



Holy Cross

CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

Pupil Drug and Alcohol Policy

'I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full' (John 10:10).

Statement of Intent

Holy Cross Catholic High School is committed to keeping pupils safe from drugs and alcohol, both on our premises and in the wider community. This policy has been developed in conjunction with DfE guidance to ensure that everyone is aware of the risks posed by the misuse of drugs and alcohol.

The school maintains the view that alcohol and drug use on school premises is entirely unacceptable. For this reason, we aim to foster an approach of supportive discipline, whereby pupils who are facing issues with drugs and alcohol are aided through both internal and external support, as well as disciplinary measures where appropriate, to make more healthy and positive choices and to reframe their attitudes towards drugs and alcohol.

For the purposes of this policy, a drug is defined as any substance which, when ingested, alters perception and the way the body works. This definition includes but is not limited to:

- All illegal substances
- Alcohol
- Tobacco
- Solvents
- Medicines
- Legal highs
- Vapes

We are committed to:

- Providing a safe and healthy environment for the school community
- Providing a robust policy which outlines our approach to supporting pupils struggling with drugs and alcohol misuse
- Developing and improving the policy by reviewing it after any incident
- Educating pupils on the dangers of drug and alcohol misuse
- To ensure that Holy Cross Catholic High School is free from illegal drugs (and solvents)
- To provide opportunities for pupils to practice the personal and social skills and the strategies needed to deal with situations involving drugs

Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Children and Families Act 2014
- Education Act 2011
- Health Act 2006
- DfE (2026) Keeping children safe in education 2026
- DfE (2018) Mental health and behaviour in schools

Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Body is responsible for:

- Ensuring that effective policies and procedures are in place to make sure that pupils are kept safe from alcohol and drugs at school
- Ensuring that this policy is maintained and disseminated to all relevant stakeholders

- Ensuring that pupils experiencing difficulties with alcohol and/or drugs can access the support they need
- Working with the Headteacher, and in liaison with staff, parents, pupils, health and other professionals, to ensure that the relevant curriculum, eg Personal Development, addresses the needs of pupils and the local community, and reflects current trends
- Ensuring that the designated safeguarding governor submits an annual written report to the governing board concerning drug- and alcohol-related incidents and concerns

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- The day-to-day management of this policy
- Providing a safe environment for all members of the school community
- Working with governors to ensure compliance with relevant legislation
- Informing the Governing Body, via the designated safeguarding governor, of any issues and developments concerning drugs and alcohol
- Acting on any concerns arising from pupils' use of drugs and alcohol
- Informing parents of any drug- and alcohol-related incidents concerning their child, where appropriate and where doing so will not place the child at risk
- Inviting the local police and drugs team into school to raise awareness of the risks and issues associated with drugs
- Informing the police of any drug- or alcohol-related decision, where they deem it appropriate to do so
- Ensuring a consistent approach to managing drug and alcohol incidents

The DSL is responsible for:

- Ensuring that staff have the skills to teach and discuss issues relating to drugs and alcohol
- Ensuring that pupils experiencing difficulties with drugs or alcohol are provided with appropriate internal support and referred to external support agencies as appropriate – such as We are with You
- Consulting with pupils to inform provision around drugs and alcohol education
- Accessing appropriate training to enable them to successfully advise the school on drug and alcohol matters
- Liaising with local services as necessary to provide support for pupils
- Assisting with the monitoring and review of this policy

Staff are responsible for:

- Attending scheduled training concerning drugs and alcohol, including how to spot the signs and symptoms of use and dependency, identifying paraphernalia, and how to respond to a drug related incident
- Reporting concerns regarding pupils' use of drugs and alcohol to the DSL

The site manager is responsible for:

- Regularly checking the school premises for signs of drug and alcohol use and reporting any concerns to the DSL

Pupils are responsible for:

- Ensuring they do not bring illegal or prohibited drugs or alcohol onto school premises or whilst engaged in any off-site activity representing the school
- Ensuring they do not take drugs or consume alcohol whilst travelling to or from school
- Contributing to the development of this policy by providing feedback on the effectiveness of

the drugs and alcohol education provided, and on how incidents are managed

- External agencies are responsible for supporting the school with drug and alcohol issues as required

Staff Training

The school recognises that early intervention can prevent drug misuse. As such, designated staff will receive training in identifying the signs that a pupil may be at risk annually, at the start of each academic year.

The Curriculum

All pupils will receive regular guidance on drugs and alcohol as part of the Personal Development curriculum, in line with the Sex and Relationship Education Policy (SRE).

Lessons will be delivered as appropriate to the age and phase of the pupils and will be differentiated according to individual learning styles.

Information about drugs and alcohol will feature regularly as part of pastoral education in the form of classes and assemblies. Where appropriate, visitors and external speakers will lead classes on drug and alcohol misuse.

Specific Types of Drug

Smoking/Vapes/E-cigarettes

In accordance with part 1 of the Health Act 2006 and the school's Smoke-free Policy, the school is a smoke-free environment. Parents, visitors and staff will not smoke on school grounds and must avoid smoking in front of pupils and/or encouraging pupils to smoke. This includes all buildings, out-buildings, playgrounds, playing fields and sheltered areas. Pupils found smoking, or in possession of cigarettes, tobacco, vapes or e-cigarettes can expect their parents to be informed and appropriate punishment administered. Subsequent offences may result in suspension.

Legal drugs and prescribed medicines

The school recognises that some pupils may require medications that have been prescribed by a doctor or other health professional. Parents have the primary responsibility for their child's health and the school will request all relevant information about pupils' medical conditions from parents. Medicines will only be permitted to be brought onto the premises if it would be detrimental to the child's health if medicines were not administered during their time at the school.

The school will only accept medicines which have been prescribed by a doctor, dentist, nurse or pharmacist, with the exception of over-the-counter painkillers, eg paracetamol, which may be taken in accordance with package instructions.

The school will only accept medicines which are provided in the original container as dispensed and include the prescriber's instructions for administration and dosage.

Solvents

Pupils will not be permitted to bring solvent-based products onto the premises including, but not limited to, aerosol deodorants, compressed air and aerosol hairspray.

The school will ensure that potentially hazardous solvents are stored safely, and pupils will be

supervised if they are required to come into contact with them.

Pupils found to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol

Unless it is a medical emergency, or where there is aggressive or threatening behaviour, pupils found to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol whilst on school premises will be escorted to a member of SLT, where they will be assessed.

The school will decide whether it is appropriate to notify the pupil's parent – parents will generally be informed unless the school feels there is a safeguarding concern which means that telling the pupil's parent may put them at risk. Where the school determines parents should be notified, they will be contacted and asked to collect the pupil from the premises. The pupil will remain in the SLT office until their parent arrives. In the event the school chooses not to inform the pupil's parents, the pupil will be taken to the Pastoral Coordinator's office, where they will be given water and offered pastoral support.

Medical emergencies

In drug- or alcohol-related medical emergencies, trained first aiders will be summoned and care will be provided in line with the First Aid Policy. A staff member will remain with the casualty until the trained first aider arrives. Other pupils will be removed from the immediate area as soon as is reasonably practicable.

Following assessment by the first aider, a decision will be made as to whether an ambulance will be called. The pupil's parent will be telephoned and told about the incident.

If the pupil is felt to be at risk, the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will come into effect and social services will be contacted.

All accidents and incidents, including near misses or dangerous occurrences, will be reported to the HSE as soon as possible following the school's Health and Safety Policy. The [Medical Emergency Procedure](#) will be followed at all times.

Threatening behaviour

Aggressive and threatening behaviour by pupils under the influence of drugs or alcohol will be taken very seriously. Where aggressive and/or threatening behaviour is displayed, the school will contact the police where necessary.

Any pupil displaying aggressive and/or threatening behaviour will be removed from the premises. If a pupil displays this kind of behaviour, their parents will be contacted and sanctions will be implemented in line with the school's Behaviour Policy.

Searching

Under part 2, section 2 of the Education Act 2011, teachers are authorised by the Headteacher to search for any prohibited item including, but not limited to, tobacco, cigarette papers, illegal drugs and alcohol, without the consent of the pupil, if they have reasonable grounds for suspecting that the pupil is in possession of a prohibited item. Staff members may use common law to search pupils for any item with their consent.

A staff member carrying out the search can confiscate anything they have reasonable grounds for suspecting is a prohibited item. This includes “legal highs” and other potentially harmful materials which cannot immediately be identified.

Controlled Substances

Following the identification and confiscation of a controlled substance, a staff member will seal the sample in an envelope and include details of the date and time of the confiscation alongside the name of any witness(es) present. The staff member will store the sample in a secure location.

The incident will be reported immediately to the police, who will collect the sample and then deal with it in line with agreed protocols.

The school will consider, on a case-by-case basis, whether it is appropriate under the pupil’s specific circumstances to divulge the name of the pupil from whom the drugs were taken, and names will not be given to the police where the school cannot be certain beyond reasonable doubt that the pupil in question was the one in possession of the drugs.

A full incident report will be completed and submitted to the Headteacher.

Any further measures will be undertaken in line with the school’s Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Where controlled substances are found on school trips away from the school premises, the parents of the pupil, as well as local police, will be notified.

Safeguarding

The school understands that the misuse of drugs and alcohol can often be a sign of underlying issues.

Staff members are aware of the fact that alcohol and drug misuse can be an indicator of a safeguarding concern and is often an indicator of both child criminal and sexual exploitation. All staff are aware that behaviours linked to issues such as drug and alcohol misuse put pupils in danger. Staff will be particularly alert to the potential need for early help for a pupil who is misusing drugs or alcohol, or where it is observed or suspected that their parents or family members misuse drugs.

Pupils experiencing difficulties with drugs or alcohol will be provided with appropriate internal support and referred to external support agencies as appropriate. Support will be arranged and offered to pupils in line with the school’s Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

CCE is where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child into any criminal activity in exchange for something the victim needs or wants and/or for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or through violence or threats of violence. CCE can include children being forced to work in cannabis factories and being coerced into moving drugs across the country (known as county lines).

Staff will be made aware of the following potential indicators of CCE:

- Pupils who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions
- Pupils who associate with other young people involved in exploitation

- Pupils who suffer from changes in emotional wellbeing
- Pupils who misuse drugs and alcohol
- Pupils who regularly miss school

Staff members will be aware that illegal drug use or possession by pupils may indicate that they are victims of exploitation, even if it appears that illegal activity regarding drugs is something to which they have consented. The DSL will use their professional judgement to ensure they can reasonably rule out CCE as an explanation for a pupil's drug-related behaviour before pursuing other support and disciplinary procedures, rather than making assumptions about the pupil's intentions.

Staff will be alert to the indicators above and all concerns relating to CCE will be managed in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Managing Incidents

Instances of pupils being involved in drug and/or alcohol incidents will be managed in line with the relevant school policies, including the Behaviour Policy, Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Following an incident, the Headteacher will work with key members of staff, including the DSL, to decide on the most appropriate course of action to take. This action will include discipline being enforced in line with the Behaviour Policy, or informing the police in severe circumstances.

Any pupil involved in illegal drugs when he/she is under the school's authority can expect to be permanently excluded from school and the Police will be informed.

Being under the school's authority means:

- Throughout the school day, whenever on or off the premises
- Whenever he/she is involved in any activity organised by the school
- Whenever he/she is identifiable as a member of the school

Support will be arranged for pupils involved in any alcohol- or drug-related incidents, in line with relevant school policies.

Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed by the Headteacher in liaison with the DSL.

Updated: Summer 2026

Review: Summer 2027