

Walderslade Girls' School

Drug & Substance Incident Policy



Aims and Principles

Walderslade Girls' School aims to provide an excellent education in a healthy, safe, supportive learning environment, where everyone is valued and makes positive contribution to the school community, and where students enjoy and achieve and go on to achieve social and economic well-being as responsible, independent members of society.

Drugs and drug education in the context of this policy are inclusive terms covering medicines, volatile substances, illegal drugs, alcohol, tobacco and other substances such as solvents.

This policy applies to all students, parents/carers, volunteers and staff members of Walderslade Girls' School and visitors to the school whilst on site, on school business off-site or on trips and visits.

Walderslade Girls' School does not condone either the misuse of drugs, alcohol or tobacco and cigarettes by members of the school, or the illegal supply of these substances. We are committed to the health and safety of our students and will take action to safeguard their wellbeing. We acknowledge the importance of its pastoral role in the welfare of young people, and through the general ethos of the WGS, will aim to work with students in need of support.

Guidelines

This policy not only considers such illegal substances as defined in the Misuse of Drugs Act but also considers the education and sanctions Walderslade Girls' School can use with regard to the supplying and use of solvents, alcohol and tobacco.

Walderslade Girls' School is a smoke-free environment for everyone which includes all areas of the school site, its grounds and its buildings. All staff, students, parents, carers and visitors to be school are not permitted to smoke anywhere on the school's grounds. This also applies to off site visits.

In dealing with drug-related incidents Walderslade Girls' School has a duty of care to all within the school. This includes students, employees and members of the public with a legitimate right to be on the school premises.

The scope of this policy applies to conduct whilst on the school premises, on journeys between WGS and home as well as on school visits, journeys and other activities, whether supervised by teaching staff or not.

If a student's unusual, irrational or inappropriate behaviour gives staff a strong suspicion that she is under the influence of an unauthorised /illegal substance, the Headteacher or a member of staff will contact the parents/carers and ask for the student to be collected and taken home. Parents/carers will be informed if their children are regularly on the periphery of incidents where the school rules on alcohol are broken.

The bringing of any harmful or illegal substance or article on to School premises is a very serious offence which will carry sanctions. (This includes drugs, alcohol, solvents and tobacco).

Confidentiality

If a student makes a disclosure that he/she has been using drugs or misusing substances, staff must never promise confidentiality. Disclosure usually indicates a need for help, and the student needs to be made aware straight away that we may need to talk to other adults who are able to help. Such disclosures should be discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Headteacher before action is agreed. In deciding upon what action to take staff must have regard to the law and their safeguarding responsibilities.

Walderslade Girls School students should feel able to talk in confidence to a member of staff about any drug related problem without the fear of being judged and every effort should be made to establish a meaningful dialogue. However, no member of staff can agree to offer complete confidentiality.

Education

Walderslade Girls' School has a proactive approach to drug education and provides a clear view on handling the incidence of drug use on the school premises. We provide drug education within the appropriate curriculum areas for access by all students. The school promotes a positive ethos that helps students feel valued as part of the wider community, fostering a positive self-image enabling students to cope better with possible drug use situations. In all cases the guiding principle is that the welfare of all students is paramount.

At Walderslade Girls' School we aim to:

- Provide a safe, healthy environment in which students and staff can learn effectively and develop
- Ensure all members of the school community know, understand and recognise the consequences concerning drug related incidents.
- Ensure there is clarity over how drug related incidents are managed.
- Ensure students make informed choices and to understand the benefits of a healthy lifestyle.
- Ensure students understand the risks associated with drugs and to reduce the numbers of students who may experiment with illegal or harm-causing substances.

Support

We are a caring community and wish to provide students with opportunities to access support when needed. We aim to do this by working in partnership with the Local Authority, parents/guardians, out-reach organisations and health professionals. Students should be aware that we will endeavour to support any one who voluntarily seeks its help with drug related problems.

Students will have access to drugs education and information through all year groups, which will be delivered by appropriate staff who have access to the necessary training and resources.

Appropriate counselling will be offered in school to students/parents/carers or referral made to outside agencies to help individuals/families overcome problems related to drug abuse. Students and parents/carers should feel able to discuss issues related to the use of drugs with a member of staff in private but understand the limits of confidentiality.

Sanctions

As a general principle, any student involved in any form of drug related incident will normally be suspended from the Walderslade Girls' School whilst a thorough investigation takes place. During, or immediately following this period, a decision will be made on the most appropriate following action.

Parents/carers will be informed if their children are regularly on the periphery of incidents involving drug or solvent abuse or where the school rules on smoking are broken.

Drugs & Solvents

Students need to be aware that bringing drugs or solvents onto school grounds or on school related visits for any purpose will be dealt with severely, as will using the school site or educational trips to make deals for the supply of drugs.

Any student:

- Who brings drugs or solvents to the school, and/or is otherwise involved in any form of drug related incident, will be disciplined and their parents/carers informed.
- Who knowingly brings illegal drugs or solvents onto the school site will be reported to the Police.
- Found in possession of, or known to have handled, illegal drugs will be reported to the Police. (Unless in exceptional circumstances; eg where it has been proved that a student has been coerced or bullied into carrying a substance)

Walderslade Girls' School reserves the right to exclude permanently students who:

- Are involved in repeated instances of drug related incidents
- Persistently place themselves, other students or staff at risk through their drug taking activities
- Coerce other students to take drugs by threat or other persuasive activity
- Whilst supplying, with or without financial gain, harmful, controlled or illegal substances on the school site, its local environment, or School trips will result in permanent exclusion

At Walderslade Girls' School we realise that every situation will have a unique context and set of circumstances. It is therefore vital that any incident is investigated fully before a decision is made on the sanction applied to each individual student involved and will depend on the nature/classification of the substance involved. For example, smoking a cigarette will be dealt with in a different manner than a student found using a class A drug.

Intoxication

The circumstances will be investigated and an appropriate sanction applied. Incidents may result in fixed term or permanent exclusion.

Smoking

If a student is caught smoking, the parent/carer informed. The Headteacher will consider the appropriate sanction which may include Internal Exclusion for the first offence. More serious sanctions may apply for further incidents. A student caught in possession of any smoking materials will have a note in their planner or a phone call home. The smoking materials confiscated, to be collected by a parent/ carer.

Police Searches and Drug Testing

The Safeguarding Team will carry out a screening assessment, Drug Use Screening Tool (DUST) if a student is suspected of drug use with consent of a parent/carer and will refer to Social Services and/or the Early Help Team and School Nursing Service for support from outside agencies of the student's drug use.

Passive Search Dogs

The Headteacher will exercise the right to use the support of the local Police to instigate searches and investigations into drug related incidents or when there is a suspicion of drug use without requiring prior parental consent.

Are there powers to search pupils with or without consent?

All Walderslade Girls' staff can search a student for any item if the student consents. In addition, the Headteacher and staff authorised by them have a statutory power to search students or their possessions, without consent, where they have reasonable grounds for suspecting that the pupil may have a prohibited item such as knives or weapons, alcohol, illegal drugs, stolen items, tobacco and cigarette papers, fireworks, pornographic images or articles that have been or could be used to commit an offence or cause harm.

Residential and off-Site Visits

Walderslade Girls' School complies with Medway Council's regulations and guidance for offsite activities. A risk assessment is completed for all trips and visits. Staff who suspect that a student is using or has used an unauthorised substance whilst on a visit or trip will inform a member of the senior leadership team immediately and await guidance.

If the visit is abroad then repatriation will be considered. The student may be sent home at the expense of the parent/carer or will be kept in isolation from the trip's group. If a drug related incident occurs on a foreign visit then contact is advised with the British Consulate and local police.

Staff

Any member of Walderslade Girls' School staff consuming unauthorised substances at work or presenting at work in an intoxicated state (including when on duty during an offsite visit or trip) will be subject to disciplinary procedures, possible police prosecution and dismissal from employment under the terms of gross misconduct. All staff have a duty of care to the students.

Any concerns raised about a member of staff in terms of possessing unauthorised substances to work or presenting at work in an intoxicated state will be reported to the Headteacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and an investigation will take place. The DSL will consult with Medway's Children's Safeguarding Board (MCSB).

Walderslade Girls' School staff are obliged to follow the procedures set out in the Whistleblowing Policy.

Parents and Carers

Walderslade Girls' School aims to inform parents and carers about all aspects of its policies via newsletters, the website and the prospectus. In the event of a drugs incident the school will take all necessary appropriate action. Student safety is paramount. Information about individual students cannot be divulged in the interests of confidentiality. Parents and carers are encouraged to approach a member of welfare staff if they have any concerns over their child's involvement with drugs or unauthorised substances.

The school is aware of the impact parent/carer drug misuse can have on a child and a child's education. Children of drug misusing parents may be at risk of emotional or physical harm or neglect. Walderslade Girls' School Safeguarding and Child Protection procedures seek to identify where a child may be experiencing difficult home or life circumstances and appropriate action will be taken to alert relevant authorities. When dealing with intoxicated parents/carers on school premises staff should not attempt to enter the situation alone. Every effort should be made to maintain a calm atmosphere and to communicate on a professional level. If a situation becomes, or is in danger of becoming volatile, staff will call the police without hesitation. The Headteacher and/or other member of the Leadership Team should be informed.

If a member of staff suspects that a parent or carer is intoxicated then concerns will follow about discharging a child into the care of that parent or carer. The focus for staff is student welfare. Staff will follow the Safeguarding and Child Protection procedures and advice will be acquired. The police will be informed if deemed necessary by the DSL.

Walderslade Girls' School staff have a right to be free from harm or threat of harm or abuse when carrying out their professional duties. If a member of staff is or feels threatened in any way by the behaviour of a parent or carer or visitor to the school then a ban on entering the school site will be enforced under section 32 of the County of Kent Act, 1981 or Section 547 of the Education Act 1996 and the police may be summoned.

Staff Responsibilities: Designated Co-Ordinator for Drug Related Incidents

The designated co-ordinator for drug related incidents is the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Headteacher

Procedures

Any student thought to have misused any substance by intent or accident will always be treated as a serious medical emergency and medical advice and treatment will be swiftly sought. Parents will be informed at the earliest opportunity.

All members of staff have a duty to support students who approach them with problems related to drug use. Prior to any further investigation any approach should always be considered as a request for help deemed a pastoral concern rather than a disciplinary matter.

When dealing with any incident staff should consider in priority

1. Medical support -immediate first aid if required then appropriate referral to the Health Service.
2. Inform the DSL and Headteacher
3. Give immediate safety/welfare support; ascertain if the student is at risk from own or others behaviour.
4. Communication with parents
5. Discipline- only if appropriate (including liaising with the police if appropriate). Otherwise counselling and guidance.

All Staff should remain vigilant for signs of drug misuse on and around the school. Any use of illegal drugs, the actual supply of (or offer to supply) illegal drugs or any other drug related incident on the school premises, home to Walderslade Girls' School or on school trips will always be reported to the police.

As a general principle, parents/carers will be notified of the school's concern over a drug related incident. An exception to this is when the Headteacher or Designated Safeguarding Lead feels that the welfare of the student involved would be placed in greater jeopardy by this action. The child protection measures will then be invoked.

Incident Management

Staff members have a professional duty to investigate and take appropriate action, either individually or by referral, if they have reason to believe that any student is at risk. Staff may safely take possession of an unknown substance. It is then recommended that a picture be taken of the substance before it is then destroyed or handed on to an authorised person as soon as possible, such as the Headteacher or Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Monitoring and Recording

All drugs related incidents will be recorded and kept by the DSL in a confidential place. No entry will be made to any student's record until all evidence is gathered and corroborated. The School will follow up drug related incidents to monitor progress.

Walderslade Girls' School works in partnership with the police to actively prevent and reduce the number of drugs related incidents within the area.

Media

Any media involvement will be dealt with by the Headteacher or a delegated member of staff.

Definitions

Drug

Any substance that has a mind/behaviour altering effect. This includes harmful substances such as aerosols and volatile substances, controlled substances such as alcohol and tobacco, and over-the counter and prescription medicines and all illegal drugs.

Drug misuse

The non-medical use of drugs that are only intended for use in medical treatment, and the use of drugs that have no acceptable medical purpose. Such drugs are controlled under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971. The Act does not cover solvent abuse.

Drug-related incident

Evidence or suspicion of a specific event at Walderslade Girls' School or during a school event involving one or more unauthorised drugs, and requiring immediate action by WGS staff.

“Controlled” Drugs under The Misuse of Drugs Act 1971

These are separated into three classes: Class A, Class B or Class C.

Class A drugs include opium, heroin, morphine and other narcotic drugs placed under strictest control by the UN Convention on Narcotic Drugs. It also contains cocaine; derivatives of cannabis; injectable amphetamines; and certain other hallucinogens.

Class B includes codeine and seven other opiate drugs and also includes certain barbiturates and six stimulant drugs of the amphetamine group.

Class C contains other drugs in the amphetamine group which are considered to be less dangerous and related drugs. It also includes cannabis, cannabis resin, 34 benzodiazepine tranquillisers, 54 anabolic substances, several non-barbiturate sedatives, two appetite suppressant drugs and the opioid analgesic buprenorphine.

Review

This policy and procedures will be reviewed annually and may also be reviewed in light of new legislation or incident that may occur related to drugs.

Linked Policies:

This policy needs to be read in conjunction with:

- Behaviour and Conduct Policy
- Use of Reasonable Force Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Confidentiality Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Anti Bullying Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Educational Visits Policy