

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to prevent pupils from using illegal drugs or substances at any time. It reflects a clear recognition that drugs or substances are widely available and widely used by some teenagers and that this is a problem which must be faced squarely, both at School and at home. While the implementation of the policy will be based upon trust, openness and understanding between pupils, staff and parents, and external agencies such as the Police and Health and Safeguarding Authorities, its primary purpose is to act as a positive and effective deterrent against drug or substances abuse.

Drugs and substances means controlled drugs and the paraphernalia of drugs or substances intended to resemble drugs, or 'legal' drugs which can be obtained from a chemist shop, performance enhancing drugs, anabolic steroids, glue and other substances held or supplied in each case for purposes of misuse.

The School is aware that some substances which are not illegal may have an intoxicating, and/or stimulating and/or hallucinating effect. The use of animal, mineral or vegetable products which have such an effect is against School rules and pupils misusing such substances (including possession or supply of such substances) may be dealt with in a similar fashion to those who use illegal substances.

The School community extends beyond the campus. Pupils of Stowe School may not use, possess or supply these substances at any time; either at School, away from School or during the holiday periods when in the care of the School or otherwise representing or associated with the School. Bringing the School into disrepute for any reason associated with drugs or substances, whether or not the pupil is in the care of the School at the time. Action will be taken when the welfare of any member of the School community or the reputation of the School is affected.

Summary

- It is forbidden to possess or use any illegal substance or to abuse any legal substance. Anyone found breaking this rule will be liable to expulsion.
- Any pupil bringing in any illegal drugs, or being in possession of them, will be liable to expulsion.
- Any pupil caught supplying or inciting the use of illegal drugs, of whatever class, or being in possession of them with intent to supply, will be expelled.

Authority

The person responsible for ensuring the implementation of this policy is the Head as part of his overall responsibility for education and discipline in the School.

Statement of Policy

It is the policy of the School that it will actively discourage the abuse of illegal drugs and the abuse of legal highs or legal substances and will treat cases of abuse by pupils or staff as serious misconduct.

Implementation of the policy

1. Prevention through Education

Priority will be given at all levels of the School to a continuing programme of education about drugs. Pupils, parents and staff will be regularly kept up to date on developments in drug abuse to ensure that sensible and informed discussions can be held and decisions made about the misuse of drugs. Drug awareness forms a central component of the School's PSHE programme and it is also taught in Third Form Biology classes.

Anyone genuinely seeking support will find this within the School's programme and from the Medical Centre. Anyone with a drugs problem will receive this help but will go onto a programme of regular testing.

2. Suspicion of Misuse

If a member of staff has reason to suspect that a pupil is misusing drugs, he/she must report the situation to the Head, Senior Deputy Head or Deputy Heads who will decide if further investigation or a drug test is warranted.

Suspicion of misuse may be aroused by certain behavioural and other signs which may in turn be associated with deterioration in a pupil's welfare and/or performance. Accordingly, all staff must be alert to signs of drug misuse taking into account any warning signs. Such signs include: a decline in performance in School work; marked swings in mood; excessive tiredness; sores and rashes, especially on the mouth or nose; a lack of concern for one's physical appearance and an unwillingness to take part in School activities. Other evidence may include the finding of certain items of equipment, behaviour on a particular occasion, or other information that has been gathered.

3. Investigation into Possible Misuse

Once it has been confirmed that there are reasonable grounds for suspecting that a pupil has been using illegal drugs, the Head, Senior Deputy Head or Deputy Heads shall be accountable for any further investigation; they may decide that a pupil shall take a urine test or hair follicle test. Responsibility for all investigations rests with the Head, Senior Deputy Head or Deputy Heads who will make every effort to ensure that they are conducted fairly and with as much openness towards the affected pupil as the circumstances may reasonably allow. Wherever possible, the School, via the Houseparent, will contact the pupil's parents at the time to let them know of the decision to test.

Urine sampling or hair follicle testing will be carried out in accordance with a strict procedure, details of which are available from the School. The procedure may change from time to time as dictated by experience and scientific advance and therefore the written procedure may be updated from time to time. It is a requirement that urine samples will be collected in the School Medical Centre under conditions of the strictest hygiene and care, whilst maintaining the privacy and dignity of the pupil. The sample will be passed to the Houseparent to read the result. In the event of a positive sample a second test can be taken and sent to an independent laboratory, and the same laboratory will properly maintain the second sample for a period of six months, so that it is available for re-testing by another laboratory if this is required by the parents. A hair follicle test may be conducted in a situation where drug use may have taken place sometime previously so as to render a urine test unlikely to be effective. Complete chain of custody records for the urine and hair follicle samples will be kept. It is intended that the procedures be fully in accordance with the standards required to satisfy any legal challenge.

4. Authority to Perform Testing

Under Behaviour and Discipline (Sect. 8.8) of the School's Terms and Conditions, parents are informed that a pupil may be asked to provide a biological sample under medical supervision if involvement with drugs is suspected.

5. Action Following Misuse

The school reserves the right to inform the police of any case of serious drug abuse involving Stoics, and to give the authorities assistance during the course of any subsequent enquiries. Unless the offence is one of dealing, or is at a significant level, or unless the drug involved is a Class A drug, it has been agreed by the School and the local police force that the police will exercise their discretion not to arrest on condition that the pupil concerned is willing to be interviewed for the purpose of intelligence gathering, if required. Such interviews will be conducted without a member of staff present and any evidence so gathered would be inadmissible in any subsequent criminal proceedings.

A dilute urine sample will be treated as suspicious and the pupil will be under a regime of random testing for the rest of their career at Stowe.

6. Random Sampling

All pupils who have had any involvement in drugs either in or outside School will be under a regime of random testing for the rest of their time at Stowe. A subsequent positive test will lead to the pupil's expulsion.

7. Confidentiality

The records of testing will not be used for any other purpose and they will be destroyed when the pupil concerned leaves the School.

Some signs and symptoms of drug abuse amongst pupils

All staff are expected to be aware of the signs of possible drug abuse and to report any worries about a pupil to the Houseparents concerned. The signs listed below may indicate drug abuse, but their presence alone is not conclusive proof as many of them are a normal part of adolescence:

- decline in academic performance
- unusual outbreaks of temper, mood swings, restlessness, irritability
- excessive tiredness without obvious cause
- no interest in physical appearance
- lack of appetite
- sores or rashes especially on the mouth or nose
- heavy use of scents, colognes, etc. to disguise the smell of drugs
- new friends in older age groups
- unwillingness to take part in school activities