



# Prohibited and Unauthorised Items Policy

Ratified:

March 2024

Ratified by:

Full Governing Body

Next Ratification Due:

March 2028

It is the role of the College to provide a safe, caring and protective environment for all its students. This policy is aimed at reducing the risk of exposure to harmful substances and items, enabling students to take responsibility for their own health and welfare.

In the interests of the health and safety of students, staff, other members of the school community and visitors to the school, the school asks parents and students to ensure that any inappropriate and dangerous items, or any inappropriate and harmful substances, are not brought in to school.

In the majority of cases the application of common sense will easily determine what should not be brought in to school. The list below is not exhaustive but is intended as a guide.

Consequences under the Student Behaviour Policy may be applied to any student found in possession of any banned item or any item that the school deems to be unsuitable and dangerous. The school reserves the right to exclude students in extreme cases, or when students or parents have received warnings about banned items.

All stakeholders recognise that there are a broad range of items which, if brought into a school by a student, could compromise the health and safety of the individual student and other members of the school community, including students, staff or visitors

## **Prohibited Items**

The 2022 DfE Screening Searching and Confiscation Advice is the foundation for this policy and it identifies prohibited items as:

- knives or weapons
- alcohol
- illegal drugs
- stolen items
- tobacco and related items/vaping items
- fireworks
- pornographic images
- any article that is likely to be used to commit an offence, or to cause personal injury, or to damage the property of any person

Headteachers and authorised staff can also search for any item which has been identified within the school rules as a banned item that may be searched for.

For the purpose of this policy

The definition of '**Knife**' includes any bladed article, such as craft knife, Stanley knife, Swiss army knife, fishing knife, razor, kitchen knife etc. or any bladed item including improvised or self-made items.

The term '**weapon**' refers to any gun, including air rifle, BB gun, toy gun, pellet gun, crossbow, Taser, blow pipe, knuckleduster or any similar item and includes any item made for the purpose of assault or defence including improvised or self-made items.

**Self-made items** are those that have been crafted or adapted for the purpose of self-harm, or to threaten others, and include but is not restricted to shards of glass, mirrors, sharpened sticks, pencil sharpener blades, broken rulers.

**Items used offensively** refers to routine items (e.g. compass, technology equipment, aerosol, sports bat, pencil) used inappropriately to cause harm distress or intimidation.

This is not an exhaustive list and could include other bladed items, equipment or weapons not specified. The policy is not constrained by the criminal definition of an offensive weapon but refers to any item which could cause harm, injury or distress to the holder or others, or which could be used to threaten, alarm, distress or intimidate others

### **Unauthorised Items**

In addition to the prohibited items identified above and detailed in the DfE Screening Searching and Confiscation Advice, there are a number of other items which could cause harm, distress or injury to students or persons or adversely affect good order and discipline of the school community.

- Chains
- Catapults
- Lighters, matches
- Tools (sharp scissors, screwdriver, hammer, nails, craft blades, Stanley knives etc)
- Pepper sprays and gas canisters
- Any item fashioned to cause injury i.e. a sharpened stick, shard of glass
- Laser pens
- Dangerous chemicals (acids, hair dyes, bleaches, nail varnish remover etc)
- Stink bombs/smoke bombs/flares
- Solvents
- Energy drinks
- Super Glue
- Needles (Syringes if required for medical grounds should be kept in accordance with the students own care plan and the schools own drugs/medical policy)
- Offensive material - pornographic, racist, homophobic, extremist material (in any medium)
- Rope, cable ties

This is not an exhaustive list and the Head teacher may consider other items as inappropriate if they believe that the possession of the item is to cause harm, distress or injury to another.

The pastoral role of the College, including assemblies and the delivery of an effective PSHEe programme, provides a proactive approach to preventative education whilst also stating clearly the actions which will be taken in the event of students' involvement in bringing in prohibited items.

This policy is clear that the possession, consumption, use or supply of illegal and other unauthorised drugs is unacceptable within the College boundaries. Bringing in prohibited or unauthorised items is equally unacceptable.

The College boundaries extend beyond the College premises and perimeters to include journeys to and from College in College uniform, work experience, residential trips, College link courses and any other occasions when they are representing the College.

This policy should be read in conjunction with other policies, the staff handbook and the sixth form code of conduct.

## **Context relating to Drugs:**

### **Social and cultural:**

All drugs have the potential to harm; but some drugs are more harmful than others. For a small number of people, drugs lead to serious and far reaching consequences not only for themselves, but their families, their communities and society in general. For young people in particular, drugs can impact on their education, their relationships with family and friends and can prevent them from reaching their full potential.

All young people need to be able to make safe, healthy and responsible decisions about drugs, both legal and illegal. Schools play a central role in helping them make such decisions by providing education about the risks and effects of drugs; by developing their confidence and skills to manage situations involving drugs; by creating a safe and supportive learning environment; and ensuring that appropriate support is given to those for whom drugs are a concern.

However, schools and Colleges cannot act alone. They are part of a broader prevention picture which includes parents/carers and a range of partner agencies. By working together, we can help young people navigate what is a complex social issue. The College works positively with other services to enhance and communicate information available to young people on these issues and understand the impact they have on communities. It also seeks to work together with agencies to provide necessary support and services as required.

The majority of young people of school-age have never used an illegal drug. Most will at some stage be an occasional user of drugs for medicinal purposes and many will try tobacco or alcohol. Some continue to use on a regular basis. There are complex motivations behind a young person's decision to first experiment with alcohol, tobacco, volatile substances and illegal drugs. However, very few who experiment with illegal drugs will go on to become problem drug users.

**Local and national guidance:**

This policy has been written taking into account guidance from DfE and ACPO drug advice for schools and The East Sussex Drug and Alcohol Action Team and should be read in conjunction with East Sussex Drugs and Alcohol at Work Policy.

The team working in East Sussex with young people is **The Under 25's Substance Misuse Service** who help young people and their families that are affected by drugs and alcohol. The service aims to offer one to one support to young people under 25 years who have alcohol/drug issues. The service offers level 2-4 (prevention -treatment) service provision including an assessment, case work and access to a range of holistic specialist interventions focused around the young person's health, wellbeing and social functioning.

**The health needs of the College body:**

The first concern in managing drugs is the health and safety of the College community and meeting the needs of the students. The College statement on illegal or other unauthorised drugs as defined above is clear. The first concern in dealing with a medical emergency involving drugs is the health and safety of the College community and meeting the needs of the students. Appropriate help/first aid should be summoned before further issues are addressed.

**Confidentiality:**

The welfare of young people will always be central to our policy and practice. However, teachers will not be able to promise complete confidentiality for reasons linked to safeguarding. Information about a student in relation to drugs will follow the same procedure as for other sensitive information. The HoY, appropriate Assistant Head Teacher and Headteacher will be informed and further help sought if appropriate.

**Medicines:**

Some drugs may be authorised in College, namely medicines. If a student is on medicine either prescribed by a doctor or over the counter medicine with parental instruction, this must be discussed with the Welfare office where some medicines can be kept for self-administration during the day by mutual agreement only.

**Volatile substances:**

Some solvents or hazardous chemicals are legitimately used by College staff or students - these substances are stored securely (in line with COSHH regulations) and managed to prevent inappropriate use or access. Arrangements are set out in the College's health and safety policy.

**Alcohol:**

Use and consumption of alcohol by staff and adult visitors on the College premises can only be authorised by the Headteacher.

The College recognises that there may be occasions when a member of staff may experience difficulties in relation to alcohol misuse outside of College. Staff are encouraged to discuss this with line managers so that support can be put in place. The College offers confidential counselling through our Employee Assistance Programme. In addition, an Occupation Health Referral can be actioned if appropriate.

**Tobacco:**

In keeping with East Sussex County Council policy, the College is a non-smoking site.

**Drugs education and drugs prevention:**

The College provides a comprehensive and planned drugs education curriculum for all students, as part of the Personal Social Health and Economic Education (PSHEe) programme and in other areas of the curriculum.

Details are available on the College

website:<https://www.heathfieldcc.co.uk/wp/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/PSHEe-Curriculum-Map-2023.pdf>

The PSHEe Coordinator has responsibility for ensuring that there is effective drugs education embodied within the PSHEe curriculum. This aims to provide all students with knowledge, attitudes and skills to be able to make informed decisions about drugs, including tobacco and alcohol. The College acknowledges that a positive College ethos helps students to feel valued and part of the College community, and in so doing, helps to foster positive self-images which may help students to cope better in situations involving drug abuse.

## **THE COLLEGE'S RESPONSE TO AN INCIDENT INVOLVING PROHIBITED ITEMS:**

### **The College's definition on drugs:**

The definition of a drug given by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime is:

*"Chemical substances that affect the normal functioning of the body and/or brain"*. The term drugs and drug education unless otherwise stated is used throughout this policy to refer to all drugs:

- all illegal drugs (those controlled by the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971)
- all legal drugs including (not limited to): alcohol, tobacco, volatile substances (those giving off a gas or vapour which can be inhaled), poppers and substances that at present produce a legal high (these are constantly monitored by the government and some maybe categorised under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971)
- all over the counter and prescription medicines

### **Key responsibilities:**

If any member of staff has concerns about any prohibited or unauthorised item related incident then they should immediately inform a member of the senior leadership team.

The person to oversee any major prohibited or unauthorised item issues in the College would be the AHT Behaviour & Attendance. The person responsible for the development and delivery of the education programme in the College is the head of PSHEe.

### **Parental involvement:**

Parents will be contacted if their child is involved in breaking the rules on prohibited items and advised of the incident. Where it is felt that to do this might put the child's safety at risk or if there is any other cause for concern for the child's safety at home then the College will exercise caution when considering contacting parents/carers. In any situation where it is felt the child may be at significant risk of harm and require protection the College's safeguarding and child protection procedures will be followed.

Opportunities will be made available for parents to get support and guidance. Parents are encouraged to approach the College if they are concerned about any issue relating to prohibited or unauthorised items and their child and the College can refer to specialist support.

**Police involvement:**

In most cases, consequences are likely to be a College rather than police matter, however this is judged on an individual basis. The College is aware of the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 and the Offensive Weapons act 2019. This means the College will contact the police for their guidance in a non-emergency situation. Should the College believe there is any threat to harm or there is non-compliance involving a weapon, 999 will be called for an immediate police response.

**Disciplinary response:**

Situations where College rules on prohibited items are broken will result in a consequence. The type of consequence cannot be categorically stated as it will depend on the exact nature and degree of the offence. Sanctions will include fixed term suspensions, community service and permanent exclusion will be considered. The sanction for drug dealing within the College as described above will most probably be permanent exclusion.

**Counselling response:**

The students' welfare is paramount and, in all incidents, involving drugs, referral for counselling or support will be actively considered. The College has contacts with local drugs agencies and advisers who can offer counselling and work with students as part of the drugs education programme. We believe those students misusing prohibited items should be encouraged to seek help at the earliest possible stage so they can be given appropriate support and guidance.

**The College's response to misuse of drugs by adults:**

If parents/carers are suspected of being under the influence of drugs or alcohol on College premises, staff should attempt to maintain a calm atmosphere and call for a second adult, if necessary. On occasion, a teacher may have concerns about discharging a student into the care of a parent/carer. In such instances, the College will discuss with the parent/carer if alternative arrangements could be made, for example asking another parent/carer to accompany the child home.

If staff members are suspected of being under the influence of drugs or alcohol on College premises, senior staff should attempt to maintain a calm atmosphere and call for a second adult, if necessary. Should further support be required, the College subscribes to a staff counselling service. This is available to all staff and is free and confidential. Further details can be found in the staff handbook. Disciplinary actions for staff are covered under their employment contract.



## **SEARCHES, SCREENING AND DISPOSAL OF PROHIBITED ITEMS:**

### **College searches:**

The College will ensure that a second adult witness is present. If this is refused they will consider whether to call the police and/or parents.

Searches will be conducted in such a way as to minimise potential embarrassment or distress. It should be noted that under DfE Screening, searching and confiscation guidelines:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/62d1643e8fa8f50bfbe55c/Searching\\_Screening\\_and\\_Confiscation\\_guidance\\_July\\_2022.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/62d1643e8fa8f50bfbe55c/Searching_Screening_and_Confiscation_guidance_July_2022.pdf)

along with article 8 of the Human Rights Act 1998 the College reserves the right to search personal property without consent, the College is entitled to do personal searches of students when they are believed to have prohibited items on their person, this is in place to protect the human rights of the other students in the College.

### **Personal searches:**

When a person is suspected of concealing illegal, prohibited or unauthorised items every effort will be made to persuade that person to hand items over voluntarily, in the presence of a second adult witness.

Where the individual refuses and the item is believed to be prohibited the student will be screened. Should this be refused, either parents or police will be called depending on the circumstances as outlined above.

### **Searches of College property:**

Staff may search College property, for example, students' lockers if they believe prohibited items to be stored there.

### **Searches of personal property:**

The College reserves the right to search personal property without consent. After any search involving students, parents/carers will normally be contacted by the College, regardless of whether the result of the search is positive or negative.

**The law permits College staff to take temporary possession of a substance suspected of being an illegal drug for the purposes of preventing an offence from being committed or continued in relation to that drug providing that all reasonable steps are taken to deliver it to a person lawfully entitled to take custody of it.**

In taking temporary possession and disposing of suspected illegal items staff will:

- ✓ ensure that a second adult witness is present throughout
- ✓ seal the sample in a plastic bag and include details of the date and time of the seizure/find and witness present.
- ✓ store it in locked cabinet
- ✓ **without delay** notify the police, who will be asked to collect it and then store or dispose of it.

Staff should not attempt to analyse or taste unknown substances. Police may advise on analysis and formal identification. If formal action is to be taken against a student, the police will make arrangements for them to attend a local police station accompanied by an appropriate adult for an interview. Only in exceptional circumstances should arrest or interviews take place at College. An appropriate adult should always be present during interviews, preferably a parent/carer or duty social worker.

## SCREENING

All screening, searching or confiscation will be carried out by senior staff at the College and in accordance with the DfE Screening Searching and Confiscations advice 2022:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/62d1643e8fa8f50bfbefa55c/Searching\\_Screening\\_and\\_Confiscation\\_guidance\\_July\\_2022.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/62d1643e8fa8f50bfbefa55c/Searching_Screening_and_Confiscation_guidance_July_2022.pdf). Screening is defined as the use of a walk-through or hand-held metal detector (wand) to scan students for prohibited items. In the context of this policy screening is taken to mean the use of a hand-held metal detector to assist with searching (Paragraph 33 DfE Guidance)

Any items will be confiscated and locked away securely.

A photograph/photocopy of the confiscated item will be taken, including a scale to illustrate the size.

The student will be removed from main school activities and given the opportunity to make a statement concerning their reasons for having this item in school.

Parents will be contacted by telephone to inform them of the incident and the subsequent investigation including informing them of the headteacher's deliberations. If necessary, a fixed term suspension will be considered to give opportunity for the incident to be investigated by the headteacher or a senior member of the school team, including enabling student voice and taking witness statements from other students and staff members. The headteacher will consider whether it is appropriate to inform the Police.