



# **Laurus Trust (Secondary) Drugs, Alcohol, Tobacco and Vape Policy**

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# Policy Context

All schools have a responsibility to identify and act upon potential safeguarding issues in relation to children and young people. This includes the use of drugs, alcohol, tobacco and vapes amongst pupils accessing education; whether or not these substances are possessed or used on school premises.

Young people frequently experiment with substances but often have little knowledge or awareness of the effects and harms and are naïve to the risks to themselves or others. Schools are ideally placed to identify pupils who may be experimenting with substances and this policy is designed to support schools in taking appropriate action in respect of safety, education, and safeguarding.

The law bans the sale of vapes for anyone under 18 and bans the proxy purchasing of vapes for children by adults - It is illegal for anyone under the age of 18 to be sold a vape device, and illegal for anyone to purchase a vape device for anyone under 18. Vapes will be confiscated from students and action taken in line with policy guidance around confiscation of drugs and alcohol.

Any student who is involved with a drug, alcohol or vaping incident will be offered support from the Local Authority drug and alcohol services.

This Policy links to the following policies Safeguarding Policy

Data Protection Policy Health & Safety Policy Anti-Bullying Policy

This policy applies to all school staff and pupils, parents/carers, governors, and partner agencies working with the Trust.

# School Based Education around Substances

## Education & Curriculum

The Trust has a responsibility to provide sensitive, age-appropriate drug education, which is inclusive to all students.

The statutory guidance “Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (PSHE) and Health Education” clearly states that schools must deliver drug education as part of the health education component, of which there is no right to withdraw.

Schools within The Trust plan drug education which has relevance for all pupils, and we will offer provision appropriate to the particular needs of all our students, taking specialist advice where necessary, and which considers the needs of their school community.

Teachers are sensitive to the fact that pupils may have varying attitudes towards drugs which are influenced by their cultural and religious backgrounds and their life experiences, values and beliefs.

The Trust will respond to incidents of substance abuse via assemblies and be proactive in regard to emerging trends.

## Education for Parents & Carers

The Trust is open with parents and carers about the nature and content of substance related education that is being provided to students. This helps to ensure that appropriate and relevant conversations which supplement the school’s education can take place in the home, further reinforcing key messages to young people.

## Education for Staff

Trust staff are appropriately trained in at least basic drug & alcohol awareness and keep themselves up to date with current trends and emerging substances used amongst young people. This allows staff within The Trust to identify and respond to substance use in an appropriate and safe way, promoting the health and wellbeing of students. The Trust ensures that all staff are provided with mandatory training around these issues, and that this is reviewed regularly throughout each academic year.

In addition to ensuring that all staff to have received at least basic drug and alcohol education, each school in The Trust has a DSL and DDSL who manage and oversee significant incidents, including drugs being found on school property, and students and/or parents or carers attending under the influence. All Trust staff and students know who the DSL/DDSL are and how to contact them.

## Third Parties Providing Drug & Alcohol Education in Schools

Any other provider or individual who is brought into The Trust for the purposes of providing education around substances is fully aware of the correct and appropriate approach to take with young people. It

is entirely the responsibility of The Trust to ensure this is the case prior to any work being carried out.

Particular care will be taken to ensure that accurate messages are given to school children about substances, and The Trust ensures that the provider is appropriately trained and qualified to deliver these. They will be aware of good practice that recommends the avoidance of shocking images and inappropriate descriptions of drug use and have a clear understanding of the aims and objectives of the session and have seen and understood the school's drug education policy.

Visitors will be briefed on any sensitivities that there may be in the student group. Visitors will be made aware by the DSL/Class teacher of the individual school's protocols for dealing with any disclosures or distress shown by pupils during the session.

## Support For Schools, Students and Parents & Carers around drugs and alcohol

All schools within The Trust have access to drug and Alcohol Services:

- Stockport – Mosaic Young People's Drug & Alcohol Service
- Manchester – CGL Eclipse
- Manchester – ABL (A Better Life) – vaping support
- Tameside - Change Grow Live

### Children of Substance Misusing Parents/Carers

Where children are identified as being affected by the alcohol or drug use of a parent or carer, schools within The Trust will refer to the appropriate service. This work can be carried out in schools, community locations or (where appropriate) the family home.

### Parent/Carer Service

This service supports parents, grandparents and any other caregiver of young people who use drugs or alcohol and aims to provide guidance and support to enable them to understand how best to manage their emotions and feelings and provide effective help for their child.

## Responding to Drug, Alcohol & Vaping Related Incidents

## Definition

A Drug or Alcohol Related Incident may fall into one or more of the following categories:

- drugs or drugs paraphernalia or alcohol found on school premises;
- vapes – in possession of, using, sale or supply
- students in possession of unauthorised drugs or alcohol;
- students supplying unauthorised drugs or alcohol;
- students under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or exhibiting signs of intoxication or illness;
- disclosure of drug or alcohol use;
- information suggesting student(s) involved in substance misuse
- illegal sale/supply of drugs or alcohol in the school vicinity.

The Head of School and DSL have responsibility for the management of drug or alcohol incidents. All staff are fully aware of the procedures for managing incidents, including who they should inform and who has authority regarding issues such as searching school property and involving the police.

If the pupil is under the influence of drugs and alcohol on school premises the school must prioritise the safety of the young person and those around them.

A referral will be made to a local authority Drug and Alcohol Service.

## Involvement & of Parents / Carers

Parents and carers will be involved at the earliest possible opportunity should a substance related incident arise at The Trust and should be kept informed of any actions taken as a result. Parents and carers will be involved in any plan produced for their child as a result of a substance related incident.

If Police attend at a Trust school to interview a student about a substance related incident, consent from that student's parent or guardian must be gained prior to any interview taking place. Parents and carers can refuse consent for the interview to happen. As a last resort, a senior member of school staff can give consent for the interview to take place providing that all attempts at contacting parents have been unsuccessful. Any attempts made to contact parents and carers will be recorded with date and time on CPOMs.

For further guidance, please use the link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/drugs-advice-for-schools>

## School response to incidents where a pupil has ingested a substance

If the pupil is unresponsive or otherwise displaying behaviour or physical symptoms that are concerning, call 999 and request an ambulance immediately, then follow the individual Trust school policy for responding to medical emergencies. If it is considered safe to do so, First Aid may be given by a trained First Aider in accordance with Health & Safety Policy.

If a pupil is under the influence of a substance but does not appear to be at risk of serious harm in that moment, they will be taken to the DSL, and a decision taken as to whether the pupil should remain in school or be sent home. Informing parents and carers is a decision to be taken by the DSL.

Any substance the pupil is found to be in possession of will be confiscated by an appropriate member of staff, ideally wearing a face mask and gloves. Containers of alcohol will be emptied into a sink and disposed of. A witness will be present for the removal and disposal of any substance a young person is in possession of, with a clear record of the event noted down on CPOMs, including date and time.

Any incidence of removal of a substance from a young person should be done in accordance with each school's own searching and confiscation guidance and Behaviour Policy.

## School response where a pupil is suspected to be in possession of illicit substances, alcohol or tobacco

School staff have a statutory power to search pupils or their possessions, without consent, where they have reasonable grounds for suspecting that the pupil may have a prohibited item. Prohibited items include alcohol, vapes and illegal drugs.

## Searches and Confiscations

Any search carried out on a young person or their possessions should be carried out in accordance with The Trust/school procedures on searches.

Pupils will be given an explanation as to why the search is being undertaken, and that staff have reasonably cause to suspect that they have alcohol or drugs in their possession.

All searches and any confiscations will be witnessed by another member of staff, with times, dates and findings clearly recorded. However, if a drug or alcohol is found, staff will never leave the substance with the student if no witness is available to support them.

The student, and the substance itself, should be taken to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

If the substance confiscated is believed to be an illicit drug, the DSL will place the substance in a sealed container or police evidence bags and lock away until it can be disposed of safely and correctly. Both the DSL and another staff member will sign and date the container.

The appropriate disposal of any seized illicit substance will be managed as quickly as possible. It is not appropriate for substances to be placed in a locked location for safekeeping or retained on Trust property for any longer than is necessary. On no account should any member of school staff transport the substance in their vehicles or on their person to a Police Station, pharmacy, substance misuse



service or medical establishment. Police will be notified of the seizure of the illicit substance at the earliest possible opportunity, and they will arrange to attend for collection and safe disposal.

Seizures of alcoholic drinks which are contained in clearly marked cans or bottles will be disposed of by emptying these down the sink or drain. If there are any suspicions that the liquid is not alcohol but a different psychoactive substance (e.g., Lean), staff will follow the same process for the handling of illicit drugs.

Seizures of Bongs, pipes, vape and vape liquid, needles and syringes and any other paraphernalia should be handled in line with the Local Authority Health & Safety guidelines as per school's Supporting Children with Medical Conditions policy. Wherever possible, appropriate PPE safety equipment should be worn when handling any unknown substance and associated paraphernalia.

The DSL will meet with the appropriate Head of Year/Senior member of staff to discuss the incident, and agree upon an appropriate plan of action involving an investigation of the incident. This will need to be on a case-by-case basis. A review of the school's CCTV will be considered as part of the action.

If as part of the investigation, a student is found to be supplying drugs or alcohol to other students, a permanent exclusion could be considered. However, this will always follow the usual process for permanent exclusion. The supply of substances will be deemed as gross misconduct.

Parents and carers of the student(s) involved will be informed as soon as is reasonably possible.

Any information recorded as part of the investigation will be written up on the individual schools Serious Incident paperwork and recorded as per school policy on the storage of written information of this nature. All records of such an incident will be as detailed as possible, factual, and include records of conversations held with key others, such as parents and carers, other pupils and members of staff.

Students will be sanctioned according to our behaviour policy:

Where vapes are found, or students are involved in incidents of vaping, sanctions will be imposed. This will include a fixed term suspension.

Where drugs or drug paraphernalia are found on a student, regardless of the quantify or intent, to ensure the Trust remains a drug free environment the Head of School will impose the appropriate sanction. This will include a fixed term suspension or a permanent exclusion.

The Head of School reserves the right to exercise discretion when making exclusion decisions, in line with DfE statutory exclusion guidance. The Head of School will take into account the individual circumstances of each case before making a decision about sanctions, including suspensions.

The young person will be offered a referral to the local Drug and Alcohol service following any incident involving drug/alcohol/vaping as an intervention

## School responsibility in relation to Information

# Sharing

It is extremely important that no member of staff at The Trust promise complete confidentiality to a pupil. Young people who are using (or suspected to be using) substances are classified as being at risk of harm. Data Protection law allows information to be shared, without consent, provided that doing so is in the interests of preventing harm and promoting the health and safety of individuals or others. Similarly, it is the duty of all Trust staff to share relevant information if they have cause to suspect that a young person is at risk of harm from their behaviour, or the behaviour of others.

Staff who are sharing information will always seek the views of the young person prior to doing so, unless this delay would increase risk. If the young person refuses to consent, it is still necessary to share the information so that interventions can be put into place in order to safeguard the pupil from potential harm.

Where there are concerns around a pupils' use of substances (actual or suspected) a referral should be made to the local authority Drug & Alcohol Service, where an assessment of need will be carried out and interventions put in place in the interests of keeping the young person safe from harm. The young person must consent to this information being passed on, and at least one parent or carer will be informed of the referral being made. If the student is under 13, parents and carers must be informed of why the referral is being made.

## School Response if a Parent or Carer arrives under the influence of drugs or alcohol

If a parent or carer is on Trust premises under the influence of drugs or alcohol, the primary concern should always be the safety of the child in question, not the moderation of the parent or carer's behaviour.

If staff are concerned that the parent or carer is unable to safely provide care for the young person, they should follow Trust policy in relation to Safeguarding before making any decisions about whether to discharge the child back into the care of that adult.

If a parent or carer is acting in a way that is volatile, aggressive or abusive, or behaving in any manner which places students, staff or other parents at risk, Police should be called for support with the incident and Safeguarding processes followed. Similarly, if staff note that a parent/carer is frequently causing a risk to a child through substance use, it is important to consider a referral to the MASSH or to Police.

Children of Substance Misusing Parents can be adversely affected by the drug or alcohol use of their loved one, and in many cases are acting as carers for their own caregiver. This places barriers on school attrition and progress and can cause significant difficulties for the children affected. It is important that all Trust staff feel equipped to identify and approach young people who may be

affected by Parental Substance Misuse with a view to offering onward support from services or Early Help interventions.

## Substance Misuse & Safeguarding

A student using drugs or alcohol *alone* may not be an automatic Safeguarding concern warranting a referral to the MASSH. If in doubt, please refer the young person to the local drug and alcohol service and they will pass on information to MASSH if necessary. Key to understanding whether or not such action is needed is to sensitively gather enough information from the student and their families (if possible) to paint as comprehensive a picture as possible about the needs of the student and how these can best be met. Key additional risk factors suggesting links to organised crime or Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) would be:

- Young people in possession of drugs and/or alcohol they have no obvious means of affording (especially more expensive drugs such as cocaine)
- Young people seen to be selling drugs to other students
- Young people observed to be wearing new and expensive clothes, mobile phones, bikes, shoes, jewellery or other possessions suggesting they may have access to large amounts of money or may be being bought these possessions.
- Young people who are seen to be meeting or associating with older people near to the school grounds.

In terms of identifying the wider signs of abuse or neglect, staff in The Trust will use their judgement in recognising students who are at risk from this and act in accordance with the Trust/school Safeguarding Policy. All students who present at hospital or A&E under the influence of drugs or alcohol will have their details shared with the local authority drug and alcohol services as a matter of course, and arrangements will be made to see them in school wherever possible.

# Appendix

## Definitions & Terminology

Drugs can be broadly categorised as follows:

### Illicit drugs controlled by the Misuse of Drugs Act

Illegal drugs, also known as Controlled Drugs, are classified according to the harm they potentially do to individuals and the wider community. These substances fall into Class A (greatest harm, including heroin and cocaine), Class B (including cannabis and amphetamine) and Class C (including Benzodiazepines and Steroids). Possession and sale of these substances is classified as an offence under the law and can be punishable by fines or prison sentences.

### Drugs Controlled by the Medicines Act

Many substances can only be obtained with a prescription from a medical professional, for example anti-depressants, sleeping tablets, strong painkillers, and anxiety medications. Many of these substances become, without a prescription, controlled substances that fall under the Misuse of Drugs Act (e.g., higher strength codeine without a prescription becomes a Class B drug under the law).

### Over the Counter Medications

It is possible to obtain a number of substances which can induce mild psychoactive or physiological effects from pharmacies over the counter. These substances are classed as medicines and are not controlled by the Misuse of Drugs Act, although their sale is age restricted. Examples are low strength Codeine based medications such as Co-codamol, cough/cold remedies such as Promethazine, sleep remedies such as Nytol and decongestants containing Pseudoephedrine.

### Substances controlled by the Psychoactive Substances Act

The Psychoactive Substances Act covers all substances which have a psychoactive effect on the body. It is not an offence to possess these substances, but supply is illegal. This legislation primarily covers the substances which were, prior to 2016, available for legal sale and referred to as "Legal Highs". The legislation was brought in with an aim to prevent harm from emerging substances which were technically exempt from legislation as their chemical structure was not recognised under the Misuse of Drugs Act. Common examples of former "Legal Highs" which are now covered by law include Spice, Black Mamba, MCAT/Mephedrone and Ethylphenidate.

### Alcohol, Tobacco and Vapes

The sale of alcohol, tobacco and vapes is age restricted - young people under the age of 18 cannot legally buy alcohol, tobacco or vapes. Possession or use of these by young people is discouraged and not permitted in The Trust. Alcohol, tobacco and vapes are included within the scope of this policy.

There is also a substantial market in illicit, unregulated vapes which do not comply with Tobacco and Related Products regulations. Where vapes contain illegal substances, it is appropriate to consider management under the drug policy.

## New & Emerging Trends

It is important to recognise that the above list of substances is not exhaustive as new drugs and psychoactive chemicals are being identified all the time. Examples include Lean, which is a cough mixture containing Dextromethorphan, Codeine and fizzy drinks, producing a dissociative sedative effect. Similarly, “edibles” are becoming more widespread amongst young people. This term refers to commercially available sweets such as Skittles or Nerds which have been mixed with THC (cannabis) or Spice like chemicals and are eaten. Trust staff will attend training on emerging trends and will be issued updates and alerts once a substance or dangerous practice is identified in the local area.

It is important to note that some children will be taking medication prescribed by a doctor for a diagnosed medical condition.

## Vaping

### Vape devices

Vape devices commonly come in the form of an “all in one” vape pen, a disposable device which contains an integrated battery, vape liquid and nicotine. The pens are typically brightly coloured and fruit flavoured. The liquid in these devices cannot be easily accessed or altered. Vape devices can also be obtained as “separates” - a battery pack with a screen-based display and a removable tank which is refilled with nicotine and allows for vape coils to be swapped.

### Vape liquid

Vape liquid is a mixture of vegetable oils, propylene glycol and flavourings. It is illegal to sell vape liquid containing nicotine in a quantity greater than 10mls; for large bottles of vape liquid separate “nic shots” containing concentrated nicotine are added to the liquid and mixed together. Vape liquids are available in a huge range of flavours including fruits, milkshakes, cakes, donuts and popular sweets.

### Illicit vapes

There is a substantial market in illicit, unregulated vapes. All vapes must comply with the requirements of the Tobacco and Related Products Regulations and be labelled in accordance with the regulations for hazardous substances. The key requirements are listed below.

Nicotine-containing vapes must not:

have a nicotine strength of more than 20mg/ml or 2%

contain more than 2ml of nicotine-containing liquid

## Key risks to consider with vaping

Excessive use of vapes may present as nausea, sore throat, dizziness and headaches. In the event of an extreme adverse reaction, this should be reported to the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Authority (MRHA) via the [Yellow Card Scheme](#).

Illicit vapes can also contain illegal THC (Tetrahydrocannabinol - a psychoactive chemical found in cannabis).

## Sanctions

Any student found in possession of a vape, or found to be vaping on school premises will receive a fixed term suspension – please refer to the Behaviour Policy

# Equality Impact Statement

|                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Names and title of people involved with this assessment                 | Rachel Robinson<br>Assistant Trust Director of Inclusion                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Impact assessment carried out with regard to identified characteristics | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Race<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Disability<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sex<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Age<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religious belief<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sexual Orientation<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gender Reassignment |
| Summary of any issue/proposed changes                                   | None                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Date                                                                    | April 2026                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Date of next review                                                     | April 2027                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |



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