



Prior Park Schools

An Education for Life

DRUGS AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE POLICY FOR PRIOR PARK COLLEGE

Whole Trust? Yes	Statutory? Yes	Website? Yes
Reviewed: September 2015	Next review: September 2019	



Prior Park Educational Trust, Charity No: 281242, Co. No: 01521832, Registered Office: Prior Park College, Ralph Allen Drive, Combe Down, Bath BA2 5AH

1. Statement of Policy

Prior Park College is committed to the health and safety of all members of its community and will take action to safeguard their well-being. Action will range from a programme of education, to better equip pupils to make informed decisions, to firm action to deter and correct abuse, involving the Police as appropriate.

Prior Park College condones neither the misuse of drugs or alcohol by members of the school nor the illegal supply of these substances. A central assumption in the Prior Park drugs education programme is that all drugs can be harmful to a varying and uncertain degree; that the misuse of legal drugs or the consumption of illegal drugs damages lives and self-respect; and that, in certain cases, the consumption of illegal substances or the abuse of legal drugs can be life-threatening. Members of the school engaging in drug and substance abuse endanger their position within the school.

The PSCHE programme and Assembly and Tutor time will include sessions relevant to good health and avoidance of harmful substances.

2. Policy Aims

We believe and support the following aims in respect of substance use and misuse:

- To provide accurate information about substances, including alcohol, tobacco, illegal drugs and dangerous substances;
- To increase understanding of the implications and possible consequences of use and misuse;
- to increase awareness of related health issues;
- to provide information about the law and legal consequences of substance abuse;
- to generate awareness of the wider social impact of use and abuse of a range of substances (including alcohol and tobacco);
- to enable members of the community to identify sources of appropriate personal support

3. Educational Programme

Through the taught curriculum (including science classes and the pastoral programme), the PSCHE Programme, and occasional lectures and presentations, members of the community will be given information and opportunities to discuss issues.

The school seeks to emphasis a healthy and positive life-style, and the campus is a “no smoking” environment. The school liaises with outside agencies to update and develop its provision. The Police, Off the Record, the local Drugs Education team, the R.N. Drugs Education Team, Alcoholics Anonymous, local doctors and professional lecturers have all contributed in recent years.

Key areas of concern are:

- Consumption of alcohol by young people underage or to excess is harmful to health and must be avoided. Pupils who abuse alcohol and break the Law are in breach of good sense and the PPC Behaviour Policy.

- Smoking of tobacco is known to be injurious to health and has no part in a school setting. Pupils who smoke will be detected and given educational material. Persistent smoking will result in restrictions and discussion of “stop smoking” personal plans, but it is not expected that young people will have established serious addiction. Appropriate sanctions will be applied to deter this harmful activity. Smoking in a building at PPC endangers the community as it is a fire hazard and pupils who do this face exclusion from school.
- Use of e-cigarettes (so called “vaping”) exposes people to the health damage of nicotine addiction and smoke inhalation and is unacceptable. Any pupils who engage in vaping will face sanctions.
- Misuse of items like nitrous oxide, aerosols and volatile adhesives are harmful and can even kill. Harmful substances must not be brought into school or used by PPC pupils. Pupils must not seek to misuse substances as such behaviour is high risk. Sanctions will be applied proportion to the danger created by breaking this expectation.
- Synthesised recreational substances pose a huge risk to young people and we seek to offer up to date guidance so people can avoid such materials. Engaging with such substances is contrary to the expectations of the school.
- Abuse of prescription drugs and painkillers. All medical drugs are issued at PPC under the guidance of the Medical Centre and we would not expect pupils to self-medicate. Pupils must beware of any dependency on such items.

4. **Vigilance and Response to Concerns**

Pastoral teams seek to maintain awareness of developments in this area and update material as knowledge changes. Tutors are central to delivery of our educational programme and in routine daily contact with pupils, being aware of changes in their behaviour and manner.

Experience indicates that the most likely source of information that an issue exists is the pupils themselves. Pupils tend to show concern for individuals and the standards of the community, recognising the seriousness of any drugs or substance abuse issue.

All staff, especially those with particular pastoral responsibilities, recognise the need to treat any information with the utmost seriousness and respect, treating it with sensitivity (whilst knowing they can never offer confidentiality and need to pass information, with all due care, to those senior staff in a position to act).

It may also be appropriate to engage with external agencies, like the Police and Childrens’ Services, if a major concern becomes evident.

5. **Assessing the Situation and Formal Investigation**

Preamble: Even though there is a great temptation to take it for granted that any issue of the use of illegal drugs will lead to major sanctions, it is important to grasp that the world of our pupils (and, indeed, young adults) is one in which the close proximity of a range of illegal drugs and incidents of illegal drugs and incidents of substance abuse can be assumed.

It is likely that pupils will encounter pushers and users in Bath, at parties (in holidays particularly), and experience discussion about social standards on, for example,

alcohol, tobacco and illegal drugs. The social acceptability of certain habits may challenge their own view and generate confusion.

Thus, in assessing culpability we must take account of the context and measure our response with care. We cannot tolerate behaviour damaging to individual and to community standards, but we must establish the facts and use authority and power to take disciplinary action to good effect.

a) Preparing for an Investigation

A clear plan needs to be formulated, respecting the principles of natural justice. Include the parents as soon as possible (see Appendix A, attached, from the Code of Conduct).

- If concerns arise from suspicions, concerns and information from staff/pupils, it is important that these are shared with parents.

It is better to act in co-operation with parents at an early stage, giving them a chance to intervene to nip a possible problem in the bud.

- If concerns arise from discovery of substances or physical evidence, the substance must be confiscated and taken to the Deputy Headmaster or Headmaster, who will place it in a sealed container. If a pupil seems intoxicated, staff should record their impression and seek other staff to further witness. Any intoxicated pupil must be put in a safe place.
- If concerns suggest a pupil is in possession of unacceptable substances (including alcohol, tobacco, drugs) he/she may be asked voluntarily to hand over such substances.

On suspicion, searches of a pupil's desk, locker or room may be made, but physical personal searches are not allowed. (If a pupil refuses to turn out his pockets/bag, parents may be notified or the police may be called). Any action must be proportionate to the issue identified and in line with the PPC protocol on conducting a search.

b) Policy on Testing

It is the policy of Prior Park College that where a view develops that there is a serious suspicion of the consumption of illegal drugs (or substance abuse) by a member of the community, pupils and parents must accept the testing for the presence of illegal drugs. This will be discussed with parents and a period of simple swab testing agreed. If any of these tests prove to be positive a further analysis will be sought, using a hair test or urine test administered by Medical Staff.

The school does not endorse a policy of random testing, but it insists on the right to conduct tests on the grounds of serious suspicion.

The school may use the following tests:

- i) a swab test - this is an initial step
- ii) a hair test or a urine test - this offers a more accurate and long term analysis of drug use by an individual

The tests will be co-ordinated by the Deputy Headmaster in liaison with the Medical Centre and parents.

In any instance of testing the dignity of the individuals involved will be upheld at all times and the procedure will follow a clear chain of custody and necessary sensitivity.

Refusal to accept a test, without reasonable excuse, may cause Prior Park College to draw an adverse inference and may result in a precautionary non-disciplinary exclusion from school as the issue is discussed.

Negative tests do not necessarily endorse innocence, whilst positive tests may, under certain circumstances, need yet further scrutiny before being taken as definitive evidence. Testing is there to produce information which may or may not be helpful to investigations or those being investigated.

6. Concluding the Investigation

When investigation procedures have been concluded parents/guardians may be invited to a personal meeting with the Headmaster. The pupil and Housemaster/Housemistress will attend.

The Headmaster will explain:

- i) what is alleged
- ii) the evidence
- iii) the consequences being considered
- iv) what the pupil has said or written
- v) what the Headmaster believes to be true

The Headmaster's decision will reflect input by parents and the pupil, allowing time for appropriate reflection.

Involvement with illegal drugs and substance abuse is a very serious matter and Appendix A to the Behaviour Policy makes clear the range of sanctions likely to be incurred.

The Community Handbook (sent to all parents) states that “...the use or distribution of illegal drugs is contrary to the ethos of PPC and threatens the welfare of the individual and the community. Major disciplinary sanctions are applied to protect the individual and community...”.

The Behaviour Policy make it clear that the Law of the Land must be observed. The use of illegal drugs is a breach of this fundamental belief and it undermines the values of the school. Our Behaviour Policy makes it clear that

“...the consumption or possession of illegal drugs is not allowed. A breach of this rule breaches the ethos of the school and will result in exclusion. Any attempt to sell illegal drugs is unacceptable. School and Police action will follow...”

The College's response will reflect this stance, giving due regard to the details of the offence and the age of the pupil, but recognising the seriousness of any drugs offence.

The Police will be informed in the following situations:

- i) where cases of pushing or dealing are discovered;
- ii) where the Police may wish to take over an investigation because of its potential ramifications;
- iii) where involvement by a pupil goes beyond casual, mis-informed or accidental use;
- iv) where substances need investigation/destruction.

DISCIPLINARY INCIDENTS

INVESTIGATION, SANCTIONS AND REVIEW

Context

Prior Park College has a duty of care to its pupils, and parents (or guardians) have a duty to ensure the attendance and good behaviour of their son/daughter. The expectations of the school are set out in the Code of Conduct, the Community Handbook, the Counter-Bullying Policy (including the Cyber-Bullying Policy), the Equal Opportunities Policy and the Drugs Policy. Pupils are expected to respond positively to the principles and rules of the school.

The Behaviour Policy indicates a staged response to misbehaviour and makes it clear that serious breaches of discipline must be referred to Housemasters/Housemistresses. Serious offences, even on the first occasion, may lead to suspension or expulsion, but the HM (or in his absence the Acting Head) has the prerogative of imposing this. Serious offences include:

- Bullying - including cyber-bullying
- The use of violence
- Sexual misconduct/impropriety, including sexting
- Misuse or illegal use of alcohol
- Possession or use of illegal drugs (in or out of school)
- Vandalism
- Serious 'hacking/misuse of computer systems (including downloading pornography)
- Serious theft or persistent theft
- Repeated smoking or smoking in any school building
- Cheating/plagiarism
- Possession of offensive weapons/dangerous items

This list is illustrative rather than inclusive. Breaches of the law, dangerous or reckless behaviour, and persistent flouting of school standards, including academic standards, would also warrant major sanctions.

Investigation

Awareness by staff of offences is likely to arise in a variety of ways. A teacher upon hearing of an offence or encountering an issue must act in accordance with school policy. Consider guidance given in the Behaviour Policy the Counter-Bullying Policy, the Drugs Policy and the Child Protection Policy. Teachers will need to inform the Housemaster or the Deputy Head Master. Any investigation (beyond preliminary discussion) must be conducted in accordance with a plan agreed by the Housemaster/Housemistress and probably conducted by him/her. The investigation of a serious offence should not be conducted by a member of staff who was witness to the alleged breach. Once a decision is made to launch an inquiry/investigation a plan must be defined:

- Decide the critical issues, and what inquiries could be reasonably made to resolve them
- Keep accurate written records of each stage of the investigation, including date, time, who was present, what was said, and where it took place
- When taking notes of an interview, read these notes back to the person being interviewed at the end to confirm their accuracy

- Add any written statements (by a pupil or person interviewed) to your documentation, completing an Incident Form as a cover sheet
- Be careful and even-handed in consideration of all available evidence
- Consider having another adult present during any discussion or interview
- Consider the age and vulnerability of the pupil/pupils being interviewed. Also consider the record of the pupil, his/her circumstances, peer pressure, frequency and severity of the behaviour and likelihood of recurrence
- Inform parents of the situation
- Written records should be collated and filed in the House files, with full copies to the DHM
- Any punishment/sanctions must be proportional to the offence committed (and consistent with the burden of probability) - sanctions are defined in the Code of Conduct. In exceptional circumstances an additional contract of personal behaviour or statement of intent may be negotiated and signed by pupil and parents.

Suspension and Expulsion

In the event of serious misbehaviour, matters are referred to the Deputy Headmaster/Head Master. Serious breaches of discipline can result in suspension or expulsion.

- A. Suspension/temporary exclusion** is applied for serious breaches of school rules and expectations. Only the Head Master (or in his absence the Acting Head) may suspend a pupil. This may occur in two forms:
- i) Fixed-term sanction - a pupil is excluded from the school for a defined period as a warning of the need to re-assess his/her behaviour. This is recorded on a pupil's disciplinary record.
 - ii) Removal of a pupil pending an investigation of a rumour or complaint concerning him/her. This is a neutral (not disciplinary) measure to allow an unimpeded investigation, and may also be taken for the good of the pupil by separating him/her from immediate school pressures.

The HM will make any such decision in consultation with HsMs and senior staff. HsMs will explain the matter to parents. There is no right to formal review of decisions to suspend, but parents may ask the Head Master to reconsider.

B. Expulsion or Permanent Withdrawal

- i) Expulsion/permanent exclusion - in the case of serious offences the Head Master may require a pupil to leave the school. Before making this decision the Head Master will have consulted the Chairman of Governors. Parents must be made aware that they can seek a Governors' Review.
- ii) Withdrawal of a pupil - for a breach of discipline which did not justify expulsion, but makes it impossible for the pupil to remain, the Head Master may request parents to withdraw a pupil. A consultation with parents will

take place, to discuss leaving status and to provide help; in finding a fresh start. If parents accede to this request, there will be no fees in lieu of notice. The fees/extras up to and including the end of the present term remain payable (without remission for unexpired weeks).

- iii) Required removal - following consultation, the Head Master is satisfied a pupil must leave, but parents refuse to withdraw the pupil. The head Master is entitled to suspend (or to continue suspension) and to inform parents that consideration will now be given to formally requiring the pupil's removal. The Head Master will set the timescale (e.g. 3 days) for his decision.

The HM will inform parents that if he comes to the conclusion that the child must be removed, the parents will be entitled to a review by Governors. However, they must realise that, if the decision is upheld, leaving status may be affected (and there may be financial consequences). When requiring removal the HM should state:

- The facts found
- Reasons for the decision
- The pupil's leaving status
- The financial position

If parents request a Governors' review they should be sent an application form and a copy of the review procedure without delay. Following receipt of a completed application from parents, the review should take place within 7 days, and preferably sooner (see Appendix A).