



READING SCHOOL

ANTI DRUGS POLICY

DRUGS

It is the school's policy that taking, possessing, distributing or dealing in the following is forbidden:

- i) illegal drugs
- ii) drugs which are controlled/illegal substances under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971
- iii) being in possession of illegal drugs paraphernalia
- iv) legal/age-dependent drugs, including alcohol, tobacco, volatile substances (which give off a gas or vapour which can be inhaled), as well as all over-the-counter and prescription medicines (unless the school is notified by parents)

The definition of a drug used in the DfE 'Drugs guidance for Schools' is 'A drug is a substance people take to change the way they feel, think or behave'. For the purposes of this Anti Drugs Policy the term "illegal drug" is used to include items falling under i) - iv) above.

INTRODUCTION

Reading School believes unequivocally that drug-related issues should be confronted in an open and responsible manner and that taking illegal drugs or using controlled substances inappropriately is contrary to our core values including integrity, leadership and community and potentially hazardous to physical and mental health. It is vital that all students understand appreciate the dangers of drug misuse and the fact that Reading School adopts a zero tolerance approach.

There are three principles to our approach:

1. It is part of our professional responsibility to take any necessary disciplinary or other appropriate action to reduce the risks that illegal drugs present to our students.
2. It is Reading School's responsibility to protect the Reading School family and community from the influence of illegal drugs.
3. It is also part of our professional responsibility to signpost support and counselling for young people and their families who encounter problems with drugs.

ETHOS OF READING SCHOOL

The philosophy of Reading School is to provide a safe environment in which students can flourish. We strive to 'build good men' who show character and integrity and understand their responsibility towards others in the community. The ethos and values that underpin Reading School are incompatible with the use, possession, supply or distribution of illegal drugs and we promote an attitude that upholds the law, ensures students are not pressurised to undertake illegal activities and strengthens community.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to prevent students from using illegal drugs. Critically, Reading School has legitimate interest in students' activities outside school hours where they may bring the school into disrepute, where they may endanger the well-being of the students concerned or where they and other students from the school are put at physical or mental risk or are breaking the law. This policy strengthens Reading School's commitment to its pastoral role in the welfare of pupils and crucially to the health, safety and security of all members of the school community.

SCOPE

This policy applies at all times when a student is in the care of Reading School. It will also apply to incidents out of school where a student or the reputation of the school is affected

At Reading School, we are committed to promoting a healthy, safe environment in which we build 'good men' who flourish, have respect for the law and for others. We believe that it is important to deliver a clear, consistent framework that promotes the integrity of the Reading School community. In addition, it is necessary to help students have the understanding and strategies to withstand pressure to experiment with illegal drugs, especially in social settings.

The anti-drugs policy has been drafted in accordance with the Department for Education's guidance 'Drugs: Guidance for Schools'.

The central aim of this policy is to keep drugs out of Reading School. We aim to achieve prevention by means:

Drugs Education,
Support and pastoral care,
Effective detection and response,
Sanctions that function as a deterrent.

DRUGS EDUCATION

Reading School will provide a programme of drugs education within the curriculum including external speakers/agencies. The programme will contain factual information, including the legal and health issues concerning drugs. The local health agencies and police will, where appropriate, assist in the delivery of the programme. Periodically, there will be information evenings for parents on this and other pastoral topics. Reading School's aims for drugs education are:

- To promote a healthy lifestyle through informed judgements;
- To educate students about the effects of drugs on the mind and body by providing them with accurate, up to date and age appropriate information, enabling them to make positive choices emphasising character and integrity.
- To explain the legal situation regarding the use of drugs and alcohol.
- To actively discourage the use of drugs and to inform students that the possession and/or use/supply of illegal substances on school premises is treated as extremely serious misconduct (linked to management of behaviour policy).
- To encourage compliance with the criminal law under which it is an offence for any person to possess use, supply or sell controlled drugs or for the school to allow its premises to be used for those purposes.
- To enable parents to acquire knowledge and support through information and awareness evenings, and highlighting where they can obtain literature, support and advice.
- Parents are encouraged to contact the school if they have concerns regarding the harmful use of substance by students at Reading School.

At Reading School we educate students to understand the use of illegal drugs is or may be a criminal offence and will be harmful to their health, their integrity, their relationships and character and will damage the community in which they live. We educate by means of PSHE and talks from outside experts.

SUPPORT AND PASTORAL CARE

At Reading School we encourage students to discuss anxieties and issues regarding drugs with a member of staff or the school counsellor.

If a student comes forward and voluntarily identifies themselves as a drug user and asks for help, or if his parents ask for help on their behalf, Reading School may, depending on the circumstances and at the discretion of the Headmaster, offer the student the opportunity to reform their habit with the support of counselling either within the school or from external services. Drugs problems in such instances be dealt with via the Assistant Head (Pastoral) or Deputy Headmaster who will liaise with appropriate external specialists.

Any student disclosing drug use will be told that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed and that the issue may need to be taken further for the student's safety.

The School will consider mandatory drug testing programmes if these are considered to reduce the risks of further substance abuse or dependence.

DETECTION AND RESPONSE RELATING TO DRUG-RELATED INCIDENTS

Without prejudice Reading School will always investigate rumours, complaints or allegations about involvement in illegal drugs and substances. Investigation by a designated senior member of staff may include questioning a student, asking them to give a written account of particular circumstances, searching their personal possession (in accordance with regulations) and taking possession of property for analysis. Investigations will be carried out in accordance with natural justice. Parents will be kept informed as is practicable.

The school will inform parents as a matter of urgency and the Headmaster or, in his absence, other Senior Leaders, will discuss the issues with them in a meeting.

Suspicious substances or circumstances, and any evidence of illegal drug taking and/or possession will be passed to the Police.

Every complaint or report of involvement with illegal drugs will be followed up and investigated by a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Where necessary or useful, the School will work in partnership with Thames Valley Police or other agencies to undertake searches of the School site as a deterrent or to manage concerns about substance use. Such searches will be covered by the School's procedures for searching personal possessions.

SANCTIONS

Any student selling, distributing, supplying or inciting the use of illegal drugs or otherwise actively encouraging their possession or consumption by others will be permanently excluded. Any student caught possessing or consuming illegal drugs while under the school's jurisdiction must expect exclusion, including permanent exclusion, as the most likely consequence their actions.

Any student caught in possession of, or using illegal drugs on school premises, whilst on a school-related activity, or during the school day, must also expect to be permanently excluded unless there are, in the judgement of the Headmaster, particularly extenuating circumstances in which case significant exclusion and a supportive regime may be offered as an alternative to permanent exclusion at the discretion of the Headmaster.

The school cannot be seen to be condoning illegal activities and has a duty of care to the student and his parents and also to other members of the school community to do all that it can to discourage illegal drug use.

If the school is in possession of information about behaviour which could be deemed to be criminal outside of school senior leaders may:

- Inform parents of the nature of any allegations.
- Ask that there should be drug counselling.
- Refer concerns to the local police.

In the event of the school's reputation being brought into disrepute, it will be the school's right to invoke its full disciplinary procedures.

SAFEGUARDING

If parents or other visitors to the 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 a safeguarding lead. If it is reasonably believed that a student is at immediate risk of harm from a parent who is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, the student will not be released to the care of the parent until appropriate measures have been taken which may include involving social services or the police.

If a student appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol they will be isolated from other students with appropriate safeguarding procedures undertaken to protect the well-being of other students and to allow appropriate investigation or communication with parents.

Policy approved by EXPC Committee 12th June 2023

Date of next review: June 2025

Appendix 1

The law relating to drugs

Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 is the principal law governing illegal drugs. Offences involving Class A drugs are the most serious and carry the heaviest penalties. Principal drugs include:

- Class A: opium, heroin, cocaine, crack, LSD, and any Class B drug prepared for injection.
- Class B: amphetamines, barbiturates, cannabis.
- Class C: GHB, ketamine.

Regarding cannabis, in many police forces, young people under 17 in possession of cannabis will be arrested. Persons over 17 but using cannabis in the vicinity of young people under 17 will also be arrested.

Maximum penalty for supply: 14 years
Maximum penalty for possession: 5 years

It is an offence knowingly to allow premises for which you are responsible to be used for smoking cannabis or opium or the production or supply of controlled drugs. If the drug is offered for supply to another, the person responsible for the premises commits an offence unless he or she acts to stop it.

SUPPORTING AGENCIES

NATIONAL DRUGS HELPLINE: 0800 776600

(The National Drugs Helpline is free, confidential and won't show up on your telephone bill)

RELEASE: 0171 7299904

(Release is a voluntary organisation which gives legal advice to drug users, their families and friends)

THE SAMARITANS: 0345 909909

(The Samaritans provide a 24-hour telephone counselling service giving confidential support, charged at a local rate)

ADFAM: 0170 638 3700

(Adfam is a national telephone helpline for the families and friends of drug users, providing confidential support and information. It is open from 10am – 5pm Monday to Friday)

NO.5 0118 9585858

(Young peoples' counselling and information – Reading based)

SOURCE (YOUNG PEOPLES' DRUG AND ALCOHOL SERVICE- RBC):0118 901

5666(This is an excellent local support service which offers both support for any young person involved in drug or alcohol misuse, as well as parenting courses)