

Drugs & Drug Testing Policy

Drugs & Drug Testing Policy for both the Junior School and Senior School

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Policy for Drugs and Drugs Testing

1. Introduction

With 38% of 15-year-olds nationally admitting to having taken drugs¹, we wish to ensure that Freeman's pupils are given every support to avoid the dangers of drug use both in and out of term time and to create an environment free from drugs in the School.

In all contexts, we aim as a School to find the right balance between a strong disciplinary line and an educational principle that one can learn from mistakes, though essentially any drug use is not tolerated at Freeman's and breaches the School's code of conduct. This said, we wish to establish a culture here where students feel that they can ask for help knowing that taking such a step could lead to support.

This Policy applies to all pupils at Freeman's, including boarders, and should be read in conjunction with our *Behaviour Policy*, *Exclusions Policy* and *Searches & Confiscation Policy*.

2. Definition

The substances covered by this policy and referred to as 'drugs' are:

- All illegal drugs (that is, those compiled in the Misuse of Drugs Act, 1971);
- Volatile substances which give off gas or vapour and which can be inhaled (e.g. alkyl nitrates, ketamine, 'poppers'), excluding legal 'vaping' products;
- Misuse of over-the-counter and prescription medicines;
- So-called 'legal highs', including nitrous oxide.

¹ 2018 figures from a NHS national survey. See <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/smoking-drinking-and-drug-use-among-young-people-in-england/2018/part-8-drug-use-prevalence-and-consumption>

3. Scope and authority of policy

Any student involved with the misuse or distribution of drugs either on school premises during term-time, while on a School trip or while representing the School would expect to lose his/her right to remain at Freeman's.

Similarly, any reported misuse of drugs which takes place when the pupil is not under the duty of care of the School, and which could either have an impact upon any Freeman's pupil and/or bring the School into disrepute, is likely to have severe disciplinary consequences up to and including permanent exclusion. Where the circumstances of drug misuse mean that there is neither any such impact nor the School at risk of being brought into disrepute, the pupil and his / her parents are required to sign a contract (see paragraph 4 and Appendix A below for details).

Distribution of drugs by a Freeman's pupil at any time and under any circumstances would also lead to severe disciplinary consequences up to and including permanent exclusion.

4. Education and prevention

In relation to any possible involvement of a pupil with drugs it is vital that parents and School stand shoulder to shoulder. The School is dependent upon - and grateful for - any reinforcement of the School's stance on drugs that parents are able to provide. In addition, it is expected that parents do not condone involvement with drugs in any way. Parents will no doubt be vigilant during School holidays in ensuring that no involvement with drugs occurs. Indeed, it needs to be made clear that any such involvement during the school holidays may impact on the pupil, the School, members of the School or the School community and may result in onerous consequences following the pupil's return to School.

We aim to educate pupils, staff and parents at regular intervals about illegal and 'legal' substances through Personal, Social and Health Education, Sixth Form Enrichment, INSET and through talks from visiting specialists. We aim to give pupils confidence and skills and strategies that they can engage to avoid pressure from peers.

When visiting experts deliver lectures, care is taken to ensure that those selected share the School's values. Visiting specialists impart information about the law on drug use, the physiological and psychological effects of drugs, and the implications of drug use for the individual and for society.

Drug education within the PSHE programme explores ways of helping pupils to resist undesirable forms of peer pressure, including pressure to experiment with drugs, and to confront the question of drugs in terms of responsible decision-making.

Staff involved in PSHE and drug education programmes receive training, which will enable them to provide accurate information, deal with queries, and deliver a clear and consistent message. In addition, members of staff are trained to be made aware of the signs which may indicate drug use and where they see these signs are under instructions to inform the Deputy Head of their concerns immediately.

Pupils have access to School Nurses, School Chaplain and School Counsellor for qualified medical advice and counselling. Any such assistance is subject to the normal rules on medical and clergy confidentiality.

Any pupil who volunteers anxiety or concern about their involvement with drugs to a member of Staff will be supported in order that they may steer clear from drugs during their career at Freeman's. This support will be on condition that both the pupil and his or her parents agree to the pupil receiving counselling and undergoing periodic urine testing, both at parents' expense, at the school's discretion, during the remainder of the pupil's time at the school. If such a test is found to be positive, then the pupil shall be required to leave the school immediately, whether or not the abuse took place on school premises or during term-time. The terms of the pupil's future place in the School are outlined in a contract which must be signed by both parents and pupil (Appendix A). If an investigation is already underway, a pupil's coming forward would be negated. Offering to place a pupil onto a contract is at the School's discretion.

From time to time the School may employ a professionally trained and accredited handler to bring in a drugs search dog to search common areas of the School. Notice of any particular such visit is not given to pupils, parents or staff.

5. Discipline

It is explicitly stated in the School Rules that the use, supply or involvement with drugs or any harmful substance is forbidden.

If a pupil is suspected of taking drugs at School or of being under the influence of drugs at School, the Deputy Head will be responsible for conducting an investigation. This investigation and any necessary searches of rooms/personal property will be conducted in line with the School's *Searches and Confiscation Policy*. Parents will be kept informed as far as it is practical so-to-do.

Suspicious of drug use may arise from physiological behaviours, evidence of drug paraphernalia or information received by staff, parents or pupils.

As part of the investigation, it might be deemed necessary to authorise a urine or other suitable test which will be carried out in the School Medical Centre.

Involvement with drugs is a breach of criminal law. It is the School's policy to notify the police of any breach of the law on drugs on school premises. The School reserves the right, however, to carry out its own disciplinary proceedings whatever may or may not be decided by the police and at a time independent of any proceedings initiated by the police.

6. Testing Procedure

Given sufficient evidence, a pupil may be asked by the Deputy Head to take a urine or other suitable test straight away; consent to such a test is outlined in the parent contract. Refusal to take a test will be perceived as a strong presumption of a pupil's involvement with drugs and constitutes a breach of the School's disciplinary procedures.

The type of testing used varies depending upon the circumstances, but in each case standardised procedures are used which are designed both to ensure the fairness of the test and reduce to a minimum any stress the subject may feel. The purpose of a test in these circumstances is to give a clear indication as to whether or not drugs have been taken recently. Urine sampling is designed to give an indication of very recent activity.

Parents or guardians will be informed, by the Deputy Head, before a test is carried out, except in circumstances where (after reasonable efforts have been made) it proves impossible to contact them.

7. Disciplinary outcomes

If, as a result of the Deputy Head's investigation, he or she believes there is sufficient evidence of drug misuse, the matter will be referred to the Headmaster. The Headmaster will then convene a hearing first, to decide whether the evidence supports a finding of involvement of the pupil in drugs and second, to apply the School Rules in which case permanent exclusion of the pupil must be expected. This hearing will usually involve the pupil, his/her parents or guardian, the Deputy Head and such others as may be appropriate.

8. Media

The Headmaster is responsible for any dealings with the media. It is not the School's policy to volunteer any comment on disciplinary matters of any kind, which it considers the private concern of the School and the pupils themselves and their families. In cases where information has reached the media it may, however, be necessary to confirm that an incident has occurred or that disciplinary action has been taken.

APPENDIX A:

CONFIDENTIAL WHEN COMPLETED

Contract for pupils who may be permitted to stay at the School who have admitted to involvement in drug use

Having revealed to the School the details of his/her involvement with drugs, the Headmaster will allow to continue his/her education at Freeman's provided the following terms are met in full and with his/her unconditional co-operation.

.....'s parents agree to take steps to ensure that medical advice/counselling is sought and will keep the Deputy Head informed concerning any recommendations made for treatment/support.

During the remainder of 's time at Freeman's, he/she will be asked to supply urine or hair samples for testing. The cost incurred in the administration and analysis of these tests will be charged to the parents.

Any subsequent proven involvement with drugs whether inside or outside the School premises and whether during term time or in the holidays, will result in immediate exclusion.

Declaration by the parents:

I/We have read and accept the terms set out in this contract and undertake to support the School in applying the terms outlined herein.

.....
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Declaration by the pupil:

I have read, understood and accept the terms presented in this contract and promise to abide by them.

I understand that failure to cooperate with any of the above terms will result in permanent exclusion from the School.

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