



Maria Fidelis
Catholic School FCJ

Drugs and Alcohol Policy	
Committee	Curriculum
Author	David McLoughlin
Approved by Governing Body	26 th January 2026
Frequency of Review	2 years
Next review Date	Spring 2028

The FCJ Schools' Vision

Our vision is that FCJ schools are communities of personal and academic excellence.

Strong in companionship, the unique giftedness of every person in these faith communities is recognised, nourished and celebrated.

Our hope and expectation is that, through God's grace working in us all, each young person grows into their best self, with zest for life and the generosity and confidence to use their talents and gifts in the service of others.

Maria Fidelis Catholic School FCJ

Drugs and Alcohol Policy



Vision Statement

The vision for Maria Fidelis is to create an inclusive school equipped for the 21st Century which will enable all young people to maximise their potential in order that they leave school as educated, confident and courageous Catholics, prepared to challenge injustice and care enough to 'live life to the full'.

Aim

The aim of this policy is to:

- Clarify the school's responsibilities and legal requirements.
- Reinforce and safeguard the health and safety of the whole school community.
- Give guidance on developing, implementing and monitoring the school's drug education programme.
- Enable staff to manage drugs and drug-related incidents on school premises with consistency, and in the best interests of all involved.
- Ensure that the response to drug-related incidents is in line with the school's approach to the drug education programme and with the school's values and ethos.

Extent of the Policy

The limits of the school boundaries extend beyond the school premises to include all off-site student activities, such as work experience and school trips, or when students are wearing school uniform out of school. The policy applies at all times when staff 'duty of care' responsibilities apply.

Definition of Drugs

The definition of drugs used in this policy is the definition given by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime:

"A substance people take to change the way they feel, think or behave"

This refers to all drugs:

- Legal drugs including alcohol, tobacco, vapes, volatile substances, ketamine, Khat and poppers.
- Over the counter and prescription medicines.
- Illegal drugs (those controlled by the Misuse of Drugs act 1971) including ecstasy, cannabis, crack/cocaine, heroin and LSD.

Smoking and Vaping

The school is a no smoking / vaping site at all times. This applies to all staff, students, hirers, contractors and visitors.

Students are not permitted to bring to school smoking or vaping materials, including vapes of any kind, matches and lighters. In the interests of health and safety, should a student be found in possession of any of these on school premises, they will be confiscated and parents informed.

Smokers /vapers must not smoke or vape on the pavement outside school buildings, or near public entrances, doorways and any points overlooked by students and members of the public.

Vehicles carrying staff or students are regarded as workplaces for the purposes of this policy. Therefore vehicle-users must ensure smoke-free environments.

Drug Education

Our drug education aims to give young people accurate information about drugs and help them develop the skills and attitudes to make their own healthy, safe and responsible decisions about drug use. This will be delivered through PSHE Themed Days and lessons in Science, Drama, Health & Social Care and ICT.

Drug education objectives:

- To increase knowledge and understanding of drugs and their effects by providing accurate information
- To improve self-knowledge, particularly in terms of risk taking
- To promote positive attitudes towards healthy lifestyles; to challenge and try to modify these when they may lead to behaviour harmful to health
- To develop social skills such as making informed choices and resisting unhelpful pressures from peers and from advertising
- To enable young people to identify sources of appropriate support

Management of Drugs in School

This school does not permit:

- the possession, use or supply of any illegal drug, legal high OR
- the use, possession or supply of any legal but authorised substance e.g. alcohol, prescription medicines (not specifically prescribed for the student) which takes place within or near the school boundaries, this covers on or near the school premises, within the school day and during term time; or whilst students are engaged in any off-site activities e.g. work experience or school trips;
- dealing in or arranging for transactions involving Drugs of any kind or
- the use or possession of solvents or other sniffable products.

These rules apply equally to staff, students, parents, governors and those working in and visiting the school.

Management of Authorised Drugs

- Administration of medicines to students is in line with the school's Administering Medicines Policy
- Those students who need inhalers are responsible for their administration and carry them with them for easy access, and parents complete a permission form.
- Teachers should be aware of any serious medical conditions which affect students in their care.
- Staff do not give any non-prescribed medicines to students. There may be circumstances when students can take over the counter medicines e.g. for hay fever, the responsibility for this rests with the students and their parents.
- Arrangements for the secure and safe storage of chemicals e.g. for cleaning and scientific experiments, are set out in the school Health and Safety Policy.
- There are occasions when alcohol is authorised at school, during parents' events and staff social events. Sixth Form students are not permitted to drink alcohol at school social events or on school journeys. Staff accompanying students on field trips and school journeys are expected not to drink when on duty.

- There is a no smoking policy for students and staff. Nor are parents or visitors allowed to smoke on school premises.

Local and National Guidance

This policy is in line with *DfE and ACPO drug advice for schools* (DfE 2012), DfES (2004), and 'Drugs, alcohol and tobacco curriculum guidance for schools', QCA (2003), as well as the National Healthy Schools Programme, of which the school is part.

Managing Drug-Related Incidents at School

The first priority will always be for the safety of all, dealing with medical emergencies and securing appropriate help. The school may employ a range of responses, so that the needs of the individual are balanced against those of the wider community. The precise response will be determined after a full and careful investigation into the exact nature of the incident. Students will be aware of the range of possible responses and the effect those responses may have on them.

The school will normally involve the student's parents/carers, unless this would jeopardise the student's safety. A full record will be made of every incident.

Discovery of Suspected Substances on School Premises

Staff discovering substances which are suspected of being harmful, illegal or requiring further investigation should observe the following guidance:

- Consider the possible need for first aid and follow the school's first aid procedures.
- If possible, remove the suspected substance from the location in the presence of a witness. If there is no witness, do not delay, remove the substance and take it to the headteacher, or member of the senior leadership team.
- If a student is, or is thought to be, in possession of a suspect substance do not attempt to search the student. You may ask the student to voluntarily empty his or her pockets, bag, desk or locker with a witness present. You may not forcibly detain the student.
- Do not retain the substance on your person or in a place of safekeeping for a later time, since to do this could place you at risk.
- Record the time, place and circumstances of the discovery and also record the details of what was found, but do not investigate the substance.
- Where drug-related paraphernalia, such as needles and syringes, is discovered, do not attempt to handle this. It should be collected by the appropriate personnel in accordance with health and safety guidelines. The headteacher must ensure that materials are placed in a secure container to await proper collection.
- There is no legal obligation to inform the police, although they may be able to give relevant support and advice. Once the nature of the substance is confirmed it is legally acceptable to dispose of the substance, typically by flushing down the lavatory. This should be witnessed and recorded.
- Where a substance is confirmed as being controlled, it is the responsibility of the headteacher to notify the parents/carers concerned, and, if necessary, to consider further action, including notifying the chair of governors.
- In circumstances where it is possible that the school premises are being used for illegal drug use or dealing, all reasonable steps must be taken to prevent this, in order to avoid contravening the law.
- Record details on the incident on CPOMs as soon as possible.

In all such incidents the following principles will apply:

- All situations will be carefully considered before a response is decided upon.
- Parents/carers will be involved at an early stage in the investigation of the incident.
- Support agencies and the police will be involved as appropriate and in keeping with the legal requirements.
- A range of responses will be considered including disciplinary and counselling/supportive responses.
- Decisions about the response will depend on the severity of the situation, whether the offence is one of a series or a first time and whether the person involved is putting themselves and others at risk. The Headteacher in consultation with key staff will decide whether a disciplinary and/or counselling action should take place.
- Any student using or supplying any unauthorised drug on school premises will result in Governors recommendation for permanent exclusion as stated in the School's Behaviour Policy.
- Any action taken will be in line with the school's Behaviour Policy.

Working with the Police

The school is not legally obliged to involve the police regarding illegal drugs, but we will work in partnership to the benefit of the school and wider community. The school is able to seek assistance from the local policing team officer, who will give guidance on the law, the identification and disposal of substances, and whether or not the police should be more actively and formally involved in a given situation.

Searching, Screening and Confiscations

- The document *Searching, Screening and Confiscation at School* (DfE: 2014) states that 'school staff can search a student for any item if the student agrees' noting that the ability to give consent may be influenced by the child's age or other factors.
- The Headteacher and staff authorised by him/her have a statutory power to search students or their possessions, without consent, where they have reasonable grounds for suspecting that the student may have a prohibited item.
- Prohibited items include alcohol and illegal drugs. The law says that the person conducting the search may not require the student to remove any clothing other than outer clothing.

Confidentiality

In managing drugs, and in drug education lessons, teachers cannot and should not promise total confidentiality. The boundaries of confidentiality will be made clear to students.

If a student discloses information which is sensitive, not generally known, and/or which the student asks not to be passed on, the request will normally be honoured. Exceptions to this will be:

- when child protection issues arise;
- in order to co-operate with a police investigation; and
- where there has been agreement to refer the student to an external agency.

Every effort will be made to seek the agreement of the student before further sharing of sensitive information. Where information is to be shared, this will be strictly on a need-to-know basis.

Support for students

At Maria Fidelis, the welfare of the student is paramount. Support is available through the pastoral system, to ensure a caring response to students in distress. Interventions will be considered if the school feels a student is at risk from, involvement with drugs, whether their own or their parents'/carers'. Such interventions may include consultation with parents/carers and other agencies, possible case conferences and subsequent referral.