

Harrogate Ladies' College



Substance Abuse Policy

1. Policy Statement

- The College is committed to the health and safety of its members and will take action to safeguard their well-being.
- The College acknowledges the importance of its pastoral role in the welfare of young people and through the general ethos of the College, will seek to encourage pupils in need of support to come forward.
- The College prohibits the misuse of alcohol, solvents and illegal drugs or the supply of these substances.
- The College believes it has a duty to inform and educate its pupils on the consequences of substance use and misuse so that they are able to make healthy, informed choices that will help them to avoid danger.
- The College's firm stance against the abuse of harmful and illegal substances is underpinned by a consistent policy of education for pupils as part of the school's PSHE programme.
- Fundamental to the College's values and practices is the principle of sharing the responsibility for education of young people with parents, by keeping them informed and involved at all times. Effective communication and co-operation are essential to the successful implementation of this policy.

2. Alcohol, Tobacco and Solvents

- Whilst the College recognises that alcohol, tobacco and solvents are legal substances in certain circumstances, it has, nevertheless, an established policy that prohibits smoking and the misuse of alcohol and solvents by pupils. These matters are addressed in the College's PSHE programme throughout the Key Stages.
- The College will seek to discourage pupils from smoking because of the widely accepted medical evidence that the practice is profoundly damaging to health.
- The College will seek to make pupils aware of the dangers of the misuse of alcohol.
- Any pupils caught abusing these substances in the school or boarding community will be immediately reported to the Headmistress who will liaise closely with Heads of Year, Boarding staff and parents to determine the appropriate action. This will depend on individual circumstances.
- Any pupils caught abusing these substances will be offered assistance in identifying sources of appropriate personal support.

3. **Use of Legal Drugs**

- The College accepts that pupils may need to take prescription drugs. Any day pupil who needs to receive such medication should bring a note from parents detailing the medication and dosage and pass to her form tutor or Head of Year. This information should be shared at once with the Health Centre staff and it may be required that pupils go to the Health Centre to take this kind of medication.
- Medication required by boarding pupils will be kept either in a secure area in House and be administered by the Housemistress or Assistant Housemistress, in consultation with Health Centre staff, or pupils will report to the Health Centre to take this medication. A record should be kept of medication in the House Health Book.
- A detailed record of pupils' medication needs is held by Health Centre staff. Staff taking trips out of school have access to this information in order to ensure medical safety on trips.

4. **Illegal Drugs**

- The College takes a strong view about the importance of upholding the law in respect of the use and abuse of illegal drugs. All those associated with the school should be aware of the College policy.
- The priority of the College must be the health and well-being of all its pupils. Any incident will therefore be treated with the utmost seriousness.

The policy is clear:

- No pupil may bring illegal drugs onto school premises
- No pupil may handle illegal drugs on school premises
- No pupil may use illegal drugs whilst on school premises
- No pupil may give or sell illegal drugs to other members of the school community, whether on or off school premises
- This policy applies on all occasions when a pupil is a recognisable member of the school community, such as during school trips, outings and expeditions.
- It follows that the use and abuse of these substances by pupils will lead to disciplinary sanctions being imposed by the Headmistress, in consultation with the Chairman of the Board of Governors. Such sanctions could lead to a pupil who contravenes these clear rules being suspended and/or expelled from school.

Action following Misuse:

- Any member of staff who suspects or knows of a pupil who is involved in possession or in seeking to sell or pass to others any illegal substances must report his/her suspicions to the Headmistress or Deputy Head immediately. In no circumstances should any member of staff seek to deal with such matters without reference to one of these senior colleagues.
- Any pupil who is found in possession of, or seeking to sell or pass on to others, any illegal substance(s) will be liable to immediate suspension and, particularly if seeking to sell or pass on to others such substances, expulsion from the school. Any mitigation of a pupil's position is at the discretion of the Headmistress, depending on the individual circumstances of the case.
- Where a pupil is found in circumstances that suggest she has used or is in possession of illegal drugs, the College may require the pupil to take a drug test. Such a test will be carried out by trained staff using an approved system.
- Where such a drug test yields a positive result, the pupil will be immediately suspended. The Headmistress will subsequently see parents to determine whether the pupil will be allowed to remain at College. If a pupil is allowed to remain, she will be given further guidance, support and counselling by specialist staff. She will also be under an obligation to submit to a regime of regular testing. A subsequent positive test will lead to the pupil's permanent expulsion from College.
- In all cases of such activity by a pupil, parents will be immediately informed and the matter may also be reported to the police.
- Any pupil caught supplying or inciting the use of illegal substances, or being in possession of them with intent to supply, will be expelled.
- Any pupil experimenting with, encouraging or speaking openly of illegal drug use may be considered to be bringing the name of the school into disrepute. This is even true if the offence takes place out of school hours or off school premises. The College will be prepared to give advice in such circumstances even if implementing the disciplinary sanctions described above.
- The school is aware that some substances that are not illegal may have an intoxicating and/or hallucinatory effect. The use of animal, mineral or vegetable products that have such an effect is against College rules and pupils using such substances will be dealt with in a similar fashion to those who use illegal substances.
- The Headmistress will keep the Chairman of the Board of Governors informed at all times about incidents involving illegal drugs.