



READING BLUE COAT

Drugs and Drug Testing Policy

Introduction

Reading Blue Coat's Drug Policy is born out of our duty to safeguard the students within our care. It is also important for the maintenance of good order and discipline within the community, and for the protection of the School's reputation. Our policy also seeks to encourage respect for the rule of law.

All drugs have the potential to harm, but some drugs are more harmful than others. For a small number of people, drugs lead to 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 have an impact on their education, their relationships with family and friends and, of course, their futures. Sadly, there is also a clear relationship between drugs and organised crime.

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 police and a range of partner agencies. Parents are asked to give their wholehearted support to the implementation of this policy. By working together, we can help young people navigate their way through what is a complex social issue and safeguard everyone within the community.

As a school we are aware that young people face pressure to use or experiment with controlled drugs, and we aim to do all that we can to reduce those pressures.

Statement of Policy

It is the policy of Reading Blue Coat to actively discourage and, as far as possible, prevent the handling and use of controlled drugs. The School treats cases of handling and misuse by students as serious misconduct. It is also the policy of the School to focus on prevention through education; this forms an integral part of the PSHEE curriculum throughout all stages of a student's time at Blue Coat. These lessons are further supplemented through regular visiting speakers.

The purpose of this drug policy is to:

- clarify the legal requirements and responsibilities of the School
- reinforce and safeguard the health and safety of students and others at the School
- clarify the School's approach to drugs for all staff, students, governors, parents, external agencies and the wider community and the associated sanctions that may be given
- give guidance on developing, implementing, and monitoring drugs education

- enable staff to manage drugs on School premises and any incidents that occur with confidence and consistency, and in the best interests of those involved
- ensure that the response to incidents involving drugs complements the overall approach to drug education and the values and ethos of the School
- re-enforce the role of the School in contributing to local and national strategies.

This policy applies to all staff, students, parents, governors, and partner agencies working in the School. It includes journeys to and from School in School uniform, work experience, residential trips, and courses. Students must not bring controlled drugs (including so-called 'legal highs'), cigarettes, e-cigarettes, or alcohol onto the School site at any time.

This policy also applies to conduct outside of School, as this may have an impact upon the School community or on the reputation of the School. For example, action could be taken where one student supplied controlled drugs to another student outside school. Students must not bring drugs onto the School site or to any school activity or event at any time.

Further definitions: the definition of 'use' includes inhalation, injection or ingestion, either deliberately or recklessly. The definition of 'possession' includes having the drug or substance on one's person, clothing, and in one's belongings. 'Possession' may also include having knowingly concealed a drug or substance in another location with the intention of retrieving it in the future, including coercing another student to conceal the substance.

Definition of a Drug

The definition of a drug, as given by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, is: "*a substance people take to change the way they feel, think or behave.*"

The term 'drugs' and 'drug education', unless otherwise stated, is used throughout this document to refer to all drugs:

- all illegal drugs (those controlled by the *Misuse of Drugs Act 1971*)
- all over-the-counter and prescription medicines. (Please refer to the School's *First Aid Policy* for the management of prescription medicines whilst in school and on school trips).
- Novel or new psychoactive substances (commonly mis-named as 'legal highs'), including volatile substances (those giving off a gas or vapour which can be inhaled), alkyl nitrites (known as poppers). (*The Psychoactive Substances Act 2016* makes it an offence to supply, offer to supply, or possess such substances).
- all legal drugs, including alcohol and tobacco. Please note the School has a separate approach to dealing with alcohol and tobacco, as outlined in the *Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions Policy* and *Student Manual*.
- other drugs, which may not be illegal, and which may yet have a stimulating, intoxicating, or hallucinogenic effect
- performance enhancing drugs, anabolic steroids, glue, solvents and other substances held or supplied in each case for purposes of misuse
- all drug related paraphernalia

As described below, the School seeks to achieve its aims by:

- education and instruction,
- advice and assistance, and
- clear and firm disciplinary procedures.

It seeks to do so in co-operation with parents, who are asked to give their wholehearted support to the implementation of the policy.

Education and instruction

The education of students about drugs and their dangers forms part of the School's programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE), within the framework of the overall pastoral care programme. It includes classroom teaching, group discussions and talks by experts from outside the school.

All members of staff receive training about drugs so that they are alert to the warning signs of drug misuse and can respond appropriately when students seek advice or assistance.

Advice and assistance (ring-fencing)

Students are encouraged to discuss their anxieties about drugs with a member of staff or other responsible adult. Students also have access to information about outside agencies able to provide advice, support and assistance. Accredited counselling services can be recommended by the School to a student in appropriate circumstances.

Matters brought to light by a student or their parents, in circumstances which are genuine, will be 'ring-fenced' from the above disciplinary sanctions. In such cases, advice and support will be given to the student and their parents. The student may remain in the School if both the student and parents agree to a 'supportive regime' in which the student promises:

1. Not to breach the School's *Drugs & Drugs Testing Policy*, and
2. Agrees to regular and random testing at the parent's expense, for the remainder of their school career.

Such a circumstance would require cooperation from parents and the student with the School in every respect. And failure to cooperate with a reasonable request by the Senior Leadership Team, or a failed drug test, would result in the student being required to leave the School. (See Appendix, 'Supportive regime'.)

A student who is involved with drugs outside of this context will face the full disciplinary consequences.

Disciplinary procedures

Any suspected involvement (possession, use or supply) in drugs in circumstances to which this policy applies will be subject to the disciplinary process and procedures outlined below.

Investigation

If a member of staff has reason to suspect that a student is misusing drugs, they must report the situation to the Deputy Head (Pastoral), Second Master, or Headmaster, who will decide if further investigation or a drugs test is warranted. Suspicion of misuse may arise from: behavioural signs, such as deterioration in a student's wellbeing and/or performance and/or behaviour, their physical appearance, or other signs or evidence such as the finding of certain items of drugs related equipment, or other information that has been gathered.

Once it has been confirmed that there are reasonable grounds for suspecting that a student may have been misusing controlled drugs, the Headmaster, the Second Master, or Deputy Head (Pastoral) will be responsible for any further investigations which will normally be conducted through the Head of Year (and/or Director of Section). The student must be accompanied at

interview by another appropriate member of staff. Sources of information will not normally be disclosed. Any failure to cooperate may result in the drawing of adverse inferences. The School will make every effort to ensure that any investigation is conducted fairly, sensitively and with as much openness towards the affected student as circumstances may reasonably allow. The student's parents will be informed at the earliest opportunity.

The Headmaster, Second Master, or Deputy Head (Pastoral) may decide that a student and their belongings should be searched and/or tested. If required, the procedures laid out in *Searches & Confiscation Policy* (see Appendix 1) will be followed. As set out in Section 91 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, a member of staff may confiscate, retain or dispose of a student's property as a disciplinary penalty, where reasonable to do so. Where the member of staff finds other substances that are not believed to be controlled drugs, these can be confiscated if they believe them to be harmful or detrimental to good order and discipline. If staff are unable to identify the legal status of a drug, it should be treated as a controlled drug and further advice or clarification should be sought from senior staff.

In-School Testing Procedure ('Field Tests')

Testing is carried out in accordance with a strict procedure. This procedure is updated from time to time as experience and/or scientific advances indicate.

Where priority medical treatment is necessary this takes precedence over any testing requirements. If a student is under the influence of a drug and needs medical treatment, they must tell staff what they have taken, if they are in a fit state to do so, in order to receive the best help possible.

'For-cause testing'

In the event that there is reasonable suspicion, allegation or rumour that a student may be misusing controlled drugs, he or she may be asked to offer a biological sample for analysis. Parental consent of any student is not required for this to happen, if the student is of sufficient awareness and maturity to understand to consent. However, parents will be notified of the test taking place as soon as possible. If the student is not in a fit state on a given day to undergo a drug test, the School may require them to do so at a later stage.

Without good reason, refusal to provide a sample may be viewed as a 'positive test result'. If students refuse to agree to the drug testing procedure, then the School will suspend the student indefinitely. The student may potentially be permanently excluded from the School.

The School may make use of various testing technologies such as urine or hair samples, depending upon suitability and availability. If necessary, students may be asked to take a subsequent test for the purpose of confirmation (e.g., a hair test following a urine test).

In the case of a urine sample being provided, the student will be asked to give a sample in the Medical Centre using a suitable container provided by the School Nurse. The student's dignity and personal privacy will be respected in taking the sample, although the supervising member of staff will need to be present at the time of the test in order to ensure that the results are fair. Where a male student is concerned, a senior male member of staff should oversee the process and likewise for a female student, a senior female member of staff should oversee the process.

The School will make use of qualified, independent, and professional providers for hair sample tests and a member of the Senior Leadership Team will be available to supervise the testing if necessary. Every effort will be made to ensure the privacy and dignity of those undergoing tests.

Outcome of Testing

The School will always assist students who have been affected by drugs so they can find support from agencies who are specialists in assisting with addiction and drug problems. The School will always take a caring approach towards students and offer support, including in cases where significant sanctions are deemed to be necessary. The student and their families will be spoken with in a supportive and considerate way, with a focus on avoiding or getting off drugs, and moving on positively.

Any student under the influence of drugs, cigarettes, e-cigarettes, or alcohol in School, including journeys to and from school in School uniform, work experience, residential trips and courses may be removed from their lessons and activities in order that they can be medically assessed. Their parents may be contacted to collect them, should staff feel that this is necessary. In extreme cases whereby the student presents a danger to themselves or others, then the health services and/or the police may be informed. If an acute situation occurs, appropriate restraint may be used, in line with the School's *Use of Force to Control or Restrain a Student Policy*, to ensure the child is protected from hurting themselves or others.

Sanctions

Parents and students are reminded that under the terms of the contract signed by all parents (Terms and Conditions), a student may be permanently excluded or removed from the School at any time if, on the balance of probabilities, it is adjudged that a student has committed a grave breach of discipline or criminal offence (see Terms and Conditions 8.11). Both supply, use and possession of controlled drugs are criminal offences, and examples of gross misconduct for which a student would normally be removed from the School without notice (see *Permanent Exclusion & Required Removal Policy*).

Furthermore, parents and students are reminded that conduct outside school that may adversely affect the School's reputation is grounds for permanent exclusion without notice (see *Permanent Exclusion & Required Removal Policy*). Students at Reading Blue Coat are therefore expected to avoid any association with drugs both on and off the School site, both during term time and during the school holidays.

To be clear, a student may expect to be required to leave Reading Blue Coat if:

1. They have been involved with selling, distributing or otherwise actively encouraging possession or consumption of drugs, wherever and whenever that conduct takes place.
2. They are found to have supplied, handled, possessed or consumed controlled drugs while under jurisdiction of the School. ("Supplied" includes supplying for money or free-of-charge, communicating with a drug dealer on behalf of someone else, introducing fellow students to a drug dealer, or any other instance of procuring controlled drugs for another student, or from another student).
3. They attend school whilst under the influence of controlled drugs.
4. They are involved outside of School in the supply, handling, possession, consumption or incitement to the misuse of controlled drugs and in the view of the Headmaster this has, or may have, a negative impact on the School and its reputation, or on the student involved, or on other students, or on the wider community.
5. They refuse to undergo a drug test if it is requested by the Headmaster or another member of the Senior Leadership Team.

The School may determine whether a student's conduct falls in line with the above points 1-5 on the balance of probabilities having regard to the information known to the School, whether or not such information would be legally admissible as evidence.

As outlined in the School's Terms and Conditions (section 8), the Headmaster is entitled to exercise a wide discretion in relation to the School's policies and rules. Each case will be considered in a reasonable and lawful manner, with procedural fairness. In some cases, there may be mitigating circumstances; if so, they will be carefully considered.

The Headmaster may, in exercising discretion and judgement, decide that a pastoral approach and a 'supportive regime' of regular testing may be more suitable than a sanction as a result of drugs misuse (i.e. if there were significant mitigating circumstances). In such cases, the student and their parents would be expected to sign up to a supportive regime commitment, which includes the provision that a future positive drugs test would lead to the student's permanent exclusion from the School (see Appendix 2: 'Supportive Regime'). This process is described further in the 'Advice and assistance (ring-fencing)' section above.

The parents accept the authority of the Headmaster to take all reasonable disciplinary or preventative action necessary to safeguard and promote the welfare of the student and the School community.

Confidentiality

The records of testing will be carefully controlled to protect the confidentiality of students and, where they serve no further purpose, will be destroyed. The School may keep a record of drugs testing where it is deemed to be relevant to Safeguarding, and in that case will do so within its secure Safeguarding records system. The School may pass on records of drugs tests to the police and other external agencies if required to do so.

Police and social services

It is a criminal offence to possess, consume, or supply certain drugs. In such cases parents and students can expect that the police will be informed. The School seeks to uphold the rule of law and support the work of police in fighting drugs in the local area. Police are therefore informed not with a vindictive aim towards the student(s) involved, but rather to provide police with intelligence that might help protect other students and the wider community. The School will also contact social services regarding cases of drug misuse to better support the student and their family and, generally, the police and social services will work together in a coordinated approach.

Staff

Behaviour of staff is regulated by the Staff Code of Conduct.

Staff are reminded that their own expressed attitude and behaviour with regard to controlled drugs, especially insofar as it is witnessed by or known to students, is a matter of substantive interest to the School.

Staff are asked to act with discretion and sympathy in dealing with cases of suspected drug misuse among students. If in doubt as to how to respond to a situation, staff should seek advice from the Deputy Head (Pastoral) and/or Second Master.

Advice to Parents

The advice here is offered to parents, to help them to minimise the likelihood of their children experimenting with drugs. The starting point must be open and honest dialogue, based on reliable

information and professional advice. It is always best to discuss problems before they arise, anticipating the challenges, pressures, and dangers of drugs even at an age when they are unlikely to affect a child. Children look to their parents for norms and attitudes, and so giving clear, consistent, and reasoned opinions about drugs is important.

Other steps include:

Avoid giving your children too much money and monitor what they do with it. A major driver of teen drug use is ready access to funds.

Firmly discourage your child from smoking or vaping, immoderate drinking, and other substance abuses that may be risk factors for use of drugs.

Do not allow your children to go to unsupervised parties or stay out overnight unless parents have checked with the people with whom he/she is staying and are satisfied that appropriate supervision is in place.

Where there is suspicion that a child is taking drugs, parents may wish to arrange their own drug testing. While many of the manifestations of drugs use are identical to the typical features of adolescence, be rigorous and be certain. In these cases, parents should also be wary of and gain and understanding of tactics that may be attempted to defeat tests.

Watch out for signs of drug use:

- loss of appetite;
- being either unusually sleepy or unable to sleep at night;
- bouts of talkative, excitable and overactive behaviour;
- being unusually irritable, aggressive and even violent;
- changing moods, from happy and bright to moody and confused, for no apparent reason;
- telling lies or acting secretively;
- losing interest in schoolwork and truanting; changing friendship patterns;
- losing interest in hobbies and sport;
- money or valuables disappearing from the home;
- coming to the notice of police for unruly, disorderly behaviour or dishonesty;
- unusual spots, sores and marks on body, arms or around the mouth and nose; and
- stains and chemical smells on clothing and about the body.

NATIONAL HELP LINES AND LOCAL SERVICES

Organisation	Contact
Addaction Addaction is one of the UK's largest specialist drug and alcohol treatment charities. As well as adult services, they provide services specifically tailored to the needs of young people and their parents. The Skills for Life project supports young people with drug misusing parents.	www.addaction.org.uk
ADFAM ADFAM offers information to families of drug and alcohol users, and the website has a database of local family support services.	www.adfam.org.uk Tel: 020 7533 7640 Email: admin@adfam.org.uk

Alcohol Concern Works to reduce the incidence and costs of alcohol-related harm and to increase the range and quality of services available to people with alcohol-related problems.	www.alcoholconcern.org.uk Tel: 020 7264 0510 Email: contact@alcoholconcern.org.uk
ASH (Action on Smoking and Health) A campaigning public health charity aiming to reduce the health problems caused by tobacco.	www.ash.org.uk Tel: 020 7739 5902 Email: enquiries@ash.org.uk
Children's Legal Centre Operates a free and confidential legal advice and information service covering all aspects of law and policy affecting children and young people.	www.childrenslegalcentre.com Tel: 01206 877910 Email: clc@essex.ac.uk
Children's Rights Alliance for England A charity working to improve the lives and status of all children in England through the fullest implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of a Child.	www.crae.org.uk Email: info@crae.org.uk
Drinkaware An independent charity that promotes responsible drinking through innovative ways to challenge the national drinking culture, helping reduce alcohol misuse and minimise alcohol related harm.	www.drinkaware.co.uk Tel: 020 7307 7450
Drinkline A free and confidential helpline for anyone who is concerned about their own or someone else's drinking.	Tel: 0800 917 8282 (lines are open 24 hours a day)
Drug Education Forum This website contains a number of useful papers and briefing sheets for use by practitioners.	www.drugeducationforum.com
DrugScope A centre of expertise on illegal drugs, aiming to inform policy development and reduce drug-related risk. The website includes detailed drug information and access to the Information and Library Service. DrugScope also hosts the Drug Education Practitioners Forum.	www.drugscope.org.uk Tel: 020 7520 7550 Email: info@drugscope.org.uk
Family Lives A charity offering support and information to anyone parenting a child or teenager. It runs a free-phone helpline and courses for parents and develops innovative projects.	http://familylives.org.uk Tel: 0800 800 2222
FRANK The national drugs awareness campaign aiming to raise awareness amongst young people of the risks of illegal drugs, and to provide information and advice. It also provides support to parents/carers, helping to give them the skills and confidence to communicate with their children about drugs.	www.talktofrank.com Tel: 0800 776600 (24 hour helpline) Email: frank@talktofrank.com
Mentor UK A non-government organisation with a focus on protecting the health and wellbeing of children and	www.mentoruk.org.uk Tel: 020 7739 8494 Email: admin@mentoruk.org

young people to reduce the damage that drugs can do to their lives.	
National Children's Bureau Promotes the interests and well-being of all children and young people across every aspect of their lives.	www.ncb.org.uk Tel: 020 7843 6000
Re-Solv (Society for the Prevention of Solvent and Volatile Substance Abuse) A national charity providing information for teachers, other professionals, parents and young people.	www.re-solv.org Tel: 01785 817885 Information line: 01785 810762 Email: information@re-solv.org
Smokefree NHS Smoking Helpline	http://smokefree.nhs.uk Tel: 0800 169 0169
Stars National Initiative Offers support for anyone working with children, young people and families affected by parental drug and alcohol misuse.	www.starsnationalinitiative.org.uk
Youth Offending Teams Local Youth Offending Teams are multi-agency teams and are the responsibility of the local authority, who have a statutory duty to prevent offending by young people under the age of 18.	https://www.gov.uk/youth-offending-team

APPENDIX 1: 'Supportive Regime'

Date: _____

Full name of student: _____

Student's date of birth: _____

1. I have made a voluntary admission that I have violated the terms of the School's *Drugs & Drug Testing Policy*.
2. As an alternative to permanent exclusion, the Headmaster has offered me a supportive regime under which:
 - I agree to abide by the terms of the School's *Drugs & Drug Testing Policy*, which I have read and understood. I hereby pledge that I will not violate the terms of this policy again whilst at Reading Blue Coat.
 - For the remainder of my school career, without obligation on the part of the School, I may at any time be asked to provide a hair, blood, saliva or urine sample under medical supervision for analysis in accordance with the procedures described in the policy.
 - I understand that I may be asked to provide a hair, blood, saliva or urine sample at any reasonable time even though no grounds exist at that time to suspect that I have been involved with drugs or substances.
 - I agree to be subject to this regime and to co-operate with the School in every respect. I understand that the School will take all reasonable care to preserve my confidentiality and human rights in the operation of this regime.
3. I also understand that, if without good reason, I fail to co-operate with this regime or if a test proves positive, I would be required to leave Reading Blue Coat.

Signed: _____

Declaration of parents/guardian/education guardian

I/We, the undersigned, have read and agreed to Reading Blue Coat's *Drugs & Drug Testing Policy* and this Appendix. For my/our part, I/we accept the Headmaster's offer of a supportive regime for the above-named student.

I/We undertake to co-operate with the screening procedure in all respects and to pay any associated charges.

Signed: _____ Signed: _____

Full Name: _____ Full Name: _____

Relationship to Student: _____ Relationship to Student: _____

Date: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX 2 – Searches & Confiscation Policy

All schools have a general power to impose reasonable and proportionate disciplinary measures on students (*Education and Inspections Act 2006*). This enables a member of staff to confiscate, retain or dispose of a student's property as a disciplinary penalty where it is reasonable to do so. The School's policy on searching and confiscation complies with the DfE's guidance, *Searching, Screening and Confiscation* (July 2022).

1 Prohibited items

1.1 The School deems the following to be "prohibited items" in accordance with Section 550ZA(3) of the *Education Act 1996* and Regulation 3 of the *Schools (Specification and Disposal of Articles) Regulations 2012*:

1.1.1 knives or weapons, alcohol, illegal drugs and stolen items;

1.1.2 tobacco and cigarette papers, fireworks and pornographic images;

1.1.3 any article that a member of staff reasonably suspects has been (or is likely to be) used:

(a) to commit an offence; or

(b) to cause personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the student); and

1.1.4 any item banned by the School's 'Guidelines' (contained within the *Student Manual*).

1.2 The School has banned items that are reasonably believed potentially to cause harm or disruption. Students must not have these items in their possession on School premises or when they are in the lawful charge and control of the School (for example, on a School trip).

2 Searching with consent

2.1 The student will usually be asked to consent before any search is undertaken. The age, maturity and any special needs of the student will be taken into account when considering their ability to consent. Written consent will not usually be required.

2.2 If the student refuses, disciplinary action may be taken in accordance with the School's *Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions Policy*.

2.3 Before a search with consent begins the member of staff conducting the search should seek another member of staff to act as witness to the search and to affirm that the student freely gives consent. At least one of these members of staff present should be a member of the Senior Leadership Team or a Director of Section, unless urgency dictates this is impractical (in which case, a written note should be made of the search and shared with a member of SLT as soon as practically possible).

3 Searching for prohibited items

3.1 Where the Headmaster or an authorised member of staff have reasonable grounds to suspect that a student may have a prohibited item, no consent is required and the search will be carried out. Reasonable force may be used during such a search, with the exception of searches for items only banned by the 'Guidelines'.

3.2 The Designated Safeguarding Lead, or one of their deputies, should be informed of any searches related to prohibited items because possession of such items may raise concerns that the student (or any member of the School community) is, or is at risk of, being harmed. Under such circumstances, the procedures for making a referral to children's social care outlined in the School's *Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy* will be followed.

3.3 The Headmaster can carry out searches and retain or dispose of items in accordance with this policy. He has also authorized the following staff members to do so:

3.3.1 Members of the SLT;

3.3.3 All Directors of Section;

3.3.4 All members of the teaching staff.

3.4 No search will be conducted without having first sought permission from the Headmaster, Second Master or Deputy Head (Pastoral) in the first instance, or another member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) when they cannot be contacted. A member of the SLT or Director of Section should be present when a search is conducted, unless urgency dictates this is impractical (in which case, a written note should be made explaining why this was impractical and shared with a member of SLT as soon as practically possible).

3.5 Searches will be carried out on School site or where the member of staff has lawful control or charge of the student (for example, on a School trip or in training settings).

3.5.1 When students travel outside England on a School trip, a condition of participating in the trip will be that students give written consent to any search considered necessary by an authorised member of staff when they are outside England.

3.6 If there are reasonable grounds for suspecting that a student has a prohibited item, it may be appropriate for a member of staff to carry out:

3.6.1 a search of outer clothing;

3.6.2 a search of School property (for example, a locker or a desk); and/or

3.6.3 a search of personal property (for example, a bag or pencil case).

3.7 Searches will be conducted in a manner that minimises embarrassment or distress. Unless the circumstances are immediately dangerous, searches will be carried out in the presence of another member of staff. Where possible, the searcher and the second member of staff present will be the same gender as the student.

3.7.1 Where it is reasonably believed that serious harm may be caused to a person if the search is not immediately carried out, a member of staff may carry out a search of a student of the opposite sex and/or in the absence of another staff member.

3.8 The student should be informed a search will take place and the *grounds* for doing so. Staff should ensure the student understands the reason for the search and how it will be conducted so that their agreement is informed. The student should be given the opportunity to make a comment, prior to the search being carried out, about whether or not any property may be found.

3.9 Under no circumstances may a student be requested to remove clothing down to their skin (i.e. they should not take off their shirt or trousers / skirt). It is, however, reasonable to request that pockets are turned out and articles of clothing, such as jackets, are removed and searched.

3.9.1 If a student refuses consent and staff believe they are in possession of a *prohibited item* the police should be called.

3.9.2 If a student refuses consent and staff believe they are in possession of a *banned item* the School can reasonably assume they are in possession of the item and act according to the *Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions Policy*.

3.9.3 Staff should never forcibly conduct a personal search of a student.

3.10 The School keeps a centralised log of all searches conducted. The record will include the following details: the student's name; the basis for conducting the search; what was being searched for; whether the search was with or without the consent; the date, time and location of the search; the people present; the outcome of the search, including details of any disposal of items confiscated, and any follow-up actions taken as a consequence of the search. Searches for prohibited items will also be recorded on MyConcern.

The written record should then be **signed** by the person making the notes and the other staff member present at the time of the search. It is also appropriate for the person whose belongings are searched to be shown and offered the opportunity to sign the notes. If possible, and if items are found, a **photograph** should be taken of anything found, in the location it was found and then as necessary thereafter.

3.11 There is no legal requirement for the School to inform parents before a search takes place or to seek their consent, and it is not generally practical to do so. However, the School will inform parents of any search that has taken place and provide details of any items found at the earliest possible opportunity.

3.12 The School will keep a record of searches which can be inspected by the parents of the student(s) involved, subject to any restrictions under the School's *Data Protection Policy*. Responsibility for overseeing this record lies with the Second Master.

4 Confiscation

4.1 Under the School's general power to discipline, a member of staff may confiscate, retain or dispose of a student's property as a disciplinary penalty where it is reasonable to do so.

4.2 Confiscation may take place whether or not a student has consented to a search.

4.3 In appropriate cases, we will consult parents about how the School should dispose of certain items.

4.4 The School will take reasonable care of any items confiscated from students. However, the School does not accept responsibility for loss or damage to property (unless negligent or guilty of some other wrongdoing causing injury, loss or damage).

5 Handling of confiscated items

5.1 Alcohol will be disposed of by pouring into a drain or being placed into a refuse bin.

5.2 Controlled drugs will usually be delivered to the police as soon as possible. The drugs may be destroyed without the involvement of the police if an authorised member of staff thinks there is an exceptional reason to do so. The staff will use their professional judgement to determine whether the items can be safely disposed of.

5.3 Other substances which are not illegal drugs but are harmful or detrimental to good order and discipline (for example "legal highs"), may be confiscated and destroyed. Where it is unclear whether the substance seized is an illegal drug, it will be treated as though it is illegal and disposed of as per item 5.2.

5.4 Stolen items will usually be delivered to the police as soon as possible. However, they may be returned to the owner without the involvement of the police if an authorised member of staff thinks there is good reason to do so. This is likely to apply to items of low value (for example, pencil cases).

5.5 Tobacco products or cigarette papers will be destroyed.

5.6 Fireworks will be disposed of safely and at the discretion of an authorised staff member (this includes donating the fireworks to an appropriate charity).

5.7 Pornographic images:

5.7.1 will be handed to the police as soon as practicable if images involve children or constitute "extreme pornography". As possession of such images may indicate that the student has been abused, the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead will also be notified and the matter may be referred to children's social care; or

5.7.2 will be discussed with the School's Designated Safeguarding Lead if they do not constitute "extreme pornography". The images may then be passed to children's social care for consideration of any further action. If no action is taken by the local authority, the images will be erased after a note confirming the nature of the material has been made for disciplinary purposes.

5.8 Articles used to commit an offence may be delivered to the police, returned to the owner, retained or disposed of at the authorised staff member's discretion.

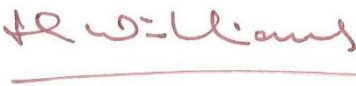
5.9 Weapons or items which are evidence of an offence will be passed to the police as soon as possible.

5.10 Items banned under the School's 'Guidelines' may be returned to their owner, retained or disposed of at the authorised staff member's discretion.

5.11 Electronic devices may be searched and erased if there is good reason to suspect that the device can (or has) been used to cause harm, endangering members of the School community, or break School rules. Alternatively, the member of staff may retain it as evidence of a breach of School discipline or a criminal offence and may hand it over to the police for investigation. Where devices are used to disrupt teaching, the device may be collected by a parent and the student will be prohibited from bringing any device onto school premises or on school trips.

6 Complaints about searching or confiscation

6.1 Complaints about searching or confiscation will be dealt with through the School's complaints procedures.

Author(s):	Pete Thomas (Headmaster)
Date:	September 2022
Review Frequency:	Annually
Next Review Date:	February 2024 (<i>revised policy schedule agreed by Governors</i>)
References:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 / Education and Inspections Act
Linked Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviour, Rewards & Sanctions Policy • Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy • First Aid Policy • Permanent Exclusion & Required Removal Policy • Searches & Confiscation Policy • Student Manual • Use of Force to Control or Restrain Students Policy • Terms & Conditions (Parent Contract)
Agreed by:	 Howard Williams (Chair of Governors)
Date of Agreement:	September 2022