



Sidcot
Live Adventurously

Policy Name: Smoking, Drugs and Alcohol Policy

Policy Number: 5.6

Date: September 2025

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1. Introduction and Context

- 1.1 The Governing Body, Senior Leadership Team and staff of Sidcot School fully recognise their legal, social and pastoral responsibilities to protect students from danger and provide them with a safe learning environment whilst in the School's care.
- 1.2 Together with providing excellent academic education, we pride ourselves on ensuring that our students are introduced to 'life skills' and knowledge that will prepare them for life beyond school.
- 1.3 We recognise that substance misuse amongst young people in this country is an ever-increasing problem. It has therefore become necessary for all schools to have a policy in place.
- 1.4 The use or misuse of alcohol, and the use of tobacco, e-cigarettes or vapes and drugs, can be very damaging both to individuals and society, therefore Sidcot School has established important guidelines and rules in these areas.
- 1.5 The implementation of this policy is an integral part of the conditions under which a student is accepted at Sidcot. Students or parents may not opt out of any part of it.
- 1.6 The School is active in its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and will not discriminate on the basis of protected characteristics including age, race, religion or belief, national, ethnic or social origin, gender and gender reassignment, sexual orientation, disability or special educational need.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This is a whole school policy. It applies to the Junior School (with the exception of the Early Years Foundation Stage) and Senior School including boarding. This policy should be read in conjunction with 'The Blue Book' (the School Code), and behaviour policies.
- 2.2 The School community extends beyond the campus. Students of Sidcot School may not use drugs, as defined by paragraph 4.2 of this policy, at any time.
- 2.3 Students must remember that they are ambassadors for the school at all times. In keeping with the behaviour and discipline policies, students may be disciplined for misbehaviour when they are:
 - Taking part in any school-organised or school-related activity; or
 - Travelling to or from school; or
 - Wearing school uniform; or
 - In some other way, identifiable as a student at the School; or for misbehaviour at any time, whether or not the conditions above apply, that:
 - Could have repercussions for the orderly running of the School; or
 - Poses a threat to someone else; or could adversely affect the reputation of the School.
- 2.4 This policy is available to all parents and students on the website and in hard copy form.
- 2.5 The term "student" refers to all those enrolled at the school irrespective of age.

2.6 The term “smoking” includes vaping and the use of e-cigarettes.

3. Aims

- 3.1 This policy aims to set out clearly the expectations of the School, and to ensure that students and parents understand:
- The implications of drugs, tobacco, vaping, electronic cigarette, nicotine products and alcohol misuse and the sanctions and consequences that may apply;
 - The measures that the School will employ to investigate possible abuse;
 - The potential for the involvement of external agencies, including the police and social services; and
 - The pastoral support that the School offers to educate and support where appropriate.

4. Prohibited Activities/Substances

- 4.1 Smoking including using e-cigarettes, vaporisers (vapes) and nicotine products.

4.1.1 Students are not allowed to smoke or vape on School premises, which includes in vehicles, or when otherwise occupied in school activities. Smoking/vaping is a health and safety risk and is particularly serious in-house as it exposes others to passive smoking and poses a significant fire risk. Smoking in public buildings in England is illegal and carries a heavy fine. It is also an offence to sell tobacco products (including vapes) to anyone under the age of 18 but the school extends this to selling to any student irrespective of their age

4.1.2 Any student who is:

- Caught smoking, including using e-cigarettes, vaporisers or oral nicotine pouches
 - Suspected of smoking (for example by virtue of smelling of smoke or vape) or
 - Found in possession of tobacco, vapes or smoking paraphernalia, including nicotine substitutes (oral pouches) or
 - Found to have concealed tobacco, vapes or smoking paraphernalia or
 - Found to have been in the company of other student who are smoking or vaping or
 - Found to have supplied (or concerned in this activity) such products to other students
- will be subject to the School's disciplinary procedures.

4.1.3 Each infringement will be treated on its merits, but as a usual course:

- First reported instances of smoking (including e-cigarettes, vapes and using nicotine products) **outside** of a building or found to be concealing tobacco, vapes, nicotine products or smoking paraphernalia will result in a conversation with the Deputy Head (Pastoral), and letter to parents and/or guardian. Students will be given a two-hour Saturday detention and directed to the Health Centre for support if they have an addiction.
- Second reported incidences will result in a further letter to parents and/or guardian and a two-hour Saturday detention.

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- Subsequent instances will normally attract a school suspension.
 - Irrespective of whether there have been any previous infringements, any smoking (including vaping and using nicotine products) **inside** school buildings will result in suspension from school, usually for two days
 - Notwithstanding the above, the School reserves the right to apply a higher sanction, including requesting the withdrawal of the student, should the context of the offence warrant it.

Persistent offences may result in exclusion or permanent removal in accordance with the School's Exclusions Policy (5.11).

4.1.4 We believe that all students should be aware of the health risks associated with smoking, vaping and use of nicotine products. The Health Centre can signpost students to support services and information. If the student is found to be taking positive steps to give up smoking, this may be taken into account when the school is administering any sanctions.

4.2 Drugs and Related substances:

4.2.1 The School forbids a student from the possession, use or supply of drugs and related substances; this includes (but is not limited to):

- Illegal Drugs (Class A, B and C) as defined by the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 such as Heroin, Cocaine, Crack Cocaine, Amphetamine, MDMA (Ecstasy tablets), Ketamine, and Cannabis;
- Legally purchased, or prescribed, medication that is being used for purposes other than intended or prescribed, such as Anti-depressants, Steroids and Benzodiazepines (such as XANAX trade name Alprozam);
- Substances which are not illegal but which may have an intoxicating and/or stimulating and/or hallucinating and / or mind altering effect. The use of animal, mineral or vegetable products which have such an effect. Students misusing such substances (including possession or supply or concerned is this activity) will be dealt with in a similar fashion to those who use illegal substances;
- Any other substance that can be purchased legally, such as glue, solvents performance related drugs, anabolic steroids, and 'legal highs', if they are being held or supplied for misuse. Mood-enhancing products, such as Nitrous Oxide (NOS) (this particular substance is soon to be made illegal it is likely that it will be made a Class C Drug but still awaiting an announcement), "Poppers", CBD products and other so-called 'legal highs' are absolutely forbidden. Stimulants such as "Pro Plus" are also not permitted. Drug related paraphernalia. This is not an exhaustive list;

4.2.2 Any student who is:

- Caught using, in possession, supplying, or cultivating drugs (or concerned in any of this activity)
- Suspected of using drugs (for example by virtue of smelling a drug or by noting altered patterns of behaviour)

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- Found in possession of drugs for personal use or the intent to supply
 - Or found to have been in the company of other students using or supplying drugs
- will be subject to the School's disciplinary procedures.

4.2.3 Although boarding students are permitted to take over the counter vitamins and minerals, at the discretion of their parents, the use of supplements, such as protein shakes, creatine and other performance enhancing aids are not permitted within school or boarding houses for any student under 18 years. For students 18 years and over, the use of these supplements, are heavily discouraged, and those wishing to take such products do so at their own risk and not in the company of younger students.

4.2.4 Each infringement will be treated on its merits, but as a usual course of action, see point 6 below.

4.2.5 A breach of this policy will result in the behaviour policy being invoked, and could ultimately result in removal or exclusion.

4.3 **Alcohol**

4.3.1 The School forbids students from:

- Bringing alcohol onto School premises or, whilst involved in activities as specified in paragraph 2.3, being in possession of alcohol or obtaining or supplying alcohol to another, being impaired by alcohol while on School premises, when travelling to and from school or in the care of the School, or found to have been in the company of students who are drinking alcohol whilst in the care of the school
- Bringing the School into disrepute for any reason associated with alcohol.

4.3.2 Each infringement will be treated on its merits, but a usual course of action will result in a two-day suspension at the discretion of the Head or Deputy Head (Pastoral).

4.3.3 A breach of this policy will result in the behaviour policy being invoked, and could ultimately result in removal or exclusion.

4.3.4 If required, alcohol detection and testing may take place using a breathalyser. Consent will be sought, and parents informed of the outcome of such tests.

4.4 **Pastoral Care**

4.4.1 Priority will be given to a programme of education and support with regard to all areas of substance misuse through Personal, Social & Health Education and within the curriculum, for example in biology. The School educates students on a wide range of substances that can potentially cause them harm to understand that the use of these substances could be harmful to their health, integrity, independence, opportunities and careers. It aims to build students' resilience in social situations. This is a sensitive and age-appropriate programme. Students, parents/guardians and staff will be presented with relevant and up to date information. Literature will also be made available through school with regard to prevention and detection of substance misuse, for example the FRANK programme.

4.4.2 We encourage students to discuss their anxieties about smoking, alcohol, drugs or other substances in confidence with a member of staff, school counsellors or the Health Centre.

4.4.3 The member of staff who oversees and co-ordinates these issues is the Deputy Head (Pastoral) who is also the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

4.4.4 Every parent should read and discuss this policy with their child when they are of sufficient understanding. The School encourages open discussion between parents and students so that parents are aware of the issues and pressures facing their child.

4.4.5 Health Centre staff will signpost services for alcohol and drug misuse and smoking cessation.

4.5 Staff Training

4.5.1 Staff receive regular training on how to recognise and manage issues around drugs, alcohol and smoking.

4.6 Concerns around Adult Misuse

4.6.1 If parents attending school premises appear to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol, they will be asked to leave and the member of staff making the request should refer the matter to the School's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

4.6.2 If a member of staff suspects that a parent has driven, or will drive, whilst under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or is not fit to have the care of a child, the member of staff should report the matter to the DSL or a member of the senior management team who may telephone the police if it is considered appropriate. If the DSL reasonably believes that a student or other child is at immediate risk of harm from a parent who is under the influence of alcohol or drugs, the student or other child will not be released into the care of the parent until appropriate measures have been taken. These may include involving another member of the family, social services or the police.

4.7 Medical Response

4.7.1 First aid must be carried out and if necessary, an ambulance called. Any drugs or drugs paraphernalia found must be kept securely and handed in to the police. While waiting for an ambulance Health Centre staff should be notified.

4.8 Notification to Head

4.8.1 The Head or Deputy Head (Pastoral) must be notified as soon as possible when an incident is discovered. Suspicion of an incident of drugs involvement must be notified to the Head or Deputy Head (Pastoral) at once. The Head and Deputy Head (Pastoral) are responsible for liaison with parents, governors, medical services, the police and the media, they may delegate to other staff to inform parents as appropriate. The Emergency Procedures set out in policy 1.1 should be followed where this is appropriate.

4.9 Searches for drugs, substances and related paraphernalia

4.9.1 The law provides schools with powers designed to help teachers maintain good discipline. Head teachers and staff authorised by them have a statutory power to search students and their possessions without consent when they have reasonable cause to suspect that a student may have a prohibited item, including alcohol, drugs, tobacco and cigarette papers, and vapes. Staff may seize any prohibited item as a result of a search. Please refer to the Search and Confiscation Policy (5.10) which regulates the circumstances in which searches may be carried out and the way in which they should be undertaken. Parents do not need to be asked to consent to a search being undertaken.

5. Police Involvement

- 5.1 If a member of staff has seized a substance which they believe is an illegal substance or a listed banned substance as per this policy then this will be placed in a secure tamper proof bag or container, placed in a secure location and a full record of the incident will be logged pending disposal or collection by the Police.
- 5.2 In line with our safeguarding duty and the KCSIE document, the school will report related incidents to the Police. If the Police suspect that a student possesses or has stored drugs, substances or related paraphernalia, the Police may elect to investigate using their own procedures or may pass the matter back to the School to investigate.

6. Concerns in Respect of Substance Misuse

- 6.1 If staff, parents/guardians or fellow students have concerns regarding substance misuse, it is in the interests of the student concerned that the information is shared in a sensitive manner with the Head or Deputy Head (Pastoral). The information will be handled sympathetically.
- 6.2 Matters brought into counselling by a student or his / her parents, in circumstances that are genuine, will be "ring-fenced" from disciplinary sanctions or adverse report. However, a student suspected of involvement with smoking, vaping, alcohol or drugs or substances outside of this context is likely to face disciplinary consequences. The supportive regime as outlined at para 6.5.5 may be invoked in certain circumstances, according to the Head's discretion, and modified as appropriate.
- 6.3 Suspicion of misuse may arise from behavioural changes leading to deterioration in demeanour and/or performance of the student. Reason to suspect use of illegal drugs may arise as a result of information or a complaint received or because of a student's behaviour such as:
- A decline in performance in schoolwork;
 - Marked swings in mood;
 - Excessive tiredness;
 - Sores and rashes especially on the mouth or nose;
 - A lack of interest in physical appearance;
 - An unwillingness to take part in School activities

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- Other signs or evidence, such as the smell from certain substances on a student, the finding of certain items of equipment (associated drugs paraphernalia), behaviour on a particular occasion, or other information that has been gathered – this could include from other students.

6.4 It is, however, important to recognise that most young people will experience some or many of the above symptoms during their school career with no link to the use of harmful substances, and reporting of suspicions must be handled sensitively and with common sense.

6.5 **Substance detection and testing**

6.5.1 Where there are concerns of substance misuse, the student will meet with the Head, Deputy Head (Pastoral), or, when involving a boarding student, the Head of Boarding to discuss the concerns that have arisen.

6.5.2 If, following discussion, more information is needed to eliminate or confirm the use of specific harmful substances, drug screening may take place. It is a means by which a student who denies any involvement in substance misuse may be cleared of concern. A positive result may be the first step to help a student face up to the difficulties they may be having and will enable that student to access the support needed to stop substance misuse.

6.5.3 Saliva sample: If, outside the context of confidential counselling, there is reason to suspect that a student has been involved with drugs or substances, they may be asked to supply, under the supervision of a trained member of staff and a witness present, a saliva sample for analysis. The reason for this drugs testing policy is:

- To deter the use of drugs and substances
- To identify users
- To absolve those who have been wrongly suspected
- To signpost for further support

6.5.4 Informed consent: The relevant consent to a drugs test is that of the student rather than the parents if the student is over 16 years of age, unless the student is not deemed Gillick competent.

6.5.5 If the student is under 16 years of age, their consent will be sought provided he/she is of sufficient maturity and understanding (Gillick competent) and gives their informed consent in writing. The member of staff undertaking the test will determine whether or not the student is able to provide this consent and may request the additional opinion of a medically qualified member of staff. In the event that a student is not deemed to be Gillick competent, parental consent will be sought.

6.5.6. In addition, as a matter of routine, it is a condition of acceptance of a new student into the senior school that a signed consent form is returned to the School by the parents to demonstrate their support for the procedure.

6.5.7 Notifying parents: Reasonable endeavours will be made, before a saliva sample is taken, to notify a parent, guardian or education guardian of the requirement for a saliva sample and the reasons for that requirement. This will not apply if parents have already been informed that a student has been put onto the testing programme, in which case the School may not inform the student's parents before each individual test.

6.5.8 Refusal: If a student or their parent on their behalf (in appropriate circumstances as per 6.4.5) refuses to provide a saliva sample they will be asked to say why they have refused. The School will be entitled to draw inferences from their response and general demeanour. The Head will then consider what sanctions and actions should be applied including the invoking of the exclusions policy and/or informing the Police.

6.5.9 Testing procedures: These will be in accordance with standard good practice.

Trained staff will have completed the Oral Fluid Drug Screening Course and the tests used are the ORAT6V3 Oral Drug Screening kits.

- The saliva sample will be taken under the supervision of a trained member of staff. Another member of staff will also be present to act as a witness. All due care will be taken to respect the student's privacy and human rights.
- The saliva sample will be taken and labelled immediately in the student's presence. If the test is positive, another saliva sample will be taken and sent off to the Lab for confirmation and the student informed of the results.
- The trained staff will ensure that correct procedures are carried out and documented. The student will be asked to sign various seals and documents which confirm that the specimens are theirs. They will also be asked to sign 'the donors consent statement', a form which signifies that they understand the procedures and are happy to provide a sample of saliva for analysis by an independent Lab. The student will also be asked to give consent for the results of the test (Orat6v3) being made available to the Head and the Deputy Head (Pastoral), and such other members of staff who need to know. Confidentiality will be preserved.

6.5.10 Medical record: The outcome of the test, whether positive or negative, will not form part of the student's permanent medical record, but will form part of their disciplinary record.

6.5.11 Outcome: When the School receives the laboratory report parents will be informed of the outcome. Any concerns raised around the validity of the test will be made with the Surescreen Laboratory.

6.6 Subsequent action

6.6.1 Procedure:

- The School will treat a positive test, although not infallible, as evidence that the student has been using drugs as appropriate. A meeting will be arranged at which:
 - The student will be asked to attend a meeting with the Head or Deputy Head (Pastoral) with their parents or a member of the School staff chosen to assist them;
 - The evidence of the positive sample and all other relevant evidence will be put to the student and they will be invited to respond;
 - their response will be heard and considered and further enquiries will be made if necessary;
 - The Head or the Deputy Head (Pastoral) will make a finding of fact on the balance of probabilities based on the evidence and supported by reasons.

6.6.2. Sanctions: if it is apparent that the student has been using drugs, the Head will be informed. If permanent exclusion or required removal is being considered, the procedures set out in the School's Exclusion Policy (5.11) will be followed.

6.6.3 There is no automatic sanction for a drug- or alcohol-related incident. Any decision will be taken after considering all the relevant facts available and information about the student involved, and the circumstances in which any incident occurred, and the School's awareness of any such incident has come about. Supply of drugs as defined by paragraph 4.2 will usually result in exclusion, even if the student is due to sit a public examination. Students involved in the possession of drugs will usually be excluded from school temporarily or permanently.

6.6.4 In certain, extraordinary, circumstances where a student has been found in possession of a drug with no evidence of supply, at the Head's discretion, he or she may be allowed to continue in the School on a supportive regime. Certain conditions, which must be strictly adhered to, are outlined below in paragraph

6.6.5 Circumstances and Conditions of the Head's supportive regime:

- The Student must have no previous record of serious breach of the School's discipline in a related matter;
- The offence must be the use, or possession of, a drug / drugs (caught with the drug or direct evidence of drug use);
- The Student must show genuine remorse;
- The Student must no longer use drugs;
- The Student must cooperate in identifying sources of supply;
- Parents must signal their unequivocal endorsement of the School's policy
- The parents must consent to the School's right to require the student to undergo regular random testing for drugs use, and agree to cover the cost of the tests. This would normally be a 3 month period from the time the student is placed on this testing regime.

6.6.6. If any subsequent tests are positive, the Student can expect to be excluded. Refusal to take a test in these circumstances may also result in the Student being required to leave the School.

6.6.7 The procedures in the Child Protection and Safeguarding policy (2.1) will be followed.

7. Charges

- 7.1 Invoices for any drugs test will be passed directly to the Accounts Office to be recharged to the parents.

8. Boarders over the age of 18

- 8.1 Irrespective of the fact that it is legal to drink alcohol over the age of 18, this policy applies to all students irrespective of age with the exception that on occasion, with the permission of the Houseparent, a boarding student may visit an agreed nearby public house with restaurant facilities, and may consume up to 2 units of alcohol with their

meal should they so wish. If it is found that this is not respected, and a student becomes intoxicated, this is likely to result in a two-day suspension.

9. Right to a Governors' Review

- 9.1 The sole circumstance in which a student has a right to a Governors' Review is when the Head has made a decision to permanently exclude a student pursuant to the exclusions policy. There is no right to a review of the Head's decision to require testing or not to offer the supportive regime as outlined in paragraph 6.
- 9.2 The complaints policy (2.6) will apply and is available on the School's website and in hard copy form.

10. Monitoring and Review of this Policy

- 10.1 This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if major incident or change in guidance or statute dictate by the Deputy Head (Pastoral), in conjunction with the Pastoral Group.
- 10.2 The Deputy Head (Pastoral) will be made aware of and will monitor any contraventions of this policy and trends in conjunction with their safeguarding role and as head of boarding and will make the Governing Body aware of incidents when appropriate.

11. References

- The Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2014
- The Handbook for the Inspection of Schools – Commentary – September 2019
- The National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools (effective from April 2015)
- 'Keeping Children Safe in Education', DfE, September 2023
- 'Working together to Safeguard Children', DfE, 2019
- 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused', DfE, 2015
- Dealing with allegations of abuse against teachers and other staff (DfE October 2012)
- DfE guidance ACPO and Drug advice for Schools
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Education Acts 1996 and 2006
- School Standards and Framework Act 1998
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006

12. Related Policies

- 2.1 Child Protection and Safeguarding
- 2.2 Staff Student Code
- 2.11 Equal Opportunities (Children)
- 3.1 Admissions

5.1a 5.1b – Behaviour and discipline policies for Senior and Junior Schools, and Out of School Care

5.7 Physical restraint

5.10 Search and confiscation

5.11 Exclusions

7.1 PSHE

13. Document Change History

Date of change	Detail significant changes and any new legislation/guidance taken into account
12.03. 2016	New Policy approved by Governing Body.
03.12.212016 Reviewed by Board	Minor grammatical amendments. Issue of consent clarified – paragraphs 6.44, 6.45. Inclusion of body building products 4.2.1 Removal of any references to alcohol testing References updated
31.05.2017	Clarification of position regarding body building products which are prohibited for any student under 18. The use of such supplements are discouraged for over 18s, but students may take them at their own risk.
22.11.2017	Minor formatting changes. Paragraph 9 – Procedure for review updated. Policy reviewed accordingly.
01.12.2018	Reviewed and adopted by Board. Minor grammatical errors corrected. Paragraph 6.9 – reference to “Cansford” laboratories replaced by “such approved testing facility as determined by the school”. References updated.

30.11.2019	Reviewed and adopted by Board. References updated. Sanctions updated Policy to be reviewed in future by Pastoral Group.
12.12.2019	Wording of “consorting with” replaced to “in the company of” for clarity
05.03.2020	Addition of the following: 2.5 The term “student” refers to all those enrolled at the school irrespective of age. 2.6 The term “smoking” includes vaping and the use of e-cigarettes. Para 3 “The implications of drug, tobacco, vaping, electronic cigarette and alcohol misuse and the sanctions and consequences that may apply Para 4.1 “It is also an offence to sell tobacco products to anyone under the age of 18 but the school extends this to selling to any student irrespective of their age.” New Paragraph 8. Boarders over the age of 18 8.1 Irrespective of the fact that it is legal to drink alcohol over the age of 18, this policy applies to all students irrespective of age with the exception that on occasion, with the permission of the Houseparent, a student may visit an agreed nearby public house with restaurant facilities, and may consume up to 2 units of alcohol with their meal should they so wish. If it is found that this is not respected, and a student becomes intoxicated, this is likely to result in a 2-day suspension.
30.11 2020	Paragraph 4.3.4 – inserted a point around alcohol testing Paragraph 7.1 removed the clause that says the school will pay for the first drugs test if it is negative. Paragraph 6.4.9 inserted a paragraph about quick drugs testing Reviewed and adopted by Pastoral Committee, approved by Board 5th December 2020.

02.01.2022	Paragraph 4.1.2 included the word 'vape' as a smoking smell Paragraph 4.1.3 clarified the procedure for the first reported instance Reviewed by the Deputy Head (Pastoral)
06.06.2022	Correction of omission from Change log in January 2022 : Paragraph 4.1.3 included the word "vaping" with smoking in the terminology
24.06.2022	Change of wording to 4.1.3 to include the phrase "irrespective of whether there have been any previous infringements"
24.05.2023	4.1.3 – clarification to procedures. No longer a Take Ten mentor addiction specialist available. 4.2.2 – clarification of when someone is bound by the policy in relation to drugs 6.5 update to testing method as it switched to saliva testing Policy checked by Dave Parvin at Drug Sense UK 4.3.2 Changed the usual course of action from a three-day to a two-day suspension at the discretion of the Head or Deputy Head (Pastoral) to bring in line with vaping
10.10.2023	Reviewed and adopted by Board as part of the Annual Safeguarding Review
1 September 2024	Policy reviewed. Included the use of nicotine products/pouches.
1 September 2025	Policy reviewed. Minor changes made.

