Manchester Hospital School

Drugs Policy

(Including illegal drugs, alcohol and legal highs)

Document Control	
Title	Drugs Policy
Policy Number	MHS026
Date	September 2026
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Purpose of the policy	Sets out education and action around drugs
Related policies/guidance	Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy Restrictive Intervention Policy Exclusions Policy Behaviour and Relationships policy Supporting pupils with medical needs
Review	Every 2 years (September 2028)
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Date adopted by	**13th October 2026 Full Governing Body**

Under the Public Sector Equality Duty, Manchester Hospital School has due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010; to advance equality of opportunity between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it and to foster good relations across all protected characteristics. Manchester Hospital School will take into account equality considerations when policies are being developed, adopted and implemented.

Manchester Hospital School serves the needs of a very large and diverse range of children, young people and their families at times when they are extremely vulnerable. Our core purpose as a school is to uphold the child's right to Education and our policies and procedures are necessary to keep staff and children safe . We acknowledge that our students are often living with a range of very complex medical conditions including mental ill health and therefore we keep the needs of the student at the heart of all decisions. We will , therefore, work within the parameters of all statutory policies whilst seeking to understand and support the child's long term education and health needs.

Rationale

Drug misuse is a major threat to individuals, families and the wider community. Drug education enables pupils to make healthy informed choices.

All drugs, both legal and illegal, have the potential to harm; but some drugs are more harmful than others. For a small number of people, drugs have serious and far reaching consequences not only for themselves, but their families, their communities and society in general. For young people in particular, drugs can impact on their education, their relationships with family and friends and prevent them from reaching their full potential. All young people need to be able to make safe, healthy and responsible decisions about drugs, both legal and illegal. Schools play a central role in helping them make such decisions by providing education about the risk and effects of drugs; by developing their confidence and skills to manage situations involving drugs; by creating a safe and supportive learning environment; and ensuring that those for whom drugs are a concern receive appropriate support. However, schools cannot act alone. They are part of a broader prevention picture which includes parents/carers and a range of partner agencies. By working together, we can help young people navigate their way through what is a complex social issue.

Purpose of this policy

Drug and Alcohol misuse is a major threat to individuals, families and the wider community. Drug and Alcohol education enables pupils to make healthy informed choices.

The policy aims to:

- ensure that Manchester Hospital School is free from the misuse of drugs, alcohol, and other substances
- make clear to staff, parents and pupils the school’s approach to the problem of drugs and alcohol

- provide opportunities for pupils to acquire knowledge and understanding about the dangers of drug and alcohol misuse
- explain the law and the procedures to be followed in responding to drug-related incidents
- contribute towards the Healthy Schools agenda by improving the capacity of young people to make informed choices
- set out the various responsibilities

Definitions and terminology

For the purpose of this policy the term 'drugs' refers to NPS (legal highs), alcohol and all illegal drugs - including substances accessed by young people through the use of vaping devices.

Roles and Responsibilities

Manchester Hospital School has a duty to ensure that all employees know the law concerning illegal drugs, and the actions that should be taken when possession or supply or production of either legal or illegal drugs is suspected.

The Head Teacher

The Head Teacher has a duty as the occupier of the premises and body concerned with the management of the premises not to knowingly permit the smoking of cannabis on the premises, or the production, attempted production, supply or attempted supply or offering to supply any controlled drug.

The Head Teacher has the responsibility for:

• the implementation of the policy
• liaison with the Council and parents
• ensuring that all staff, parents and pupils are aware of the policy and its implications
• liaison with external agencies as appropriate
• the training and support of staff

The Head Teacher will ensure that there is a planned drugs and alcohol education programme as part of the PSHE curriculum (and other appropriate areas of the curriculum e.g. Science).

The Head Teacher is responsible for liaison with the media when necessary.

Attitudes

We aim to extend the child's knowledge of themselves and the world they live in by providing a caring, secure and supportive environment. We hope that children will make informed choices as a result of this policy.

Content

Each child will have access to drugs education, regardless of gender, ability or race. Access will be matched to their particular needs or concerns of the class.

Children will be made aware of the effects of drugs for the individual, the family and the wider community. Teachers provide positive models in their attitude and approach to drugs. Additional help and support is available to pupils to understand the effects and misuse of drugs if required; this may involve a multi agency approach.

Curriculum Planning

Early Years and Key Stage One

Children will explore the role of drugs as medicine and understand that all drugs can be harmful if not used properly.

Key Stage Two

Children will look at the issues that all drugs have harmful effects if not used properly and that some drugs are illegal. There will be a variety of activities that address the harmful effects of drugs and the associated risks.

Key Stage Three

Drugs education is covered as part of a focus on high-risk behaviours together with alcohol and smoking. Pupils develop knowledge about the types of drugs, their effects and consequences of misuse.

Key Stage Four

Drugs education is covered with a focus on high-risk behaviours where the main emphasis is on personal health, personal safety, life choices and the effects of misuse on personal relationships. Pupils also learn about the wider consequences of misuse for mental health, employment, finances and the family. Pupils are encouraged to develop the life skills required to make sensible choices now and in the future.

Action to be taken in incidents involving misuse of drugs or alcohol:

It is vitally important that staff, pupils and parents are clear about the action that will be taken in any drug or alcohol related incident. The Head Teacher/ Site Lead will ensure that a thorough investigation has taken place before any sanction is applied.

• Staff will ensure that all cases of misuse of drugs or alcohol, or suspected misuse, are reported to the Site Lead.

• In all instances involving substance misuse or supply on the school premises parents/carers will be informed, and their cooperation sought.

• The school will consider each drug incident separately and consider the appropriate response, bearing in mind the circumstances of the case, and the need to balance the interests of the student, other members of the school and the wider community. School has a legal duty to cooperate with the police.

• Manchester Hospital School believes that it is essential that parents and pupils are clear about the sanctions that may be applied in particular instances, as follows:

a) a student who supplies any drugs or other solvents (whether legal or illegal, and regardless of the seriousness of the use) on school premises may have their placement at the school terminated.

'Supply' includes retailing drugs on the premises, communicating with a drug dealer on behalf of another student, introducing fellow pupils to a drug dealer, and any other instance of procuring legal or illegal drugs for him/herself or other pupils. 'Supply' includes supplying for money or free-of-charge.

In the case of the supply of a drug which is legal (including over-the-counter drugs) the Head Teacher will assess the seriousness of the incident before deciding the response. Before making a decision on exclusion the Head Teacher will ensure that a thorough investigation has been carried out.

b) a student who has any legal or illegal drug in his/her possession may be excluded for a fixed period for a first offence, to be determined by the Head Teacher after considering all the circumstances of the case.

c) The Head Teacher/Site Lead will also determine what counselling needs to be provided and/or other action needs to be taken during or after the exclusion.

Other adults

All adults involved in the classroom activities are bound by school policy. Their role is dependent upon the class-teacher's direction in these matters. Outside speakers, i.e. police, nurses and social workers may be asked to address drug issues and drug abuse.

Parents

Manchester Hospital School will encourage parents and support their efforts on drug awareness and prevention. This could be through parent meetings and signposting to relevant support.

Staff training

In addition to in-house staff training on drug awareness, the school will send selected staff on courses to maintain an up-to-date approach to drug education.

Staff in possession/under the influence of drugs or alcohol

Any member of staff involved in the possession/under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs, or involved in the sale of illegal drugs will be reported immediately to the police, and may be suspended by the Head Teacher at any point during the school day, on or off the premises. A member of staff involved in the possession or sale of drugs whether inside or outside the school may face summary dismissal for gross misconduct and referral to the LADO.

Medication in school

Prescription-only medicines* will only be administered at school:

- When it would be detrimental to the pupil's health or school attendance not to do so and
- Where we have parents' written consent

If a child receives a prescription which needs to be administered during school time, parents/carers are asked to complete a form providing information to the school of the details of the medication and giving consent for it to be administered in school. Any medication taken must be supervised by a first aider (unless in an emergency). Only First Aiders who are identified in the pupil's IHCP will administer medication.

*First aid trained staff can administer non-prescribed medications such as paracetamol with parents' permission. Permission must be sought for each dosage. This will be recorded and monitored to ensure that pupils are not given medications in excess of maximum dosages.

Controlled drugs

Controlled drugs are prescription medicines that are controlled under the Misuse of Drugs Regulations 2001 and subsequent amendments, such as morphine or methadone.

All controlled drugs are kept in a secure cupboard in the medical room and only named staff have access. This cupboard is locked at all times.

Controlled drugs will be easily accessible in an emergency and a record of any doses used and the amount held will be kept.

Health and Safety

The site lead will ensure that all staff are prepared to deal with a drug-related medical emergency by ensuring all staff know who the trained first aiders are and that staff can be easily and swiftly contacted using their work mobile phone. Professional medical help will be called immediately by staff attending at the scene - this will usually be via calling for an ambulance using 999. Staff attending the scene should notify the site lead and senior leadership team and the office will attempt to contact parents of those concerned.

Dealing with Incidents

In instances involving substance/ suspected possession, misuse or supply on the premises, and following discussion between staff members who know the student well, parents will be informed at the earliest opportunity by the Headteacher. The school and the parents can then work together to support the young person involved. Where it is known or suspected that substances are being brought into school, and/or being sold on the premises, details regarding those involved will be passed to the Community Police Officer. All incidents involving substances have extremely serious implications for school life and the children concerned. The school will consider each substance incident individually and recognise that a variety of responses will be necessary to deal with incidents. Exclusion of the student could be considered an appropriate response. The school will consider very carefully the implications of any action it may take. It seeks to balance the interests of the student involved, other school members and the local community.

General powers of confiscation

Schools' general power to discipline, as set out in Section 91 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, enables a member of staff to confiscate, retain or dispose of a student's property as a disciplinary penalty, where reasonable to do so. Where the person finds other substances which are not believed to be controlled drugs these can be confiscated where a teacher believes them to be harmful or detrimental to good order and discipline. This would include new psychoactive substances or 'legal highs'. If school staff are unable to identify the legal status of a drug, it should be treated as a controlled drug.

Taking possession of controlled drugs

In taking temporary possession and disposing of suspected controlled drugs staff will:

• ensure that a second adult witness is present throughout

• seal the sample in a plastic bag and include details of the date and time of the seizure/find and witness present

• store it in a secure location, at Leo Kelly School, this will be in the medical room safe or other lockable container with access limited to senior members of staff

• notify the police without delay, who will collect it and then store or dispose of it in line with locally agreed protocols. The law does not require a school to divulge to the police the name of the student from whom the drugs were taken but Manchester Hospital School will share this information with police

• record full details of the incident, including the police incident reference number

• inform parents/carers, unless this is not in the best interests of the student

• identify any safeguarding concerns and develop a support and disciplinary response

*NB staff would not take possession of a controlled drug at our hospital sites or in a pupils home. The hospital staff and parent/carer will be responsible for this.

Offences outside of school

If a student is involved in a drug or alcohol related incident outside school the Head Teacher will assess the implications for the pupil and the school and determine the best course of action bearing in mind the interests of the student and the interests of the school and wider community.

The Media

The Headteacher will take responsibility for liaison with the media. As the issue of substance misuse is an emotive one and is likely to generate interest from the local and national media, the school will take appropriate advice and guidance from the police to ensure that any reporting of incidents remains in the best interests of the young people, their families and the school.

Support for students

Where appropriate, students will be signposted or referred to Eclypse for drug and alcohol related addiction.