



THE ENGLISH SCHOOL
A SECOND CENTURY OF EXCELLENCE

125
YEARS

Substance Misuse Policy

The English School

The person responsible for Policy	Headmaster, DSL, DDSLs, Assistant Heads of Pastoral
Ratified by	The Board of Management
Version Number, last date updated	v.1 – May 2025
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Applies to:	All students, staff, visitors, and parents/guardians

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1. Introduction

This policy addresses the education, prevention, identification, and management of all forms of substance misuse at The English School, Nicosia. It reflects our commitment to the wellbeing and safety of all members of our community and outlines a clear framework for addressing incidents of substance misuse.

2. Aims

- To provide clear guidance on expectations, responsibilities, and disciplinary procedures.
 - To safeguard the health and welfare of students through prevention and education.
 - To offer support and guidance to students at risk.
 - To uphold local legal requirements and educational best practices.
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3. Definitions

Substances include:

- **Illegal substances** (as defined under Cyprus law)
- **Legal substances** such as tobacco, alcohol, and nitrous oxide
- **Prescription and over-the-counter medications** used improperly
- **Psychoactive substances** (“legal highs”)
- **Vaping products**, steroids, solvents, and any substance misused to alter mood or behaviour

Substance misuse

The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines substance misuse as “the use of a substance for a purpose not consistent with legal or medical guidelines.” The NICE guidelines (2008), characterize problem substance use as a condition that may cause an individual to experience social, psychological, physical or legal problems related to intoxication and/or regular excessive consumption, and/or dependence.

4. Scope and Jurisdiction

This policy applies:

- On school premises, transport, or grounds
 - During school-related activities (trips, competitions, etc.)
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- While students are in uniform or representing the School
 - In any context where student behaviour affects the School's reputation or safety
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5. Prevention and Education

Substance education is delivered through:

- The **PSHCE curriculum** (Years 1–7) covering risks, law, peer pressure, media influences, and healthy decision-making
 - **Science curriculum** covering biological and health impacts
 - Workshops with local experts about healthy lifestyle choices as well as the risks of these substances
 - Parental seminars and information evenings
 - Staff training on awareness, recognition, and response
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6. Prescribed Medications

- Students must not carry or self-administer prescription medication without prior approval.
- All medications must be handed to the **School Nurse** with relevant documentation (See (Health Welfare, First-Aid Care and Administration of Medicine Policy)).
- Staff may only administer medication under documented procedures (Health Welfare, First-Aid Care and Administration of Medicine Policy).

***Staff should NOT administer anything, only when trained in case they are escorting students on school trips (locally or abroad).**

7. Identifying Substance Misuse

The following details physical, emotional, and behavioural signs of misuse.

Staff are trained to recognise warning signs. The below list is not exhaustive.

Mood and personality

- Withdrawn or depressed
 - Decrease in motivation
 - Hyperactive or unusually elated
 - Difficulties in concentrating
 - Reserved
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- Easily irritated
- Sudden loss of inhibitions

Behaviour

- Changes in relationships (family, friends)
- Loss of interest in school (poor attendance, sudden academic changes)
- Mood swings, lack of motivation, secrecy
- Unusually tired or clumsy

Hygiene, Appearance and Physical Health

- Poor hygiene
- Physical indicators (e.g., red eyes, unusual smells or mouth odours)
- Unusually messy appearance
- Sudden increase or decrease in body weight
- Frequent sickness
- Slurred speech or speaking rapidly
- Seizures and/or vomiting

Any concerns should be reported to the **Head of Year** in writing as soon as possible.

8. Managing Incidents

All incidents are dealt with promptly and recorded thoroughly. Safety comes first, and staff follow a consistent protocol.

Incidents may involve:

- Possession, use, or distribution of substances
- Suspicion of substance misuse
- Disclosure by a student or peer

In all cases:

- Safety is the immediate priority (medical help sought if needed)
- Incidents are reported to the **Head of Year in writing, copying the Pastoral Assistant Head of Section**
- A second adult is present for any questioning or search
- Full records are maintained and stored confidentially. Refer to section 16 on Record Keeping and Reporting.

9. Searches

Searches are allowed when suspicion exists, with clear guidelines to protect student rights and ensure safety.

- The School reserves the right to search if there is reasonable suspicion.
- Students may be asked to empty their bags or pockets.
- Searches are conducted by two staff members (same gender, where possible, and same gender of the person suspected of possession).
- Parents are informed of searches unless it compromises safety or investigation.
- Substances found are sealed, documented, and handed to the police as required.

10. Disciplinary Framework

The School adopts a **two-strand approach**: Pastoral and Disciplinary where students are supported while applying sanctions. Sanctions range from warnings to permanent exclusion depending on the severity.

Disciplinary Action May Include:

Offence	Actions
Possession of tobacco/vapes	Warning, detention, written parental notification; repeated offences → suspension
Use or possession of alcohol	Suspension, written parental notification, parental meeting, counselling
Use or possession of illegal substances	Suspension, investigation, access to external support services, possible permanent exclusion
Supply or distribution of illegal substances	Immediate referral to police, permanent exclusion (at the discretion of the Headmaster)

11. Support and Referral

Where appropriate, students may be:

- Protect students from substance misuse through prevention strategies (see Section 5: Prevention and Education)
- Referred to the **School Nurse or Counsellor**
- Placed under a behaviour support plan
- Supported in their reintegration following detox, rehabilitation or exclusion
- Given access to external services

- The School refers parents to Perseas (Counselling Center for Parents and Adolescents on Addictions) and requires them to inform the school of the outcome within an agreed period of time
 - If no follow up occurs from the parents and the School continues to have concerns, the School may directly refer the case to the Social Welfare Services.
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12. Confidentiality

Total confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. Key information is shared responsibly, with a strong safeguarding emphasis.

- Disclosures are shared on a **need-to-know basis** to ensure safety.
 - The School will involve parents; however, where safety is at risk, referrals may be made without parental consent (e.g., to the Police and/or Social Welfare Services).
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13. Parental Involvement

Parents are kept informed and involved unless safety concerns prevent this. The policy encourages collaboration.

- Parents will be contacted for any confirmed or suspected case.
 - They will be expected to support any interventions or referrals.
 - The School will maintain transparency and a partnership approach unless there are safeguarding concerns.
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14. Staff Responsibilities

- All staff must report concerns to **Head of Year in writing, copying the Pastoral Assistant Head of Section**
 - Staff must never condone substance use or place themselves at risk.
 - Smoking, drinking, or drug use on campus is strictly prohibited.
 - If under the influence while at work or on duty, staff will be subject to disciplinary procedures.
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15. Visitors and External Individuals

- Visitors must not be under the influence of substances.
 - Smoking, drinking, or drug use on campus is strictly prohibited.
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- Any infringement may result in removal from the site and police involvement.
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16. Record Keeping and Reporting

- Incidents involving tobacco, vaping, and alcohol should be documented and stored securely by the relevant HoY and Pastoral SLT.
 - Other substance misuse (illegal substances) should be documented and stored securely by the DSL.
 - Reports include time, date, substance, action taken, and persons involved.
 - Serious incidents are reported to Police or the Ministry of Education as appropriate.
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17. Policy Review

- Reviewed annually by the (Senior Leadership Team) Headteacher, DSLs, and Pastoral SLT and Board of Governors.
 - Aligned with legislation, safeguarding policies, and public health guidelines.
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18. Key Contacts and Resources

- **School Counsellor/Nurse**
- **Perseas** (Adolescent Addiction Centre): 1456
- **Talk to Frank:** www.talktofrank.com
- **Childline Cyprus:** 116111
- **Cyprus National Addictions Authority:** 1402