



Notre Dame High School

Sharing the love and goodness of God with everyone

Drugs Policy 2026-2027

Policy Name	Drugs Policy
Status	Live
Policy Author	Mr A. Marsden (Director of Inclusion)
Date Adopted	September 2026
Review Period	12 months
Last Review Date	September 2026
Next Review Date	September 2027
Approved by	Local Academy Committee
Linked Documents and Policies	Behaviour and Relationships Policy; Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy 2026–27; Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions and Allergy Safety Policy; Health and Safety Policy; RSHE Policy; Equality Information and Objectives 2026–2030; Privacy Notice

Contents

How Do We Achieve Our Mission?

1. Introduction and Context
2. Scope of this Policy
3. Drugs on School Premises
4. The School's Stance Towards Drugs, Health and the Needs of Students
5. Alcohol
6. Smoking and Vaping
7. Illegal Drugs, Psychoactive Substances and Solvents
8. Medical Emergencies
9. Responses to Drug-Related Incidents
10. Drug Misuse Outside the School Premises
11. Searching and Confiscation
12. Confidentiality and Information Sharing
13. Support for Students
14. Drug Education
15. Staff, Volunteers and Visitors
16. Useful Organisations

How Do We Achieve Our Mission?

Our mission: Sharing the love and goodness of God with everyone

To carry out our mission we apply and evaluate ourselves against the seven Hallmarks of the Notre Dame Learning Communities. The Hallmarks are the characteristics, values and activities of a Notre Dame learning community.

1. We proclaim by our lives even more than by our words that God is good.
2. We honour the dignity and sacredness of each person.
3. We educate for and act on behalf of justice and peace in the world.
4. We commit ourselves to community service.
5. We embrace the gift of diversity.
6. We create community among those with whom we work and with those we serve.
7. We develop holistic learning communities which educate for life.

1. Introduction and Context

This policy is the school's response to the Department for Education and Association of Chief Police Officers Guidance Drug Advice for Schools (2012), which remains the Department's current advice. Its purpose is to ensure the safety of students and staff through clear expectations, consistent procedures for managing incidents, support for students affected by drugs, and the delivery of a high-quality drug education programme within the Relationships, Sex and Health Education curriculum.

The policy also reflects the statutory guidance and legislation that govern how the school acts:

- **Searching, Screening and Confiscation** (Department for Education, July 2022) – the statutory basis for the search and confiscation procedures in sections 9 and 10.
- **Suspension and Permanent Exclusion** statutory guidance and the Behaviour in Schools advice – the basis for any sanction applied.
- **Keeping Children Safe in Education** (September 2026) – drug incidents are treated as safeguarding matters and may indicate child criminal exploitation.
- **Misuse of Drugs Act 1971** and the **Psychoactive Substances Act 2016**, which together define controlled drugs and make the supply of psychoactive substances an offence. Nitrous oxide has been a Class C controlled drug since November 2023.
- **Tobacco and Vapes Act 2025** – disposable vapes are banned, and it is an offence to sell tobacco products to anyone born on or after 1 January 2009. This means it is illegal for any current Notre Dame student to be sold tobacco, now and for the rest of their lives.
- **Equality Act 2010** and the Public Sector Equality Duty – sanctions and support are applied with regard to students' protected characteristics and special educational needs.
- **Information Sharing: advice for practitioners** (Department for Education, May 2024), the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.

2. Scope of this Policy

Unless explicitly stated otherwise, this policy applies to all students, staff, volunteers, governors and visitors of the school.

For the purposes of this policy, a drug is a substance that affects the way in which the body functions physically, emotionally or mentally, including:

- all illegal drugs (those controlled by the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, including cannabis, cocaine, MDMA, ketamine and nitrous oxide);
- all legal drugs, including alcohol, tobacco, nicotine products and vapes, volatile substances (those giving off a gas or vapour which can be inhaled), khat and alkyl nitrites (poppers);

- psychoactive substances covered by the Psychoactive Substances Act 2016;
- all over-the-counter and prescription medicines, where misused or held without authorisation;
- any other substance taken to alter mood, perception or behaviour.

By drugs paraphernalia we mean items associated with drug use such as cannabis grinders, rolling papers, filters, matches, lighters, pipes, vaping devices and cartridges, nitrous oxide canisters and balloons. Because the nature of drug misuse changes constantly this list is illustrative, not exhaustive.

3. Drugs on School Premises

The legal definition of school premises includes everything within the property boundaries including buildings, outbuildings, playgrounds and fields, and extends to other settings such as vehicles, marquees or any venue managed by the school at the time, for example the premises used for a school trip, visit or residential.

For Sixth Form students who are allowed to leave site during free time such as study periods, break and lunchtime, this policy also applies to the areas around school where students congregate socially, for example the grounds of Ranmoor Church and the Ranmoor shops. This includes any local place where numbers of our students gather and are identifiable as Notre Dame students.

4. The School's Stance Towards Drugs, Health and the Needs of Students

The school considers that all drugs have the potential to cause harm if misused. With the following exceptions, the possession, use or supply of drugs, or of equipment associated with drug use, within the school boundaries is unacceptable.

The only exceptions are:

- **Medicines:** students prescribed and over-the-counter medicines are managed in line with the Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions procedures and the Allergy Safety Policy. Staff and adult visitors may carry medication for their own personal use, kept securely and out of reach of students.
- **Volatile substances:** hazardous chemicals are stored and used legitimately in school in line with the Health and Safety Policy and COSHH assessments.
- **Alcohol:** may occasionally be authorised by the Headteacher for consumption by adults over the age of 18 (not including students aged 18) as part of parent and carer, community or staff events, including raffle prizes at the Summer Festival.
- **Tobacco and vapes:** staff and adult visitors may carry tobacco and vaping products but may not smoke or vape anywhere on the school site.

5. Alcohol

No student may bring alcohol on to school premises or consume it during the course of a school day, a school activity or while identifiable as a Notre Dame student.

Any staff, student, parent, carer or visitor under the effects of alcohol will be asked to leave the premises and return at a later date, for the safety of the whole school community. Parents will be asked to collect their child from school and will be encouraged to seek medical advice. Where a student is significantly intoxicated the medical emergency procedure in section 8 applies.

6. Smoking and Vaping

School premises are a no-smoking and no-vaping site at all times. Students are not permitted to bring smoking or vaping materials to school, including tobacco, vapes, e-liquids, nicotine pouches, matches and lighters. In the interests of health and safety, any such item found in a student's possession will be confiscated and disposed of, and parents will be informed.

Smoking or vaping on site, within sight of the school premises, or while identifiable as a Notre Dame student will normally result in a suspension, applied in line with the Behaviour and Relationships Policy and with regard to the individual circumstances of the student.

Under the Tobacco and Vapes Act 2025 it is illegal to sell tobacco to anyone born on or after 1 January 2009 and illegal to sell vapes to anyone under 18; disposable vapes are banned entirely. Where a student is found with these products the school will therefore always consider how they were obtained. Students who wish to stop smoking or vaping are supported through the pastoral team and referral to the school nurse or The Corner.

7. Illegal Drugs, Psychoactive Substances and Solvents

No illegal drugs, psychoactive substances or drugs paraphernalia may be brought on to or used on school premises. Bringing any such items on to school premises is a serious breach of this policy. Seeking to influence or glamorise the use of drugs or psychoactive substances, either in person or through social media, messaging or gaming platforms, is also a serious breach of this policy.

The school will ensure that potentially hazardous substances it authorises are stored safely, and students will be supervised if it is necessary for them to come into contact with them in the course of their work. Students are not permitted to be in possession of solvents. Bringing solvents or hazardous substances on to school premises is a serious breach of this policy.

8. Medical Emergencies

Where a student appears to be unwell, intoxicated or unconscious as a result of drug or alcohol use, staff will:

1. Call for a first aider immediately and, where the student is unconscious, has difficulty breathing, is fitting or cannot be roused, call 999 without delay.
2. Stay with the student, place them in the recovery position if unconscious, and keep them calm and warm.
3. Not attempt to make the student vomit or give them anything to eat or drink.
4. Retain any substance, packaging or vaping device found for the ambulance crew or medical staff.
5. Inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead and a member of the Senior Management Team, who will contact parents or carers.
6. Record the incident on CPOMS and complete the accident and incident report.

9. Responses to Drug-Related Incidents

A drug incident may be any of the following:

- finding drugs or drug-related paraphernalia on school premises;
- possession of drugs or paraphernalia by an individual on school premises;
- use of drugs or paraphernalia by an individual on school premises;
- supply, or arranging the supply, of drugs or paraphernalia on school premises;
- an individual disclosing information about their own drug use;
- a student reporting the drug use of parents, staff or other students;
- hiding drugs or paraphernalia in or around the school premises for later collection, by themselves or by third parties;
- glamorising or encouraging the use of drugs and other substances, including online.

Any response to a drug-related incident must balance the needs of the individual student concerned with the safety of the wider school community.

Parents, students and staff must understand that possession of, and/or dealing in, illegal drugs or drug-related paraphernalia on site may lead to permanent exclusion for students and to dismissal for staff. The school will consider this option as part of its response to any breach of this policy. Decisions on sanctions follow the Behaviour

and Relationships Policy and the Suspension and Permanent Exclusion guidance, take account of any special educational needs or disability, and are proportionate to the incident.

Safeguarding

Every drug-related incident is also a safeguarding matter. The Designated Safeguarding Lead is informed of every incident and considers whether the student may be a victim of child criminal exploitation, including county lines activity, or of other harm. Students who are found supplying drugs are treated first as children who may be exploited, and a referral to the Sheffield Safeguarding Hub is made where the threshold is met. Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026) and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy are followed throughout.

Management of Incidents

A member of the Senior Management Team, normally the Director of Inclusion, is responsible for coordinating the management of drug-related incidents, offering sources of support and liaising with outside agencies. Incidents are dealt with after an assessment of the situation, recorded on CPOMS, and reported to the Headteacher. Where the breach of this policy involves criminal activity, the incident is reported to South Yorkshire Police. Drug-related incidents are reported termly to Governors in the Headteacher's Report.

10. Drug Misuse Outside the School Premises

The school may impose sanctions on a student for misusing drugs outside school when the student is:

- taking part in any school-organised or school-related activity;
- travelling to or from school;
- wearing school uniform or otherwise identifiable as a student at the school.

The school may also impose sanctions for misusing drugs at any time, whether or not the conditions above apply, if the misuse:

- could have repercussions for the orderly running of the school;
- poses a threat to another student or member of the public;
- could adversely affect the reputation of the school.

11. Searching and Confiscation

The Headteacher has authorised members of the Pastoral Team, the Senior Management Team and Behaviour Managers to search students in line with Searching, Screening and Confiscation (Department for Education, July 2022, the current edition). Controlled drugs, alcohol and tobacco are prohibited items under that guidance; vaping products, drugs paraphernalia and psychoactive substances are items banned by the Behaviour and Relationships Policy which may be searched for. Staff may search for any of these without a student's consent where they have reasonable grounds to suspect the student is carrying them. Staff should seek the student's cooperation and explain what they are looking for, but a student's agreement is not required. Wherever possible a member of the Senior Management Team is informed before a search proceeds; where there is an immediate risk of serious harm, staff act without delay and call for support. Staff follow the school's Student Search Quick Guide for pastoral staff.

Screening with a handheld metal detector wand may also be used, in line with the school's Metal Detector Wand Screening Procedure. Screening does not require suspicion of an individual student or their consent; a student who refuses to be screened may be refused entry to the premises and the matter is managed under the Behaviour and Relationships Policy.

- Reasonable grounds may include a direct report, the smell of cannabis or vapour, observed behaviour, or a student's conduct in a location where drug use is suspected. Students being found together in a locked space such as a toilet cubicle may, depending on the circumstances, give rise to reasonable grounds for suspicion and is in any case treated as a potential breach of the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy requiring a response.

- The member of staff carrying out the search must be the same sex as the student, and a second member of staff, also of the same sex where possible, must be present as a witness. The only exception is where the searcher reasonably believes there is a risk of serious harm if the search is not carried out immediately and it is not practicable to summon another member of staff.
- Staff may require a student to remove outer clothing (coat, jacket, hat, shoes, jumper) and may search pockets, bags, lockers and desks. Staff will never carry out an intimate search or require the removal of any other clothing.
- Where a student refuses to be searched, staff will not use force to search for drugs. The refusal is managed under the Behaviour and Relationships Policy and the police may be called.
- Parents or carers are always informed when a student has been searched, what was found and what action has been taken.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead is informed of every search that finds a prohibited item or that raises a safeguarding concern, so that the student's wider welfare is considered.
- Where a mobile phone or other device is confiscated and may hold evidence of drug supply, staff do not examine its contents. The device is secured and passed to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, who decides whether examination is justified under the statutory guidance or whether the device should be handed to the police.
- Every search is recorded on CPOMS: the reason, staff involved, outcome, items found, actions taken and safeguarding considerations.

Strip Searches

Staff will never conduct a strip search. A strip search may only be carried out by the police, in line with the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 Code C, with an appropriate adult present unless the student specifically requests otherwise and the appropriate adult agrees. The Designated Safeguarding Lead must be informed before any police strip search takes place on school premises and will ensure the student is supported afterwards. Parents or carers are always informed.

Confiscation and Disposal

Any drug or drug-related item found is confiscated. Suspected controlled drugs are stored securely, witnessed and recorded, and handed to South Yorkshire Police for legal destruction as soon as practicable; the school does not attempt to identify or test substances. Alcohol, tobacco, vapes and nicotine products are disposed of by the school and not returned. Where a substance is legal but unauthorised, for example an over-the-counter medicine, it is returned to the parent or carer. Where possession, use or supply is suspected the school contacts the police for advice, and the police decide what course of legal action, if any, should be taken.

12. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

The school will always seek to work with parents and carers when information about, or allegations of, drug use are received. There may be occasions when, for safeguarding reasons, this is not appropriate; in those cases the Designated Safeguarding Lead decides on the approach in consultation with Children's Social Care.

Complete confidentiality can never be promised to a student. Where a student discloses drug use, their own or another person's, staff follow the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and the guidance given in annual safeguarding training, and record the disclosure on CPOMS.

Following a drug incident, the school shares information as required and appropriate, in line with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR, the school Privacy Notice, and the Department for Education's Information Sharing: advice for practitioners (May 2024). Information is shared with parents and carers, the police, Children's Social Care, the student's GP and other professionals as appropriate; data protection is never a barrier to sharing information needed to keep a child safe.

13. Support for Students

At Notre Dame the welfare of the student is paramount. Intervention is made whenever the school considers that a student is showing signs which indicate particular risks of, or from, involvement with drugs, whether their own use or that of parents, carers or others in the household. Early intervention is significant, and support may include:

- support and advice in school from the form tutor, Head of Year, Behaviour Managers, the school counsellor, the Inclusion Team and the school nurse;
- referral to The Corner, Sheffield's specialist drug and alcohol service for young people aged 10 to 18, or to other specialist agencies;
- a Team Around the Child meeting or Early Help Assessment involving the family;
- working with South Yorkshire Police, including the school's liaison officers;
- working with Children's Social Care where the threshold for a referral is met;
- support for students affected by a parent's or carer's substance use, including through Sheffield Young Carers.

Students returning to school following a suspension for a drug-related incident have a reintegration meeting and a pastoral support plan agreed with parents or carers, which will normally include targeted drug education.

14. Drug Education

Drug and alcohol education is delivered as part of the statutory Relationships, Sex and Health Education curriculum in every year group and is planned in line with the school's RSHE Policy. It covers the physical and mental health effects of drugs, alcohol, tobacco, vaping and nitrous oxide; the law, including the Tobacco and Vapes Act 2025; the links between drug supply and criminal exploitation; how to resist pressure and seek help; and where to find support. Content is age-appropriate, evidence-based and reviewed annually with input from The Corner and the school nurse, and is reinforced through the Ready, Respect, Safe form-time programme, assemblies and drop-down days. Staff receive training on recognising the signs of drug use and exploitation as part of annual safeguarding training.

15. Staff, Volunteers and Visitors

Staff, volunteers and visitors must not be under the influence of alcohol or drugs while on site or while responsible for students, must not smoke or vape anywhere on the premises, and must keep any personal medication secure. Concerns about a member of staff are managed under the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy (allegations and low-level concerns) and the Trust's disciplinary procedures. Support for staff affected by substance use is available through the Trust's employee assistance programme.

16. Useful Organisations

The Corner (Sheffield)	Free, confidential drug and alcohol advice, support and treatment for young people aged 10–18 in Sheffield, and support for parents and carers. 91 Division Street, Sheffield S1 4GE. Tel: 0114 275 2051 (Monday–Friday, 9am–5pm). WhatsApp: 07570 948925. Email: thecorner.sheffield@cgl.org.uk . www.changegrowlive.org/the-corner-sheffield
FRANK	National drugs information and advice service for young people, parents and carers. 24-hour helpline: 0300 123 6600. Text: 82111. www.talktofrank.com
Alcohol Change UK	Works to reduce alcohol-related harm and improve services. Tel: 020 3907 8480. Email: contact@alcoholchange.org.uk . www.alcoholchange.org.uk

Drinkline	Free, confidential helpline for anyone concerned about their own or someone else's drinking. Tel: 0300 123 1110 (weekdays 9am–8pm, weekends 11am–4pm).
Drinkaware	Independent charity promoting responsible drinking and reducing alcohol harm. www.drinkaware.co.uk
ASH (Action on Smoking and Health)	Public health charity working to reduce the harm caused by tobacco and nicotine. Tel: 020 7404 0242. Email: enquiries@ash.org.uk . www.ash.org.uk
Re-Solv	National charity providing information on solvent and volatile substance abuse for teachers, professionals, parents and young people. Information line: 01785 810762. Text: 07496 959930. Email: info@re-solv.org . www.re-solv.org
DrugWise	Independent centre of expertise on drugs, alcohol and tobacco, providing detailed drug information for professionals. www.drugwise.org.uk
Coram Children's Legal Centre	Free legal advice and information on all aspects of law affecting children and young people. Child Law Advice Line: 0300 330 5480. www.childlawadvice.org.uk
Family Lives	Support and information for anyone parenting a child or teenager. Helpline: 0808 800 2222. www.familylives.org.uk
Sheffield Young Carers	Support for children and young people caring for a family member, including those affected by parental substance use. www.sheffieldyoungcarers.org.uk