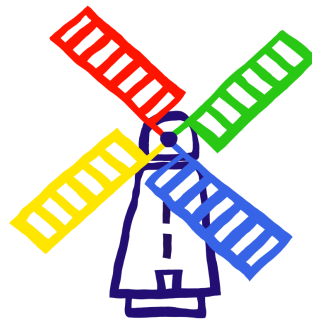


Substance Misuse Policy

Unity
Trust
Courage
Curiosity
Respect
Kindness



A community for learning. Raising expectations. Fulfilling high standards.

Policy Revised: April 2025
Policy Review Date: April 2028
Headteacher: Mrs G Hillier



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Introduction

All pupils, including those in primary schools, are likely to be exposed to the effects and influences of drugs in the wider community and be increasingly exposed to opportunities to try both legal and illegal drugs. Every school therefore has a responsibility to consider its response to drugs. This responsibility was made statutory within the Children's Act 2004 and Education and Inspections Act 2006. It is underpinned by the latest guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) and the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) which frames drug misuse in safeguarding terms and stipulates that permanent exclusion should not be the automatic response to incidents. It guides schools in ensuring that the response to drug misuse is robust, rational and safe.

Substance misuse affects all communities - crossing gender, cultural and social boundaries. No school, parent or carer can afford to be complacent or think that children and young people are not at risk. Widmer End Community Combined School & Pre-School has a key role to play in ensuring that young people understand the risks involved and have the confidence, knowledge and skills to avoid them. We have a major contribution to make in reducing and/or preventing drug misuse by:

- Creating protective environments which discourage drug or substance misuse
- Imparting knowledge and skills and supporting young people to make healthier choices
- Promoting positive behaviours and reducing risk taking behaviour
- Providing direct support and/or signposting children and young people to appropriate services whenever concerns around misuse arise.

Schools alone cannot solve the problem of drug misuse in society, but the implementation of an effective programme of drug education in all schools is an essential step in keeping our young people safe. Furthermore regular school attendance and engagement with learning is a key protective factor for young people (please see our Attendance Policy for more Information as to how we monitor attendance). Establishing strong positive relationships with family members, teachers or other socially responsible adults provides a sense of connectedness.

Possession or use of drugs and illicit substances should always be viewed as a Safeguarding and welfare issue first and foremost and Widmer End Community Combined School will seek to place our safeguarding duties at the heart of any response to such incidents. Students who are disconnected from education due to school exclusion, poor attendance, or another reason are at a greater risk of abuse, criminal exploitation, and county lines. Maintaining vulnerable young people in a positive education environment is therefore paramount in reducing the risk to the individual student and ultimately the community as a whole.



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Staff responsible for drugs issues

The Headteacher is responsible for the development, monitoring and review of the drug education curriculum, supporting and training staff and liaising with external agencies to strengthen the curriculum delivery.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (Headteacher) has overall responsibility for drugs issues, including managing drug-related incidents and liaising with police; developing, monitoring and reviewing the drugs policy and liaising with external agencies to provide additional support to pupils at risk of drug misuse.

Linked Policies:

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

Attendance Policy

Relationship & Sex Education (RSE) & Personal, Social & Health Education (PSHE) Policy

Health & Safety Policy

Behaviour Policy

Child Protection Policy

Definition of drugs

The definition of drugs used in this policy is the definition given by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime:

"A substance people take to change the way they feel, think or behave." This refers to all drugs:

- Illegal Psychoactive Substances/new psychoactive substances (Psychoactive Substances Act, 2016)
- Legal drugs, alcohol, tobacco, e-cigarettes, volatile substances (solvents)poppers,
- Misuse of over the counter and prescription medicines
- Illegal drugs (those controlled by the Misuse of Drugs Act, 1971) including ecstasy, cannabis, crack/cocaine, heroin and LSD ,khat
- Other drugs such as anabolic steroids

Throughout this policy, the term 'drugs' is used to refer to all of the above.

Definition of other key words



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'Drug use' describes any drug taking. Any drug use can potentially lead to harm, including through intoxication, breach of the law or school rules, or future health problems.

'Drug misuse' is drug taking which leads to social, psychological, physical or legal problems through intoxication, regular excessive consumption and/or dependence.

Why a policy is needed

Schools have a key role to play in ensuring that young people understand the risks involved and have the confidence, knowledge and skills to avoid them. They have a major contribution to make in discouraging drug misuse, encouraging positive attitudes and self-esteem, and promoting healthy lifestyles.

We recognise that drug misuse can have a serious effect on health, wellbeing and academic development. It is the duty of the school to help reduce the harm from drugs, deliver drug prevention and education, as well as helping those who misuse drugs, or who are at risk of drug misuse. The Department for Education (DfE) advises all schools to have an up-to-date drugs policy, consistent with national and local guidance.

Aims of the policy

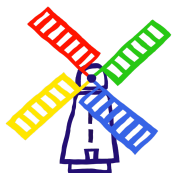
We take a positive and proactive approach to the issue of drugs and this policy aims to:

- Give a clear view on the use of drugs in school and the responsibilities of the school and legal requirements
- Provide information so that everyone is clear about the school's overall approach to drugs and its procedures should an incident occur
- Give information about drugs education
- Give guidance to teachers, support staff and visitors about drugs education

Approach to tackling drugs

We take a whole school approach to drugs through:

- A planned drugs education programme through PSHE
- Carefully considered responses to drug-related incidents informed and supported by the views of the whole school community



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- Clear rules and sanctions related to drugs understood by the whole school community
- Access to specialist support and advice when required
- Training and support for staff
- Completing a Child and Family Help Early Help Assessment as soon as we, the young person or their family, have a worry regarding drug-related issues

Aims of Drug Education

We aim to give young people accurate information about drugs and help them develop the skills and attitudes to make their own healthy, safe and responsible decisions about drug use. We also aim to reduce the number of young people misusing drugs, minimise the risk of criminalisation, and to help those concerned about drugs to get help and advice.

To achieve this, our drugs education programme will help pupils to:

- Gain knowledge and understanding about the effects and risks and dangers of drugs and correct myths and misconceptions
- Develop skills to make informed decisions, including communication, self awareness, negotiation, finding information, help and advice
- Develop skills to manage situations involving drugs, including assessing and avoiding risks, assertiveness and refusal skills and helping others
- Explore their own and other people's attitudes to drugs, drug use and drug users, including challenging stereotypes and dispelling myths and exploring media and social influences

Training and support for staff

All staff teaching drug education will have access to lesson plans and resources to support them, national protocols and guidance and will have opportunities to participate in training through a range of CPD activities including INSET, team teaching, observing other teachers and observing visitors who have been invited in to educate the pupils.

All staff are made aware of the drugs policy at the start of the year and have access to drugs awareness training.

Remit and extent of the Policy



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At Widmer End Community Combined School & Pre-School, a drug related incident refers to any possession, usage or supply of an unauthorised drug, as defined within this policy. Incidents can include emergencies, observations and discovery, disclosure, suspicion and rumour.

We do not permit the possession, use of or supply of any illegal or legal drug (unless authorised legal drug) and will investigate and respond in line with this policy to any incident which takes place:

- within the school boundaries
- on or near the school premises
- whilst in school uniform
- on the journey to and from school
- within the school day
- on school visits (supervised or not)
- residential trips
- work experience
- any school social event

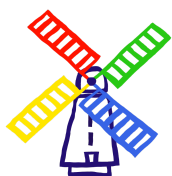
These rules apply equally to staff, students, parents and carers, governors and those working in or visiting the school.

This is a smoke and vape-free school and pupils, staff, parents and visitors are not allowed to smoke or vape on school premises. Alcohol is not an authorised drug for any pupil. Staff accompanying pupils on trips are not permitted to drink when responsible for pupils. There are occasions when alcohol may be authorised, such as for school functions during parents' evenings and staff social events.

Management of drugs in school

The school has a separate policy for the safe and secure management of prescription drugs which is referred to as 'Supporting Pupils with Medical & Health Conditions' policy.

There are circumstances when some legal drugs (prescribed) are authorised for use in school - any pupil requiring access to prescription drugs for medical reasons will be supported as per this policy. Parents and pupils must inform the school where this is needed, in writing. Pupils must not be responsible for the safety of their own



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medication, unless previously agreed, this must be handed in to school to be kept securely until needed in line with the above policy.

School responses to drug-related incidents

In all drug-related incidents the following principles will apply:

- The Headteacher and designated safeguarding leads (DSLs) will be informed immediately
- All situations will be carefully considered before deciding a response
- Permanent exclusion will not be the automatic response and will only be considered in the most serious cases
- Before any decision to permanently exclude is made, the school will offer a Child and Family Early Help Assessment to ascertain if any additional support is needed and will work in collaboration with the service to support
- Advice will be sought from the pupil reintegration team
- The health and safety needs of the pupil will always come first, whilst also taking account of the health and safety needs of the school as a whole
- Parents/carers will be involved at an early stage and throughout any investigation (unless this would not be in the pupil's best interest)
- Decisions about the sanction will depend on whether the offence is one of a series or a first event, previous support has been offered to the pupil and whether the pupil was in possession or supplying. Any extenuating circumstances will also be taken into consideration
- The Headteacher in consultation with DSL will decide whether a disciplinary and/or counselling response should follow
- Incidents will be reported to the Chair of Governors

Possible responses might be:

Support

Support is provided for pupils who have concerns about their own or their family's drug use. We assess the welfare and support needs of the pupil and identify the most appropriate support for them. This might involve the school nurse, school counselling service, a Child and Family Early Help Assessment, Family Group Conferencing or other services providing specialist help. Support is also provided for those who have been involved in a drug-related incident which is in breach of school rules. Pupils who have been involved in the incident will participate in a specific drug education programme and may be referred for specialist support if needed.



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Sanctions

Where a school rule related to drug use is broken, sanctions will be given. The nature of the sanction will depend on the nature and degree of the offence. Decisions about sanctions will be made by the Headteacher and be consistent with our behaviour policy. The school uses a range of sanctions including withdrawal from activities, internal exclusion, community service, fixed term exclusion or permanent exclusion. The latter will be considered only in exceptional cases, such as supplying illegal drugs. It will be used as a last resort after all other approaches have been considered.

Procedures for managing incidents :

Reporting a drug-related incident

All drug-related incidents are reported, in the first instance, to the Headteacher and DSLs.

Although there is no legal obligation to report an incident involving drugs to the police, every incident will be assessed individually and appropriate steps will be taken. The school will always inform police immediately about any incident involving the sale of drugs. The school will contact Buckinghamshire & Surrey Trading Standards about the sale of tobacco, alcohol and solvents to under-age pupils, from local shops.

<https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/business/trading-standards/business-advice/age-restricted-products>

Recording the drug-related incident

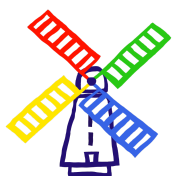
In all drug-related incidents, the Headteacher and DSLs will decide on the responses, including the use of sanctions and/or counselling and support. However only the Headteacher has the authority to exclude a pupil either for a fixed period or permanently.

Medical emergencies when a student is unconscious as a result of drug use

Staff with first aid qualifications should be called for via walkie-talkie immediately but the pupil must not be left alone. The pupil will be placed in the recovery position and an ambulance called. Parents/carers will be informed and called to the school. An assessment of the incident is started, including finding out whether a substance has been taken, and evidence gathered.

Intoxication, when a student is under the influence of a drug

The pupil will be removed to a quiet room and not left alone. The first aider and a DSL will be called. The pupil will be helped to calm down and medical assistance sought. Parents/carers will be informed and called to the school.



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In most cases, the pupil will then be taken home with the absence 'Y' coded as exceptional circumstances if a fixed term exclusion is not considered appropriate.

Discovery/observation

This refers to situations when a pupil is discovered using, supplying or holding a substance that is not permitted on school premises and which is described in this policy (suspected or confirmed)

If the substance is suspected to be illegal, staff can take temporary possession of it.

- it will be confiscated, in the presence of a second member of staff as witness
- the sample will be sealed in a plastic bag with details of the date and time of the seizure/find and witness present and stored in a secure location (e.g. a safe or lockable container) with access limited to the Headteacher and DSLs
- the pupil(s) will be supervised within a safe space in school and an investigation undertaken, pending advice from the police
- details of the incident will be recorded, including the police incident reference number
- the pupil's parents/carers will be asked to come into school, unless it is not in the best interests of the child to inform them
- the pupil(s) involved will be isolated whilst investigations are carried out.

If the substance is legal (but unauthorised in school) it will be disposed of or handed to the parent/carers.

Searches

Staff are allowed to confiscate pupil's property where reasonable to do so, including substances, whether controlled or not.

If a member of staff has reasonable grounds for suspecting that a pupil is carrying illegal drugs on them or in their personal property, they will ask the pupil to voluntarily produce the substance, in the presence of two members of staff. When a search is required, any staff involved must be authorised by the Headteacher to undertake it and, wherever possible, should be the same sex as the pupil. (Screening, Searching and Confiscation, DfE, 2018) The search will take place in school or where staff have lawful control of pupils.

We will keep a record of the search and inform parent/carers if a substance is found, although there is no legal requirement to do this or to inform parents/carers before or after a search.



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Staff may search pupil's drawers and lockers where they have reasonable grounds to suspect that drugs have been stored there. If consent for the search is not provided by the pupil, then the decision to search must be authorised by the Headteacher.

Dealing with drug-taking materials

The school Caretaker makes regular checks of the school grounds and knows how to deal with drug-taking materials, including needles, in line with health and safety advice.

Pupils are taught what to do if they come across needles on the school premises and know not to touch needles and to inform a member of staff immediately.

Disclosure

When a pupil discloses to a member of staff that he/she has been using drugs, or is concerned about someone else's drug use.

In these situations, staff will be non-judgemental and caring and will show concern for the student's welfare. Pupils know that teachers cannot promise total confidentiality if safeguarding concerns are raised and/or if further support is to be considered such as referral to a drug service or counselling service. Information about the pupil will only be given to key staff and no-one else unless the pupil gives their consent. The DSLs will coordinate the most appropriate support including referral to specialist services.

Suspicion/rumour

Staff should not assume use of drugs on the basis of rumours or behaviour alone. However, if there is a suspicion, evidence will be collected over a period of time before a decision is made to question the pupil(s) involved.

Intoxicated parents/carers

Widmer End Community Combined School & Pre-School's rules for drugs apply to all people who are on the school premises and we expect that parents/carers will adhere to these rules. If a parent/carer comes to school and appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol, they will be asked to leave. If they have come to collect their child, we will sensitively offer to phone for someone else to collect. If we are concerned that a pupil is in imminent danger, we will contact emergency services on 999. We will also follow our Child Protection procedures if we are concerned about risk of harm.

Needs of pupils

We are sensitive to the needs of pupils whose parents/carer or a family member(s) have problems with drugs. Where problems are observed or suspected or a pupil discloses problems, we will assess the pupil's welfare and



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support needs and offer a Child and Family Early Help assessment. School will also involve external support for the child if needed.

Child Criminal Exploitation/County Lines

When speaking with pupils and responding to any incidents involving drugs, staff will be vigilant to the pupil's vulnerability to criminal exploitation and particularly County Lines. Any concerns about a young person such as erratic school attendance and/or changes in their attitude and engagement with learning; unexplained or disproportionate access to money/expensive items; pupil being reported as missing; or where staff become aware that a pupil has several mobile phones could indicate the pupil is a victim of exploitation and must be shared with the DSL.

The governing body of Widmer End Community Combined School & Pre-School recognises that pupils who are not accessing school due to low levels of attendance or exclusion are at greater risk of all forms of exploitation. Any attendance issues will be addressed in line with the school's attendance policy. Furthermore any fixed-term exclusion will be for the shortest time necessary and in line with the published behaviour policy. Permanent exclusion will be the last resort and only in the most serious of circumstances where no other option is available.

Confidentiality

Pupils need to be able to talk in confidence to staff without fear of being judged or told off. The welfare of young people will be central to our policy and practice, however, staff cannot promise total confidentiality and this is made clear to pupils through the PSHE programme.

If a pupil discloses to a member of staff they are taking drugs or is concerned about drugs, they will refer the student to the DSLs and appropriate support will be offered e.g. referral to a specialist agency. This information is given only to the DSLs and the Headteacher.

If staff are concerned that a child's safety is at risk they will follow the school's child protection procedures.

Working with parents/carers

We believe that parents/carers have an important role in supporting their child's drug education. We involve parents/carers through a range of activities, such as:



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- Giving information about what is taught in school and being transparent on our website with our curriculum
- Promoting various healthy initiatives in school to support healthy attitudes and educating families on health
- Providing support from our Pastoral Lead and MHST
- Providing impartial advice about talking to their child about drugs

A copy of this policy is on the school website with hard copies available on request.

Parents/carers will be informed immediately if their child has been involved in a drug related incident. However there may be some exceptional situations where involving the parents may put the young person at risk of abuse and, in these exceptional cases, the school will exercise some caution. The decision will be taken by the Headteacher in liaison with the DSLs, with the child's welfare a priority.

Involving Police

In most cases a drug-related incident will be a school, rather than a police matter. However we work closely with community police and will contact them immediately if an illegal (or suspected illegal) drug has been found or illegal drug dealing is taking place. We will only call 999 in an emergency.

Reviewing The Policy

This policy is reviewed every three years in line with school protocols. If an exceptional incident should occur, the policy is reviewed in the light of that incident.

Disseminating The Policy

The policy is on the school's website



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Appendix A – review of an incident involving Drugs

To assist schools and the LA in assessing the appropriate, proportionate response to any incident involving drugs, the following assessment tool will be used by the LA (PRT) to review the situation with the school. Where it is not evidenced that allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education and welfare of others, the LA will offer advice, support and guidance to schools to enable them to successfully maintain the pupil in their school. A managed move will not be supported since this would meet the Ofsted definition of off-rolling, as well as being outside the spirit of this guidance, which seeks to put the child first.

Discrimination and Protected Characteristics

When considering the response to an incident, the Headteacher must consider whether:

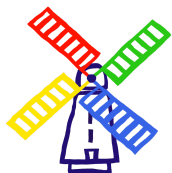
- The pupil has needs which impact on their understanding or behaviour e.g. ADHD, ASD
- The pupil has or may have anxiety or mental health needs which are impacting on their behaviour

The Headteacher must ensure that the school's policy and their decision does not discriminate and that due consideration has been given to the pupil's protected characteristics, situation and circumstances.

Assessment Tool - Possession of Drugs/Use of Drugs

Tick all that apply:

- ☐ Do you have reasonable grounds to believe that item was in the pupil's possession?
- ☐ The pupil was under the influence of an illicit substance/drugs
- ☐ The pupil had drugs paraphernalia with them
- ☐ The pupil made a premeditated decision to bring the Drugs into school
- ☐ The pupil has previously had drugs in their possession/or been under the influence of Drugs in school
- ☐ The pupil a CIN/TAC/CP and substance misuse is identified as a concern within the plan
- ☐ It was a large amount or a combination of substances
- ☐ It was small amount for personal consumption
- ☐ The pupil was carrying the drugs for the purpose of sharing with others
- ☐ The drugs were seen by /shown to/offered to other pupils
- ☐ The pupil been subject to bullying /threats from others to source the drugs
- ☐ The pupil bought from/was given the drugs by another pupil in school
- ☐ The pupil sold drugs to other members of the school community



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- ☐ The pupil confirm their intention to take the drugs
- ☐ The pupil received advice/guidance in school about the risk of Drugs (either as part of PHSE or more direct work)
- ☐ The young person a victim of or vulnerable to Child Criminal Exploitation (County Lines)
- ☐ The pupil attempted to conceal or hide the drugs from staff
- ☐ The pupil was uncooperative with the school investigation
- ☐ The pupil has been warned about similar behaviour previously
- ☐ The pupil understands that possession of drugs is against school rules
- ☐ The pupil has not shown remorse /distress/regret about their actions or the incident
- ☐ The pupil does not agree to a referral to We are with you

The above matrix is intended as a means of evaluation of situations and to enable a rational proportional response to any incident involving illicit substances. Wherever possible young people will be supported to remain in their current setting and provided with help, advice and guidance from adults they know and trust. Continuity of a school placement is a significant safeguarding feature and a key factor in reducing the risk of future drug taking or Criminal exploitation.