



Anti-Drug Policy

Introduction:

At DPS, RAK, we uphold a zero-tolerance approach towards the possession, use, distribution, supply, promotion, or misuse of illegal drugs and other prohibited substances. We believe every student has the right to learn and develop in a safe, healthy, respectful, and drug-free environment. Our commitment is to protect students from the physical, emotional, social, educational, and safeguarding risks associated with drugs and substance misuse.

We actively promote awareness, prevention, early identification, and clear procedures for reporting and responding to concerns involving drugs or prohibited substances.

Aims and Objectives:

- At DPS RAK, we treat all concerns, disclosures, allegations, or suspected incidents involving drugs or prohibited substances seriously and respond promptly.
- We are committed to providing a safe, caring, and healthy environment that is free from the possession, use, supply, distribution, promotion, or misuse of illegal drugs and prohibited substances.
- We aim to educate students about the risks and consequences associated with drugs, substance misuse, unsafe medication use, and other harmful substances.
- Prevention and safeguarding are the responsibility of all stakeholders, including students, staff, parents, and the wider school community.
- Students of Determination and students who may be particularly vulnerable require appropriate support, reasonable adjustments where necessary, and sensitive safeguarding responses.
- The school will work with parents/guardians and, where required, relevant external or regulatory authorities to safeguard students and maintain a safe school environment.

Purpose and Scope

The school's aim for Student Welfare is to meet each individual's personal and social needs in a healthy, safe, and secure environment. We wish to promote responsible decision-making, respect for self and others, healthy lifestyles, and positive relationships within a purposeful school community so that all students can flourish.

This policy applies to all students and covers the school premises, school transport, trips, residential activities, competitions, clubs, events, online learning environments, and any activity or situation where a student's conduct may affect the safety and wellbeing of the DPS community.

For the purpose of this policy, drugs and prohibited substances include illegal drugs and any substance whose possession, use, supply, distribution, or promotion is prohibited by UAE law or school rules. This includes misuse of prescription or over-the-counter medicines, substances presented as drugs, and other psychoactive or harmful substances. The school will respond in accordance with applicable UAE legislation, regulatory requirements, safeguarding expectations, and school procedures.

The school also recognises that age-inappropriate or unsafe use of substances such as nicotine/vaping products, alcohol, inhalants, or other harmful substances can present significant health and safeguarding concerns. Such matters will be addressed in accordance with the school's relevant policies and applicable requirements.

Prohibited Behaviour:

The following behaviours are strictly prohibited on school premises, during school-related activities, on school transport, and in any context covered by this policy:

- Possessing, using, consuming, supplying, distributing, selling, exchanging, or attempting to obtain illegal drugs or prohibited substances.
- Being in possession of substances, materials, or items intended to facilitate drug use or distribution.
- Offering, sharing, encouraging, pressuring, persuading, or facilitating another student's use of drugs or prohibited substances.
- Bringing alcohol, illegal drugs, or prohibited substances onto school premises, school transport, or school-related activities.
- Misusing prescribed or non-prescribed medication, including giving medication prescribed for one person to another person.
- Using, possessing, supplying, or promoting nicotine/vaping products or other prohibited substances where these are not permitted by school rules or applicable requirements.
- Attempting to conceal, dispose of, destroy, or tamper with suspected substances or evidence relating to an incident.
- Using digital platforms, social media, messaging services, or other communication channels to promote, arrange, encourage, facilitate, or distribute information relating to prohibited substances.
- Threatening, coercing, or pressuring another person in relation to the possession, use, supply, or concealment of prohibited substances.

Medication and Prescribed Substances:

The school recognises that some students may legitimately require prescribed medication. Medication must be managed through the school's approved medication procedures and must not be shared with or administered to another student.

- Parents/guardians must provide the required information and authorisation for the school to administer or store medication.
- Students must not give, sell, exchange, or share prescribed or non-prescribed medication with other students.
- Medication must be stored, administered, and recorded in accordance with the school's approved procedures.
- Any concern about inappropriate access to, misuse of, or sharing of medication will be treated as a safeguarding concern and investigated appropriately.

Detecting Drug or Substance-Related Concerns:

All stakeholders should remain alert to changes in behaviour, wellbeing, attendance, peer relationships, or physical presentation that may indicate a student is experiencing a substance-related concern. No single sign proves substance use, and staff should avoid assumptions. Report concerns through the school's safeguarding and pastoral procedures.

- Sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour, mood, concentration, or social relationships.
- Unexplained deterioration in attendance, punctuality, engagement, or academic performance.
- Repeated unexplained physical symptoms, unusual tiredness, confusion, or changes in coordination.
- Significant changes in peer groups or patterns of behaviour that cause reasonable safeguarding concern.

- Unexplained possession of substances, medication, packaging, devices, or other items that may be associated with prohibited substances.
- Disclosure by a student that they have used, been offered, pressured to use, or witnessed the use or supply of a prohibited substance.
- Online communication suggesting the promotion, arrangement, supply, or use of prohibited substances.

Recommendations for Students:

If you are offered, pressured to use, or concerned about drugs:

- **SAY NO** – Do not accept or use the substance. Move away from the situation where possible.
- **LEAVE** – Go to a safe place and stay with a trusted friend or responsible adult where appropriate.
- **TALK** – Tell a trusted adult, class teacher, Head of Phase, School Counsellor, Designated Safeguarding Lead, or another member of staff.
- **REPORT** – If you see a student in immediate danger, or believe drugs are being supplied or used, report the concern immediately. Do not investigate or confront anyone yourself.
- **SUPPORT** – If a friend tells you about a substance-related concern, encourage them to seek help from a trusted adult rather than keeping the matter secret.

If you witness an incident involving drugs or prohibited substances:

- Do not join in, encourage, participate in, or facilitate the behaviour.
- Do not take, taste, handle, move, or dispose of a suspected substance.
- Do not photograph, share, post, or circulate information about the incident on social media or messaging platforms.
- Do not confront or threaten the person involved.
- Inform a trusted adult or the relevant school staff member immediately.
- If someone appears seriously unwell or is in immediate danger, seek adult help urgently so that appropriate emergency and safeguarding procedures can be followed.

Procedure for Teachers/School Administrators to Deal with Drug or Substance Concerns:

- All reports, disclosures, observations, or allegations involving drugs or prohibited substances must be treated seriously, sensitively, and confidentially on a need-to-know basis.
- The staff member receiving the concern must ensure immediate safety and promptly report the matter to the Designated Safeguarding Lead/School Counsellor, Discipline Officer, and Head of Phase, as appropriate.
- The Principal or designated senior leader must be informed promptly of significant incidents, suspected possession, use, supply, distribution, or circumstances presenting an immediate safeguarding risk.
- Staff must not independently search a student, investigate beyond their role, test an unknown substance, or handle suspected substances unless authorised and trained to do so under the school's approved procedures.
- The school will document the concern, preserve relevant information or evidence safely, and undertake an appropriate investigation in accordance with safeguarding, disciplinary, and regulatory procedures.
- Where required, the school will inform parents/guardians and consult or notify relevant external or regulatory authorities in accordance with applicable UAE requirements.

- The school will assess the wellbeing and safeguarding needs of the student and provide appropriate pastoral, counselling, health, and educational support.
- Follow-up monitoring will be undertaken to ensure the student's safety, wellbeing, attendance, engagement, and reintegration into school life.

Parents' Role in Preventing and Addressing Drug-Related Concerns

Parents and guardians play a vital role in supporting the school's efforts to prevent substance misuse and protect student wellbeing. Their responsibilities include:

- Talking openly and age-appropriately with children about healthy choices, peer pressure, drugs, medicines, vaping, alcohol, and the risks associated with substance misuse.
- Encouraging children to seek help from a trusted adult if they are offered drugs, feel pressured, or are worried about another student.
- Taking disclosures or changes in behaviour seriously and communicating relevant concerns promptly to the school.
- Ensuring that prescribed or non-prescribed medication is not sent to school without following the school's medication procedures.
- Keeping medicines and potentially harmful substances securely stored at home and appropriately supervised.
- Working collaboratively with the school when concerns arise and supporting agreed safeguarding, pastoral, counselling, and behavioural interventions.
- Reinforcing the importance of responsible decision-making, personal safety, respect for others, and compliance with school expectations.

Prevention, Education and Awareness

The school will use age-appropriate education, pastoral programmes, assemblies, counselling, curriculum opportunities, parent engagement, and awareness initiatives to strengthen students' knowledge and resilience. Prevention will focus on healthy choices, decision-making, emotional wellbeing, peer pressure, digital safety, help-seeking, and understanding the consequences of substance misuse.

- Students will be encouraged to develop the confidence to refuse unsafe or harmful behaviour.
- Staff will receive appropriate awareness and safeguarding guidance so that concerns can be identified and reported consistently.
- Parents will be provided with relevant information and guidance where appropriate.
- The school will review incidents and emerging concerns to inform preventive education and safeguarding planning.

Procedure for School Transport, Trips and Online Platforms

- The same expectations apply on school buses, educational visits, residential trips, competitions, clubs, and other school-related activities.
- Any suspected possession, use, supply, or promotion of prohibited substances during a school activity must be reported immediately to the responsible member of staff.
- On school transport, the driver or accompanying staff member will prioritise safety, report concerns to the school, and follow the school's incident and safeguarding procedures.

- Students must not use online platforms, messaging applications, or social media to arrange, promote, encourage, or facilitate access to prohibited substances in connection with the school community.

Formal Procedures in Response to an Incident Involving Drugs or Prohibited Substances

- Each step under this procedure should be undertaken without unreasonable delay and careful records must be kept and filed appropriately.
- The relevant Head of Phase and designated senior leader will conduct a full investigation, with safeguarding oversight where appropriate.
- Statements or accounts may be gathered from the student(s) concerned and relevant witnesses, giving each person an opportunity to provide their perspective.
- Parents/guardians will be informed as appropriate, taking into account safeguarding considerations and the nature of the incident.
- The school will determine the appropriate response based on the facts established, the student's age and circumstances, the seriousness of the incident, previous concerns, and applicable school and regulatory requirements.
- Where the incident involves suspected illegal activity or an immediate safeguarding risk, the school will follow the applicable UAE reporting and referral requirements.
- The school will maintain confidentiality and share information only with those who need it to safeguard students and manage the incident.
- Staff will monitor the wellbeing and safety of students affected by the incident and maintain appropriate communication with parents/guardians.
- The school will review each incident after an agreed period, with the nature of the review determined by the circumstances and needs of the students involved.

Support Strategies for Students

The school recognises that students involved in substance-related concerns may require support as well as appropriate disciplinary action. Support will be proportionate to the circumstances and may include:

- Immediate safeguarding and wellbeing assessment.
- Access to the School Counsellor or other appropriate pastoral support.
- A structured support or reintegration plan where appropriate.
- Education on health, safety, decision-making, peer pressure, and risk reduction.
- Support to rebuild positive relationships and engagement with learning.
- Referral to appropriate external services or professionals where required and in accordance with applicable procedures.
- Regular follow-up with the student and parent/guardian to review progress and wellbeing.

Protection and Support for Students Affected by Substance-Related Incidents

- Students who report concerns or seek help will be treated respectfully and supported without unnecessary disclosure of their information.
- Students who may have been pressured, coerced, exploited, or exposed to substances will be treated as safeguarding concerns and supported accordingly.

- The school will not tolerate retaliation, intimidation, threats, or victimisation of a student who reports a concern or assists an investigation.
- The school will provide appropriate emotional and pastoral support and will monitor the student's wellbeing.

Sanctions and Disciplinary Responses

The school's response will be proportionate, consistent, and guided by the seriousness and circumstances of the incident, the student's age and needs, previous incidents, safeguarding considerations, and applicable school and regulatory requirements. Possible responses may include:

- Verbal or formal warning.
- Written warning and parent/guardian communication.
- Loss of privileges, activities, or positions of responsibility where appropriate.
- Behaviour support plan or structured monitoring.
- Mandatory participation in counselling, educational, or restorative interventions where appropriate.
- Suspension or other serious disciplinary action in accordance with the school's disciplinary procedures.
- Permanent exclusion/termination of enrolment where warranted by the seriousness of the incident and in accordance with applicable requirements.
- Referral to or communication with relevant authorities where required by law, safeguarding obligations, or regulatory expectations.

Positive and Restorative Strategies

- Students will be helped to understand the health, safety, legal, and social consequences of their actions.
- Where appropriate, students will be encouraged to accept responsibility and identify safer and healthier choices.
- Students may be provided with opportunities to rebuild trust and demonstrate positive contributions to the school community.
- Counselling or other appropriate professional support will be arranged where required.
- The school will balance accountability with safeguarding, rehabilitation, education, and the student's best interests.

Staff Responsibilities

- Maintain a safe, drug-free learning environment and model healthy, responsible behaviour.
- Remain vigilant to safeguarding concerns without stereotyping or making assumptions about students.
- Report concerns promptly through the school's safeguarding and disciplinary channels.
- Maintain accurate, factual, and confidential records.
- Follow approved procedures when responding to suspected substances and avoid handling or investigating beyond their role.
- Participate in relevant safeguarding and substance-awareness training.

Review and Monitoring

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored through incident records, safeguarding reviews, student and parent feedback, staff feedback, awareness activities, and relevant school improvement processes.

Patterns or emerging concerns will inform prevention, education, staff development, and safeguarding actions.

Whole-School Commitment

DPS RAK is committed to maintaining a safe, healthy, respectful, and supportive environment in which students can learn and flourish. Preventing drug and substance misuse is a shared responsibility. We rely on trust, respectful communication, early reporting, effective safeguarding, appropriate education, and partnership with parents and relevant authorities to protect the wellbeing of every student.

Key Expectations at a Glance

- Do not possess, use, supply, distribute, promote, or facilitate illegal drugs or prohibited substances.
- Do not share or misuse medication.
- Do not pressure, encourage, or assist another person to use prohibited substances.
- Report concerns promptly to a trusted adult or appropriate school staff member.
- Do not handle or investigate suspected substances yourself.
- Respect confidentiality and do not spread information, images, or rumours about an incident.
- Seek help if you or someone you know may be at risk.
- Work with the school to promote healthy choices, safety, wellbeing, and responsible behaviour.

Policy Administration

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