



South Hampstead

*High School*

GDST

# Illegal Substance Use Policy

UPDATED BY

Ms Zoë Brass (Deputy Head, Pastoral)

LAST REVIEWED

March 2019

NEXT REVIEW DATE

July 2019

In accordance with The Girls' Day Schools Trust's policy, South Hampstead High School aims to:

1. assist parents through education, in the prevention of drug or other substance abuse;
2. have in place clear disciplinary procedures for dealing with any drug-related incidents, or abuse of other substances;
3. provide pastoral care and support for all pupils within the context of a whole school community.

The GDST's view is that the possession, use or supply of drugs in schools or in school-related contexts will not be condoned under any circumstances, and will be treated as a very serious disciplinary offence. It will usually result in the offending pupil's permanent exclusion from the school.

The disciplinary sanctions are clearly set out in the GDST's exclusions procedures, a copy of which is available on the school website. The police may also need to be involved. In the very rare event that exclusion is not permanent, there may be a requirement to comply with subsequent random drugs testing at the parents' expense.

The GDST also recognises the role that schools have to play in helping to prevent the misuse of drugs or similar substances. All schools have pastoral care and support schemes and seek to assist parents in preventing abuse, through educating pupils about the physical, emotional and social dangers involved. This is usually delivered through the school's PSHE programme. The consequences of committing a criminal offence will be made very clear to pupils.

## DRUG EDUCATION AT SOUTH HAMPSTEAD HIGH SCHOOL

- Education about illegal drugs is an integral part of the Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) programme which is given to every pupil throughout her school career.
- Outside agencies such as Camden Police (working with the Youth and Community Service), Life Education Centres and those working on Drug Projects will also be used. Visitors will be informed of the school's values as stated in this policy.
- Girls will be given accurate information about drug use and its risks, and will be encouraged to develop skills and attitudes which will enable them to make informed and sensible choices about their health.
- Peer group pressure exerts a significant influence of the initiation and maintenance of drug use. Girls will be encouraged to resist drugs in the context of personal values and personal responsibilities towards other people.
- The school aims to provide a strong pastoral framework with Designated Persons to afford both girls and parents easy access to appropriate support, in and out of school.

## RESPONSE TO INCIDENTS IN SCHOOL

- All incidents involving actual or suspected possession of illegal substances will be reported to the Headmistress.
- While staff are always willing to offer sensitive advice and support to pupils, girls should be aware that any information divulged to staff about illegal activity cannot be held to in confidence and will be passed to the Headmistress.
- While respecting pupils' rights to privacy, where there are reasonable grounds, the Headmistress may require a pupil to show the contents of her desk, locker, bag or other property to a senior member of staff (for additional information about the searching of pupils' possessions, please see Appendix 1).
- In accordance with the policy of the GDST, any girl found possessing, using or supplying illegal drugs on school property should expect to be permanently excluded from school.
- In any incident involving possession of illegal substances, the Headmistress may inform the police.
- If well-supported information concerning out of school use of drugs is received by the Headmistress she will inform parents.
- Where there is perceived to be a need for counselling, the school will provide help and support, and advice about professional services available.

The school must maintain a very firm line on substance use within the school context, and will apply the serious sanctions listed above. However, the school wishes to be as helpful as possible to girls for whom substance use may present a problem outside of the school context. These pupils need to have adults they can turn to for help and guidance as their welfare is of paramount importance. Girls in this position are encouraged to seek help from the school counsellor, the school nurse, their Head of Year or the Deputy Head, Pastoral, whether they wish to discuss their own experiences or those of a peer about whom they are concerned.

## APPENDIX 1 – THE SEARCHING OF PUPILS

The DfE guidance 'Searching, screening and confiscation' (January 2018) states:

- School staff can search a pupil's possessions for any item if the pupil agrees.
- The Headmistress and staff authorised by her have a statutory power to search pupils' possessions, without consent, where there are reasonable grounds for suspecting that the pupil may have a prohibited item.



What constitutes 'reasonable grounds' must be decided in each particular case. For example, it might be they have heard other pupils talking about the item or they might notice a pupil behaving in a way that causes them to suspect that a pupil is concealing something.

**PROHIBITED ITEMS ARE:**

- Knives or weapons
- Alcohol
- Illegal drugs
- Stolen items
- Tobacco and cigarette papers
- Fireworks
- Pornographic images

Any article that the member of staff reasonably suspects has been, or is likely to be used to:

- Commit an offence
- Cause personal injury to themselves or another
- Damage property of any person