

Reviewed on:	November 2025
Reviewed by:	Alison Goode
Date of next review:	November 2027



Substance Misuse Policy

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Definitions of terms

For the purpose of this policy, the following definitions should be used:

Substance

A substance that, on entering the body, changes the way the body functions (World Health Organisation). This will include tobacco, alcohol, controlled drugs, medication, solvents, nicotine-based and non-nicotine based vape liquids.

Misuse

The use of substances in the wrong way, for the wrong purpose or improperly used, which includes the use of illegal substances or the use of substances in inappropriate areas/environments where they must not be used.

Background

Substance misuse affects many communities in this country and crosses gender, ethnic and social boundaries.

Young people are influenced by information and images gleaned from a variety of sources. The home, mass media, popular music, and mixing with older people who have had experience with drugs are all contributory factors.

Exceptional Ideas Ltd has an important pastoral role to play in the welfare of students and, through the general ethos of the school, will work to persuade students who need support to come forward.

Substance misuse can result in extremely serious problems for individuals, families, and the community. The school has an important role to play in enabling young people to make responsible, healthy, and safe decisions.

Substance misuse can also be an issue for staff while at work at Exceptional Ideas Ltd. Where misuse of substances is present with a staff member during work time, then the Disciplinary policy will be utilised and may result in Disciplinary action.

This substance misuse policy will address two main issues:

- Substance misuse education within the curriculum.
- Handling substance misuse related incidents in school.

Substance misuse concerns will be managed primarily as a safeguarding and wellbeing matter. Behavioural sanctions will be considered only where appropriate and proportionate.

AIMS

In applying this policy, the school will consider students' special educational needs, disabilities, mental health needs, and any relevant vulnerabilities. Responses to substance misuse incidents will be proportionate, consider reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010, and take account of whether behaviour may be linked to unmet need, trauma, or disability. The aim of this policy is to:

- To enable students to make healthy, informed choices about the use of substances.
- To provide accurate information about substances.
- To increase understanding about the implications and possible outcomes of substance abuse.
- To widen understanding about health and social issues.
- To minimise the risks that users and potential users face.
- To enable young people to identify the sources of appropriate support that is available.

DELIVERY OF THE SUBSTANCE MISUSE EDUCATION PROGRAMME

The program will be delivered:

As part of mandatory therapeutic and RSHE lessons, the social skills inventory in place for all students.

During Key Stages 3 and 4, students will be encouraged to:

- recognise personal responsibility for decisions about substances.
- know the basic facts about substances and their effects.
- develop appropriate decision making and assertiveness skills for coping with situations in which substance abuse occurs.
- understand that Britain is a substance using society and recognise the different patterns of use and their effects.
- recognise that individuals are responsible for the choices that they make about substance use.
- be able to communicate effectively with peers, parents and those who administer medication.

PREPARATION FOR STAFF

- All staff are to be aware of the legal requirements.
- Training opportunities are provided for staff to increase awareness of resources, potential issues, teaching methods, appropriate approaches, and regular updates as research/circumstances dictate. All staff are to read this policy.

IN THE CLASSROOM

Any visitors who are involved in the delivery of the program must be aware of the school's substance misuse policy.

- The use of visitors, speakers and outside agencies brought in must complement the school's approach to education.
- Although the staff's knowledge of individual drugs and their side effects, etc. is useful, it is not essential.
- The role of the staff is to give students the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to appreciate the benefits to be gained by adopting a healthy lifestyle.
- The use of shock tactics is not the best way to deliver drug education.

RESOURCES

Resources must be:

- carefully monitored to reflect the school's ethos and educational aims.
- produced to meet the needs of the students and match their maturity.
- differentiated considering ability, culture, religion, and gender.
- available from outside sources.
- user-friendly from the mentor's point of view.
- up to date and include legislation incorporating the different trends in substance abuse.

PARENTS

- Parents are informed via the school curriculum that drug education is part of the curriculum.
- A copy of the substance misuse policy should be available for all parents to see.

DEALING WITH DRUG-RELATED INCIDENTS IN SCHOOL

The position regarding the law:

- Staff are not under a legal obligation to report all incidents relating to illegal drugs to the police, but must report all issues to the director and headteacher immediately.
- The school will make it clear to students that any instances of possession, use or supply of illegal drugs on school premises or during school hours will be treated very seriously.

PROCEDURES TO BE ADOPTED WHEN SUBSTANCES ARE FOUND ON THE SCHOOL PREMISES OR IN THE POSSESSION OF STUDENTS.

Telephone or speak to the director immediately. The staff involved should make an accurate record of the incident and pass it on to the director noting,

- Who is involved?
- What substance is involved?
- The quantity of the drug involved;
- Where was the drug found?
- Is the student dealing?
- Is the drug for personal use?
- Is the student handling substances to pass on as part of a supply chain?
- Review **Appendix 2**: signs and symptoms of drug abuse and record evidence.

The laws relating to medicines and drugs (refer to Appendix 1)

Issues of confidentiality

Staff should never give any guarantees of confidentiality regarding substance issues, for circumstances may arise which will make any commitment unrealistic. **Information will be shared on a need-to-know basis in line with safeguarding duties and information-sharing guidance.**

- Substance related issues should be handled with sensitivity, and any concerns should be passed on to the Therapeutic Lead.

Guidelines for informing parents

- As with the police, there is no legal obligation to inform parents if a child is known to be using substances. The only exception to this is when substances are found on school property.
- There may be legitimate grounds for not informing parents if they may overreact and possibly cause serious harm to the student. In this case, staff should raise it as a safeguarding cause for concern.
- If the parents are believed to be directly involved in the situation, e.g., they may be supplying substances.

Exclusion

Permanent exclusion may occur depending on the severity of an incident.

Permanent exclusion may be considered where students bring substances into school with the intent to supply them to others. Any decision will be made on a case-by-case basis, taking into account safeguarding considerations, the students' needs, intent, and proportionality. Decisions must be made in clear view of SEND law, DfE Exclusion Guidance and Case law, requiring **individual consideration**.

Definitions and Procedures

This policy does not apply to the lawful use of prescribed medication taken in accordance with an agreed medical plan. Any concerns relating to prescribed

medication will be managed under the school's Medication and Medical Needs policies and considered separately from substance misuse.

Procedures for dealing with any substances that are found on the school premises. Staff will not search students or their belongings unless authorised and trained to do so, and in accordance with statutory guidance. Where a search is required, senior staff will be consulted.

If a suspicious substance is found or confiscated, the following action should be taken:

- Parents/carers and, where appropriate, the police will be informed following a risk-based safeguarding assessment.
- If the substance cannot be identified, it should be treated as illegal.

There are two courses of action that can legally be taken:

- Confiscate the substance and label it clearly with all the relevant information, then pass the substance to the Operational senior to be stored in the school safe.
- Hand the substance to the Police - senior member of staff.

MANAGEMENT OF THE SUBSTANCE MISUSE POLICY

- The Director is responsible for the implementation of the Substance Misuse Policy.
- All staff are responsible for passing on substances to a senior member of staff.
- Training opportunities will be provided for staff.
- There should be a liaison with parents.

Monitoring the Substance Misuse Policy

All staff are responsible for monitoring adherence to this policy by students. They are asked to consider:

- Suitability of resources and activities
- General organisation and sharing of good practice.
- Safeguarding reporting if required.

Relevant Legislation and Statutory Guidance

- **Equality Act 2010**
Applied to ensure disciplinary responses (including exclusion) are proportionate, non-discriminatory, and take account of disability, SEND, mental health needs, and reasonable adjustments.
- **Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice (2015)**
Applied where substance misuse or related behaviour may be linked to unmet

SEND, SEMH needs, or vulnerability, requiring consideration before sanctions are imposed.

- **Keeping Children Safe in Education** (DfE, statutory guidance – current version)
Applied to frame substance misuse primarily as a **safeguarding and welfare concern**, guide information-sharing decisions, and determine when escalation to external agencies is required.
- **Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004**
Applied to reinforce the school's duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and to take protective action where substance misuse may indicate harm, neglect, or exploitation.
- **Misuse of Drugs Act 1971**
Applied to define illegal substances and inform procedures for confiscation, storage, and potential police involvement.
- **Medicines Act 1968**
Applied to distinguish **lawful prescribed medication** from substance misuse and prevent inappropriate disciplinary responses relating to medication management.
- **Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR**
Applied to ensure information-sharing about substance misuse is proportionate, lawful, and limited to those who need to know.

Review of the Substance Misuse Policy

This policy will be reviewed by the DSL and the director on a two-yearly basis.

Next review November 2027.

APPENDIX 1

MISUSED SUBSTANCES

A wide range of substances can be abused. Many of these are not illegal. Some of these substances have legitimate uses as household products. Some have medicinal uses. Some are found as tablets or capsules, and some in the form of liquids or powders and in some cases even gases. There is a range of substances that can be found in more than one form. There are many substances that go by more than one name, including:

- the chemical name.
- the brand name.
- the street name.

Further information may be obtained from drug/health specialists or the police. If there is any doubt about any substance, advice should be sought from the drug/health coordinator or the police.

Classification of substances controlled by the Misuse of Drugs Act of 1971 – it is illegal to possess these substances unless lawfully prescribed.

APPENDIX 2

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF DRUG ABUSE

Warning signs in individuals

- Excessive spending or borrowing of money.
- Stealing from parents.
- More time spent away from home.
- Changes in attendance and lack of willingness to participate in activities.
- Unusual outbreaks of temper.
- Lack of appetite.
- Lack of interest in appearance.
- Heavy use of aftershave or perfume to disguise the smell of drugs.