



RUGBY SCHOOL

Alcohol, Drugs, Smoking and Vaping Policy

Advent 2025

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The aims of this policy are to give clear guidance on the School's approach to alcohol, drugs (including illegal substances, psychoactive substances and the misuse of prescription or over-the-counter medication), smoking and vaping. It is designed to:
- promote a safe, healthy and supportive environment where all Rugby School students can thrive physically, emotionally and socially;
 - establish clear expectations for behaviour involving alcohol, drugs, smoking and vaping which is underpinned by the values of respect, responsibility and integrity;
 - foster a culture of informed decision-making and healthy lifestyle choices, supported by effective education, pastoral care and a coaching dialogue;
 - provide a clear framework for support, restorative approaches and proportionate sanctions, should students breach the acceptable behaviour in relation to alcohol, drugs, smoking and vaping;
 - set out the School's approach to detection and testing, including procedures for the use of alcohol or drug testing, conducted in line with best safeguarding practice and the School's legal responsibilities.

2.0 SCOPE

- 2.1. This policy applies to all Rugby School students, of all age groups, at all times including:
- on School premises;
 - when wearing the School uniform or identifiable as a Rugby School student;
 - during School trips, visits, fixtures or events (including residential and overseas trips);
 - while travelling to and from School.
- 2.2 The School also reserves the right to respond to substance-related conduct that takes place outside of the normal jurisdiction of the School, such as Exeats, Half-terms or holidays, where such behaviour:
- raises safeguarding concerns about the student or others;
 - may impact the welfare of the School community;
 - is likely to bring the School into disrepute;
 - undermines the values or orderly running of the School.
- 2.3 This policy should be read by all members of the teaching staff, those delivering co-curricular activities or working in a House. Parents and guardians are also encouraged to familiarise themselves with the policy to support a collaborative approach to students' well-being and discipline.
- 2.4 The School will review this policy annually to review emerging substances or usage trends.

3.0 RUGBY SCHOOL GUIDELINES

- 3.1 **Social Pressures:** It is usually within a social context that people initially drink, smoke, vape or experiment with drugs. These behaviours can carry significant risks to physical and mental health, relationships, academic progress and personal development. The misuse of such substances can also harm wider society. Therefore, Rugby School has established clear expectations and guidance.

3.2 Summary of Expectations:

- **Alcohol** may be consumed by senior students on a limited basis, under closely defined circumstances and always with appropriate permissions (see section 3.3).
- **Smoking and vaping** are strictly prohibited in all contexts. This includes possession, use, supply or distribution of such substances.
- **Drugs and psychoactive substances** (including those referred to as ‘legal highs’ or mood-enhancing substances) are strictly forbidden. This includes the possession, use, supply or distribution of such substances.
- The use of **aerosols, solvents and unregulated stimulants** (e.g. Nitrous Oxide, ‘Poppers’, ‘Pro Plus’) is also strictly prohibited and subject to the same responses as illegal substances.
- The use of **caffeine energy drinks or highly caffeinated substances** may be considered as a breach of this policy if extreme consumption leads to health or behavioural risks.

The School forbids a student from:

- any possession, use or supply (distribution or sale) of drugs and substances at any time;
- subject to the circumstances set out in 3.3 below, bringing alcohol onto School premises or being in unsupervised possession of alcohol or obtaining or supplying alcohol to another, or being impaired by alcohol while on School premises or in the care of the School;
- bringing the School into disrepute for any reason associated with alcohol or drugs and related substances, whether or not the student is in the care of the School at the time. Action will be taken when the welfare of any member of the School community or the reputation of the School is affected.

3.3 Alcohol:

- Alcohol means intoxicating liquor of all descriptions, including beer, cider, wine and spirits. This policy covers the possession, consumption, purchase, supply and misuse of alcohol by students.
- Students in the Upper School may consume limited quantities of beer, cider or wine in defined circumstances, with written parental consent and the permission of their Housemaster or Housemistress (Hm). The consumption of spirits is not permitted.
- Students in the XX who are **over 18 years of age** may, with written parental consent and specific permission from their Hm on each occasion, visit designated public houses listed in the *Guidelines for Life at Rugby School*
- Licensed premises, including off-licences, are otherwise out of bounds.
- Alcohol may only be consumed at School during formally approved events, under the direct supervision of an Hm or a person authorised by the Head Master.
- Parents who wish to take their child to a licensed venue (e.g. after a match) should always consult with the child’s Hm in advance.

3.4 Drugs:

For this policy, ‘drugs’ include:

- Controlled substances prohibited by UK law e.g. cannabis, cocaine, heroin, MDMA, amphetamines;
- New psychoactive substances (NPS) or synthetic designer drugs e.g. mephedrone, ‘bath salts’, ‘spice’, NBOMe, synthetics cannabinoids;
- Adulterants or cutting agents e.g. xylazine;
- Drug-related paraphernalia;
- Legal or prescription drugs used for non-medical or recreational or intoxicating purposes e.g. misuse of ADHD stimulants, sedatives;
- Misuse of over-the-counter medicines when taken in non-therapeutic doses;

- Substances such as aerosols, glues or solvents or nitrous oxide and inhalants misused for intoxication;
- Any product intended to simulate or replicate the effects of controlled drugs e.g. herbal mixtures, research chemicals or ‘designer drugs’.

Definitions:

- **Use** includes deliberate or reckless inhalation, ingestion, injection, insufflation or other forms of administration.
- **Possession** includes substances found on a person, in their belongings or room, knowingly concealed for later retrieval or held by another on one’s behalf.

The School prohibits such activities both on and off School premises, including during School holidays, and will treat them as serious breaches of School rules.

3.5 **Smoking and vaping:**

Tobacco products, nicotine products, e-cigarettes/vaping devices, heat-not-burn devices, nicotine salts, nicotine pouches, herbal vaping mixtures or any product intended to deliver inhaled substances are all prohibited anywhere, at any time, by any student at Rugby School. This includes disposable vapes, refillable vapes, pods, cartridges, e-liquids.

The term ‘vaping’ is used to include all nicotine and inhaled substances. Nicotine pouches, oral nicotine products (snus, nicotine lozenges, nicotine gums used non-therapeutically) are prohibited in the same way as vaping devices.

- Smoking is a serious health and fire safety risk, particularly within boarding Houses where it endangers others through passive exposure.
- Vaping is often wrongly perceived as harmless. E-cigarettes typically contain nicotine, which is highly addictive, and the vapour may release harmful substances including formaldehyde, acetaldehyde and acrolein, all of which are linked to lung and heart disease.
- The long-term effects of vaping remain under-researched. Therefore, as a precaution, the School takes a firm stance against it.
- Possession of a vaping device, even without nicotine or liquid, will be considered as vaping and will lead to the appropriate vaping sanction.

The School promotes a culture of wellness and self-respect. Students who smoke or vape may be referred for health and cessation support as part of a restorative response.

4.0 **PASTORAL CARE**

- 4.1 **Pastoral care:** We encourage the students to discuss their anxieties about alcohol, drugs, smoking or vaping in confidence with a member of staff or the school counsellor. Matters brought into counselling by a student or their parents, in circumstances that are genuine and which are accompanied by a commitment to cessation, may be considered as part of any disciplinary process.
- 4.2 **Process for Pastoral Support:** Any student who discloses an issue under Section 4.1 of this policy, will, from the moment of disclosure, be expected to comply fully with the School’s requirements for the student to receive advice and treatment for their issue. This will include having to comply with the conditions as laid out in section 9.3 of this policy. The student will

also be subjected to randomly-times drug testing as described in section 7.1 (and others) of this policy.

- 4.3 **Staff:** The members of staff who oversee and co-ordinate these issues are the Deputy Head, the Deputy Head (Pastoral) and the Head of Safeguarding.
- 4.4 **Training:** Staff will be trained on induction on how to recognise and manage such issues. Periodic updates will be given from time to time.
- 4.5 **Education:** The School educates students to understand that the use of illegal drugs is or may be a criminal offence and will be harmful to their health, integrity, independence, opportunities and careers. Education about alcohol, drugs, smoking and vaping is aimed at all year groups. It is included in the School's PSHEe programme and at year group presentations/assemblies as well as in some lessons, such as Biology.
- 4.6 **Parents:** Every parent should read and discuss this policy with their child. The School encourages open discussion between parents and students so that parents are aware of the issues and pressures facing their child. If parents attending school premises appear to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol, they will be asked to leave and the member of staff making the request should refer the matter to the School's Head of Safeguarding. If a member of staff suspects that a parent has driven or will drive whilst under the influence of drugs or alcohol, the member of staff should report the matter to the Head of Safeguarding or a member of the Senior Management Team (SMT) who may telephone the police. If the Head of Safeguarding reasonably believes that a student or other child is at immediate risk of harm from a parent who is under the influence of alcohol or drugs, the student or other child will not be released into the care of the parent until appropriate measures have been taken. These may include involving another member of the family, social services or the police.

5.0 SEARCHES FOR ALCOHOL, DRUGS, SUBSTANCES AND RELATED PARAPHERNALIA

For the purposes of this section, prohibited items include alcohol; controlled drugs (including nitazenes (Class A), nitrous oxide (Class C), xylazine (Class C)); psychoactive substances; smoking/vaping devices and nicotine pouches; drug paraphernalia; and items reasonably suspected to be used to conceal, prepare or distribute such substances.

- 5.1 **Informed consent:** Before any search is undertaken consent will normally be sought from the student, unless the student is incapable of giving such consent due to intoxication or absence from school. The member of staff leading the search will determine whether or not the student is able to provide this consent and may request the additional opinion of a medically qualified member of staff if required. If the student refuses consent, they will be asked to say why they have refused. The School will be entitled to draw inferences from their response and general demeanor and the police may be informed. Search records will be documented, retained minimally and securely, and handled as safeguarding records in line with UK GDPR / Data Protection Act 2018. Only those with a legitimate need to know will be informed.
- 5.2 **Searches without consent:** The Head Master and staff authorised by the Head Master may search a student or a student's possessions or room without their consent where they have reasonable grounds for suspecting that a student has alcohol, drugs or substances, smoking or vaping paraphernalia in their possession. Searches will be conducted in accordance with DfE *Searching, Screening and Confiscation* guidance (July 2022) and the *Rugby School Discipline and Rewards Policy* (Appendix), including requirements on same-sex/with-witness where applicable, and the prohibition on intimate searches.

- 5.3 The School may use proportionate detection methods e.g., trained staff observations, sniffer-dog visits arranged with police, single-use residue swabs for surfaces/belongings). Any such measure will be risk-assessed, respect students' dignity, and follow DfE guidance.
- 5.4 Confiscated items will be sealed, logged and stored securely. Suspected controlled drugs will be destroyed by authorised staff when lawful and appropriate, or delivered to police as soon as reasonably practicable. Vapes, e-liquids and nicotine pouches will be confiscated and disposed of safely; where tampering or adulteration is suspected, items may be provided to police

6.0 POLICE INVOLVEMENT

- 6.1 **Procedures:** If the School seizes a controlled drug, it will either be destroyed by authorised staff where lawful and appropriate or delivered to the police as soon as reasonably practicable, in line with DfE guidance. In all other cases, the School may decide to request the involvement of the police from the outset. If the police suspect that a student possesses or has stored drugs, substances or related paraphernalia. In that case, the police may choose to investigate using their own procedures or pass the matter back to the School for investigation.
- 6.2 **Seizure:** Any seizure of a substance thought to be an illegal substance will take place in the presence of two adults authorised by the Head Master to undertake searches. See the Appendix of the 'Discipline and Rewards Policy'.
- 6.3 **Contacting the police:** The Head Master may use his discretion to decide whether police involvement is appropriate. In any case, the statutory authorities would normally be contacted by the Head of Safeguarding in order to safeguard the students at the School.

7.0 TESTING FOR DRUGS OR ALCOHOL

- 7.1 **Random testing:** Any student may be asked to undertake a randomly-timed drug test at any time whilst they are at School. They will be asked to supply, under supervision by a trained operative, a biological sample for analysis. The name(s) of the student(s) to be tested will be randomly chosen by a member of SMT from a range of year groups. The reason for this policy is to deter the use of drugs and substances by students.
- 7.2 **'For cause' testing:** If there is reason to suspect that a student has been involved with drugs or substances, they may be asked to supply, under supervision by a trained operative, a biological sample for analysis. The reason for this policy is:

- to deter the use of drugs and substances
- to identify users
- to absolve those who have been wrongly suspected.

Reason to suspect use of illegal drugs may arise as a result of information or a complaint received or because of a student's behaviour such as:

- a decline in performance in school work
- marked swings in mood
- excessive tiredness
- sores and rashes especially on the mouth or nose
- a lack of interest in physical appearance
- an unwillingness to take part in School activities

- other signs or evidence, such as the finding of certain items of equipment, behaviour on a particular occasion, or other information that has been gathered
- 7.3 **Breath test:** A student suspected of unauthorised consumption of alcohol may be asked to give a sample of their breath by blowing into a breathalyser. Only trained staff will use calibrated devices and, where practicable, with a witness present, although this requirement should never prevent timely testing.
- 7.4 **Informed consent:** The relevant consent to a drugs or alcohol test is that of the student rather than the parents, even if the student is under 16 years of age, provided they are of sufficient maturity and understanding and give their informed consent in writing. The member of staff leading the search will determine whether or not the student is able to provide this consent and may request the additional opinion of a medically qualified member of staff. In any case, a testing consent form signed by parents will be required and it is a condition of acceptance of a new student into the School that a signed consent form is returned to the School.
- 7.5 **Notifying parents:** Reasonable endeavours will be made, before a biological sample is taken, to notify the student's parents, guardian or education guardian of the requirement for the test and reasons for that requirement, unless parents have already been informed that a student has been put onto the testing programme in which case the School may not inform the student's parents before each individual test. This clause, however, is not binding and students may be tested before parents are notified if necessary, for safeguarding or other reasons.
- 7.6 **Drug Test supervision:** The biological sample will be taken by a qualified practitioner from an independent provider of testing services. A member of School staff will be present if required. All due care will be taken to respect the student's privacy and human rights.
- 7.7 **Refusal:** If a student refuses to provide a biological sample or sample of breath, they will be asked to say why they have refused. The School will be entitled to draw inferences from their response and general demeanour and the police may be informed. If a parent's consent is required and they refuse to consent to their child providing a biological sample or sample of breath, the School may draw inferences from the student's general demeanour and, in the case of drugs, the police may be informed.
- 7.8 **Drug testing procedures:** These will be in accordance with standard good practice. For example:
- 7.8.1 Care will be taken to make as sure as possible that the sample provided is genuine and uncontaminated.
 - 7.8.2 Chain of custody checks will be carried out to ensure that the sample remains uncontaminated at all stages of the process.
 - 7.8.3 The donor will be required to complete paperwork to confirm the validity of the sampling and that the chain of custody is intact.
 - 7.8.4 The sample will be sent to a UK Accredited Service laboratory for analysis.
 - 7.8.5 The School will use UKAS-accredited laboratories and will follow chain-of-custody procedures compatible with legal scrutiny
- 7.9 **Medical record:** The outcome of drug and alcohol testing, whether positive or negative, will not form part of the student's permanent medical record.
- 7.10 **Outcome:** When the School receives the laboratory report:
- 7.10.1 reasonable attempts will be made to notify the student and parent by letter or e-mail;
 - 7.10.2 if the result is negative, parents will be informed by letter;

- 7.10.3 if the result is negative, the second sample will be destroyed immediately;
- 7.10.4 if the result is positive, the second sample will be made available for independent analysis.
- 7.11 **Confidentiality:** Sensitive personal information about students is disclosed only on a 'need to know' basis with careful attention to students' rights and needs. All incidents involving the use, supply or possession of drugs will invariably be brought to the Head Master's attention, as will any circumstances requiring a student to be tested.

8.0 SUBSEQUENT ACTION (ALCOHOL)

- 8.1 **Procedure following a positive breath test:** The School will treat a positive alcohol breath test, although not infallible, as evidence that a student has been drinking alcohol.
- 8.2 **Procedure in the case of possession or use of alcohol:** The Hm will investigate the incident and the student would report to a member of SMT.
- 8.3 **Sanction:** The SMT will apply a suitable sanction, as laid out in the 'Guidelines for Life at Rugby School'.

9.0 SUBSEQUENT ACTION (DRUGS OR SUBSTANCES)

- 9.1 **Procedure following a positive drug test:** The School will treat a positive drug test, although not infallible, as evidence that the student has been using drugs. Subsequently, the following may apply:
 - 9.1.1 The student will be asked to attend a meeting with a member of SMT, usually the Deputy Head, accompanied by their Hm.
 - 9.1.2 The evidence of the positive sample and all other relevant evidence will be put to the student, and they will be invited to respond.
 - 9.1.3 Their response will be heard and considered, and further enquiries will be made if necessary.
 - 9.1.4 The SMT member will make a finding of fact on the balance of probabilities based on the evidence and supported by reasons.
 - 9.1.5 The student may be 'non-prejudicially temporarily suspended' pending a formal disciplinary hearing with the Head Master to have time to reflect and prepare for the meeting with their parents or guardian.
- 9.2 **Sanction following a positive drug test:** If the SMT member's decision is that the student has been using drugs, following a drug test, the Head Master will be informed. It is likely that the student and their parents will be invited to a Disciplinary Hearing. The Head Master will outline the range of sanctions he is considering, then hear mitigating circumstances and consider the student's academic and disciplinary record before deciding on the sanction. If expulsion or required removal is being considered, the procedures set out in the *Rugby School Group Permanent Exclusion and Required Removal Policy* will be followed.
- 9.3 **Sanction following use, possession or supply of drugs:** Anyone supplying drugs must expect to be permanently excluded immediately, even if they are about to sit public examinations. Anyone possessing or using drugs must also expect to be permanently excluded but, in exceptional cases, a supportive regime may be offered as an alternative to expulsion.

At the Head Master's sole discretion, a student who contravenes the School's policy may be allowed to continue in the School on certain conditions which must be strictly adhered to, and which are outlined below:

Circumstances & Conditions:

- The student must have no previous record of serious breach of the School's discipline in any matter
- The offence must be the use or possession of drugs and not the supply of drugs
- The student must show due remorse
- The student must provide details about when they last took a drug
- The student no longer uses drugs or must be prepared to meet the School's programme for giving up using drugs
- The student must cooperate in identifying sources of supply and in identifying other students who are involved in substance misuse, possession or supply
- Parents must signal their unequivocal endorsement of the School's policy
- The parents and student must consent to the School's right to require the student to undergo regular testing for drug use and parents agree to cover the cost of the tests
- Subsequent use, possession or supply of a drug will be cause for immediate dismissal, as will any other serious breach of School discipline

The Head Master is not obliged to offer this supportive regime.

- 9.4 **Supportive regime (see section 9.3):** In the case of drug or substance abuse, if there are extenuating circumstances and the student is not permanently excluded from the School and at the Head Master's sole discretion, the student will be put on a randomly-timed drug testing programme. If any subsequent tests are positive, the student can expect to be permanently excluded from the School immediately. Refusal to take a test in these circumstances may also result in the student being required to leave the School.
- 9.5 **Review:** If the student is permanently excluded or required to leave, they and their parents may request a Governors' Review in accordance with the *Rugby School Group Permanent Exclusion and Required Removal Policy*.
- 9.6 **Charges:** Invoices for each test required under this policy will be passed directly to the Chief Operating Officer when appropriate. The School will cover the cost of the first test required, which is negative. However, parents will be charged for the first test if it is positive and for any subsequent tests in accordance with this policy.

10.0 SMOKING AND VAPING

- 10.1 A student who is caught smoking or vaping, is suspected of smoking or vaping, has tobacco, smoking or vaping paraphernalia or has supplied such products to other students will be subject to the School's disciplinary procedures. Persistent offences could result in a requirement for the student to be removed in accordance with the *Rugby School Group Permanent Exclusion and Required Removal Policy*. Smoking paraphernalia includes any other products such as nicotine substitutes, pipes, hookahs, rolling papers, electronic cigarettes, snus, non-nicotine tobacco products or any other smoking-related products (see 3.5 for full details)
- 10.2 The School can offer students a smoking cessation programme which may involve the controlled and supervised use of nicotine replacement therapies.

11.0 STUDENT SAFEGUARDING

- 11.1 Student safeguarding and Child Protection procedures will be considered when applying this policy. If a child is in danger of immediate, serious harm, elements of these outlined procedures may not be followed to expedite appropriate care for the child.

12.0 REVIEW

- 12.1 This policy will be reviewed annually and in particular:
- following any serious incident involving students and drugs
 - following the issue of any new guidance from the Department for Education (DfE)
- 12.2 The Deputy Head will carry out the review.

13.0 RELATED POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

DfE and ACPO (now NPCC): *Drugs: advice for schools* (September 2012)

DfE: *Use of reasonable force in schools* (July 2013)

DfE: *Searching, screening and confiscation: advice for schools* (July 2022)

Home Office circular 006/2023: *Nitrous oxide Class C*

Home Office circular: *Xylazine Class C (MDA 1971 Amendment No. 2 Order 2024)* (Jan 2025)

Rugby School Discipline and Rewards Policy

Rugby School Permanent Exclusion and Required Removal Policy

The Guidelines for Life at Rugby School

Reviewed and Ratified by SMT:	June 2025
--------------------------------------	-----------