk
- promise confidentiality
- dispose of suspected illegal substances themselves
- conduct searches outside their legal powers

Confiscated substances will be stored securely. Illegal substances may be handed to police.

10. Disposal of Drugs

- illegal drugs will normally be handed to police
- alcohol will normally be disposed of safely
- medicines will be returned to parents where appropriate
- vaping devices may be retained or disposed of according to school procedures

11. Safeguarding Response

Substance misuse may indicate:

- Neglect
- Child criminal exploitation
- County Lines involvement
- Mental health concerns
- Domestic abuse
- Family substance misuse

The DSL will assess each case individually. Information will be shared on a need-to-know basis in accordance with safeguarding legislation and data protection requirements.

Possible actions include:

- Early Help Assessment
- Referral to Staffordshire Children's Services
- Referral to specialist substance misuse services

- Referral to police where appropriate

12. Disciplinary responses

Responses will consider:

- Age and understanding
- SEND needs
- Vulnerability
- Nature of the incident
- Intent
- Previous concerns

Possible outcomes include:

- Educational intervention
- Behaviour support plan
- Loss of privileges
- Internal suspension
- Suspension
- Permanent exclusion in exceptional circumstances

Support and safeguarding interventions will accompany disciplinary action where appropriate.

13. Working with Parents

Parents will normally be informed of incidents unless doing so would place a child at increased risk of harm. The school will work collaboratively with families to reduce risk, promote wellbeing, assist with access to support services and to improve outcomes for our pupils.

APPENDIX A – STAFF RESPONSE FLOWCHART



