SJFCC Drugs Policy

(including dealing with banned and/or illegal items)

Published: May 2026
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Links to Other Policies
Behaviour Policy
Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions Policy
Supporting Learners with Medical Needs Policy
Online Safety Policy
Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Mission Statement
At St John Fisher Catholic College, Christ is at the centre of all that we do. Inspired by the Gospel and rooted in the teachings of the Catholic Church, we strive to form Christ-centred pilgrims of hope with kind hearts, questioning minds, a thirst for knowledge and a hunger for justice.

We are committed to creating a safe, caring and aspirational environment where every learner is known, valued and supported to flourish spiritually, academically and personally. Guided by our Fisher values of being Ready, Responsible, Resilient, Respectful, Curious and taking Pride in ourselves and our community, we seek to nurture the dignity of every individual as a child of God.

Drugs Education and the Management of Drug-Related Incidents
This policy applies to all learners at St John Fisher Catholic College when they are:

- on the school site;
- travelling to or from school;
- representing the school;
- participating in any school-related activity, including educational visits, sporting fixtures, enrichment activities and work experience placements.

For the purpose of this policy, a "drug" is defined as any substance which affects the way a person feels, thinks or behaves. This includes:

- illegal drugs;
- alcohol;
- tobacco and vaping products;
- volatile substances (solvents);

- prescribed medication;
- over-the-counter medication;
- psychoactive substances and “legal highs”.

The Aim of Drug Education

At St John Fisher Catholic College, drug education forms part of our wider commitment to safeguarding, pastoral care and the personal development of our learners. Our aims are:

- To provide learners with accurate information about drugs and drug-related issues.
- To enable learners to make informed, safe and responsible decisions.
- To develop learners' understanding of the short and long-term risks associated with substance misuse.
- To ensure learners understand the legal implications surrounding drugs and banned substances.
- To help learners understand the impact of substance misuse on individuals, families and communities.
- To develop resilience, confidence and self-esteem.
- To support learners in resisting peer pressure and managing risk effectively.
- To ensure learners know where and how to access support and advice.
- To challenge misconceptions, stereotypes and social influences relating to drug use.

Drug education at St John Fisher Catholic College will:

- support the Catholic ethos and mission of the school;
- be age-appropriate and inclusive;
- identify and support vulnerable learners;
- promote safeguarding and early intervention;
- provide support and referral to external agencies where appropriate.

Planning and Teaching Drug Education

Drug education is delivered through:

- Personal Development and PSHE;
- Science;
- Religious Education;
- Collective Worship and Prayer;
- pastoral programmes and external workshops.

Drug education will take place in a safe, supportive and respectful learning environment. Learners will be encouraged to:

- participate actively in discussions;
- think critically;

- ask questions openly and respectfully;
- develop informed opinions and decision-making skills.

Teaching approaches will:

- use a range of engaging and interactive strategies;
- establish clear expectations regarding confidentiality and respectful discussion;
- use accurate, up-to-date and appropriate resources;
- reflect current safeguarding guidance and local context.

Staff Development and Support

All staff should:

- have a general awareness of drugs and substance misuse;
- understand the procedures outlined in this policy;
- recognise safeguarding concerns linked to substance misuse;
- understand their role in responding to incidents appropriately.

Relevant staff will receive training and support through:

- safeguarding updates;
- CPD opportunities;
- collaborative working with external agencies;
- coaching and mentoring.

The Role of Governors

Governors will:

- monitor the effectiveness of this policy;
- support the school in maintaining a safe environment;
- contribute to policy development and review;
- support leaders in responding appropriately to drug-related incidents.

Early Intervention and Safeguarding

- The primary concern of St John Fisher Catholic College is the care, safety and welfare of learners.
- The school recognises that substance misuse may indicate wider safeguarding concerns, including:
- child criminal exploitation;
- child sexual exploitation;
- mental health concerns;
- neglect or trauma;
- family difficulties.

The school will:

- maintain robust safeguarding procedures;

- identify and support vulnerable learners at the earliest opportunity;
- work in partnership with families and external agencies;
- follow safeguarding procedures where risks are identified.

Where concerns arise, the school may involve:
- Children's Social Care;
- Police;
- School Nursing Services;
- Early Help services;
- specialist substance misuse services.

Smoking and Vaping
St John Fisher Catholic College is a smoke-free and vape-free site.
Smoking or vaping:
- on the school site;
- travelling to or from school;
- or during school activities

is prohibited and may result in sanctions, including suspension.

The school will also seek to educate and support learners regarding the health risks associated with smoking and vaping.

Medical Conditions and Medication
The school recognises that some learners require medication during the school day. All medication must be stored securely in accordance with the Supporting Learners with Medical Needs Policy. Relevant staff will be informed of learners with medical conditions where appropriate. Medication and medical information will accompany learners on educational visits and trips. Parental consent will be obtained where required.

Drug Incidents
Drug incidents may include:
- suspicion or reports of drug use;
- learners being under the influence of substances;
- possession of drugs or banned substances;
- supply or intent to supply drugs;
- finding substances on site;
- disclosures by learners or parents/carers.

The school will always prioritise:
- the safety and wellbeing of learners;
- safeguarding responsibilities;

- appropriate investigation and support;
- maintaining a safe environment for the wider school community.

Response to Drug Incidents

Where a learner is suspected of being under the influence of drugs or alcohol:

- staff will prioritise immediate safety;
- first aid or emergency services will be contacted if necessary;
- parents/carers will normally be informed;
- safeguarding procedures may be implemented.

Any suspected illegal substances will be:

- confiscated;
- securely stored;
- recorded appropriately;
- dealt with in accordance with DfE guidance and police advice.

School staff will never:

- taste substances;
- attempt to analyse substances themselves.

Sanctions

St John Fisher Catholic College operates a strict approach towards illegal substances in order to safeguard learners and maintain a safe learning environment.

Consequences may include:

- suspension;
- managed move considerations;
- permanent exclusion;
- referral to external agencies;
- police involvement where appropriate.

Permanent exclusion is likely where there is:

- possession of illegal drugs;
- use of illegal drugs;
- supply or intent to supply drugs;
- serious or repeated breaches involving banned substances.

Each case will be considered individually, taking account of:

- safeguarding considerations;
- age and maturity;
- level of risk;
- previous behaviour;

- vulnerability and additional needs.

Searching Learners

The school follows current DfE guidance regarding searching, screening and confiscation. Authorised staff may search learners where there are reasonable grounds to suspect possession of prohibited items including:

- illegal drugs;
- alcohol;
- stolen items;
- tobacco and vaping products;
- weapons;
- any item likely to cause harm.

Searches will:

- be proportionate;
- respect dignity;
- follow safeguarding procedures;
- be conducted in line with statutory guidance.

Working with Parents and External Agencies

The school believes that effective partnership working is essential. Parents/carers will usually be informed of concerns unless doing so would place a learner at risk.
The school may work alongside:

- Police;
- Children's Social Care;
- Early Help services;
- health professionals;
- substance misuse agencies.

Supporting Learners

St John Fisher Catholic College recognises that substance misuse concerns are often linked to wider vulnerabilities.
Where appropriate, the school will provide:

- pastoral support;
- safeguarding intervention;
- mentoring;
- counselling;
- external agency referrals;
- reintegration support following suspension.

Our aim is always to balance accountability with compassion, support and the opportunity for learners to make positive choices moving forward.