Drugs and Substance Education Policy

Approved by:	**Curriculum Committee**
Date:	**June 2025**
Next review due by:	**June 2028**

1. Introduction

At St Leonard's, we aim to equip our children and staff with the knowledge, understanding and skills that enable them to make the sort of choices that lead to a healthy lifestyle. We teach children about drugs – what they are, the value of medicines and the dangers posed by drug misuse. We are committed to the health, safety and well-being of our pupils and all members of our wider school community.

This policy acknowledges and clarifies the school's role in drug prevention and drug education, and ensures that it is appropriate to children's needs. The policy provides guidance on all matters relating to drug education, the management of drugs within the school community and supporting the needs of pupils regarding drugs. From a wider perspective, it gives parents and the local community an opportunity for involvement in drug issues. The policy forms an integral part of our existing PSHE education, and drug education complements this.

This policy takes account of DfE / ACPO guidance for schools and the National Drugs Strategy.

1.1 Rationale

The core aim at St. Leonard's CE Primary School is to promote the development of the 'whole child' which encompasses physical, emotional, mental, social and environmental health; by equipping pupils with the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values to handle their lives effectively in the present and prepare them for the journey to adulthood. Drugs education is therefore a vital part of the school curriculum.

It is acknowledged that our school community plays an important role in tackling drugs misuse by providing drug education and pastoral support to all pupils. Our aim is to help all pupils be able to take their place safely in our society where a wide range of drugs exist. We recognise that some drugs have beneficial effects, but also that every drug has the potential to be harmful when misused. For this reason, all drugs need appropriate and responsible care and management. To make informed choices, staff and pupils need to understand the nature of drugs, their social and legal status, and their use and effects.

St. Leonard's CE Primary School recognises that young people today are exposed to the risks associated with the drug culture that exists and some children in our school come from homes where family members are dependent on drugs or alcohol. We have systems and contacts in place to support these children, such as a Home School Link Worker and these will be taken into account when planning and preparing lessons.

1.2 The role of schools

As part of the statutory duty on schools to promote pupils' wellbeing, schools have a clear role to play in preventing drug misuse as part of their pastoral responsibilities. To support this, the Government's Drug Strategy 2010 ensures that school staff have the information, advice and power to:

• Provide accurate information on drugs and alcohol through education and targeted information, including via the FRANK service;
• Tackle problem behaviour in schools, with wider powers of search and confiscation;
• Work with local voluntary organisations, health partners, the police and others to prevent drug or alcohol misuse.

Our school believes that the misuse of drugs endangers not only our pupils but also affects the wider community in which we live. It is the school's responsibility to ensure the child's health and safety while in our care and we also strive to promote their personal, social and emotional wellbeing. Drug misuse undermines this and hinders the development of the young person.

2. Definition of drugs

A drug is defined as 'any substance which, when taken, has the effect of altering the way a person behaves, feels, sees or thinks.' (Drugs: Guidance for Schools (DfE February 2004)). Not all drugs are illegal, but that doesn't mean they cannot be harmful.

As well as everyday substances such as tea and coffee, drugs include:
• Alcohol and tobacco
• Over the counter medicines such as paracetamol for headaches
• Prescribed drugs, such as antibiotics and tranquilisers
• Volatile substances such as glues and aerosols
• Illegal drugs such as cannabis, LSD and ecstasy
• Legal highs

The school recognises that this policy focuses mainly on illicit drugs. Procedures for handling prescribed medicines are outlined in our Supporting Pupils with a Medical Condition policy.

3. The aims and objectives of the drugs education programme

The aim of drug education is to provide opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge, skills, attitudes and understanding about drugs and appreciate the benefits of a healthy lifestyle. Pupils should be able to relate this to their own and others' actions.

Drugs education is an integral part of our school's curriculum. During Key Stages 1 and 2, learners gradually build on the skills, knowledge and understanding, attitudes and values they have started to acquire and develop. At St. Leonard's CE Primary, drugs education is taught through PSHE education (Using SCARF and other relevant materials) and SCIB (Safeguarding Children in Banbury). Alongside this, it is specifically included within the Programmes of Study for Science. Children in Year 6 also attend Junior Citizen, which enables them to experience varied scenarios relating to Drugs education.

The intention is to:
• To increase pupils' knowledge and understanding and clarify misconceptions about the:
▪ Short and long-term effects and risks of drugs

▪ Rules and laws relating to drugs on Impact of drugs on individuals, families and communities
▪ Prevalence and acceptability of drug use among peers.
To develop pupils' personal and social skills to make informed decisions to keep themselves 4 safe and healthy including:

▪ Assessing, avoiding and managing risk
▪ Communicating effectively
▪ Resisting pressures
▪ Finding information, help and advice
▪ Developing self-awareness and self-esteem.
• To inform pupils of the effects of drug abuse, and the risks involved.
• To help pupils to understand how they can influence their peers.
• To develop knowledge and understanding of themselves and others as individuals.
• Explore their own attitudes towards drugs and drug issues.
• Develop a competence in challenging attitudes and patterns of behaviour associated with drug misuse.
• Understand what is meant by 'a drug' and the definition of 'addiction'.
• Recognise potential drug exploitation and how to take avoiding action.
• Be aware of the current drug culture and the effect of advertising campaigns.

4. The place of drugs education within the curriculum

Drug education should not be seen as a one-off topic but as a continuous process which involves the development of skills and attitudes enabling pupils to make informed choices. It is provided in the broader context of PSHE, as part of a pupil's life skills and preparation for adulthood. Effective drug education takes place when it addresses the development of knowledge, attitudes and skills together and when teaching and learning are participative and active. We endeavour to:

• Use a variety of teaching styles that are characterized by active learning
• Find out what prior knowledge is already held by the children
• Use drama, role –play and ICT to demonstrate various strategies and scenarios
• Encourage pupils to listen to the viewpoints of others
• Develop children's understanding of protective behaviours

In Nursery and Reception, children begin to learn about making choices and developing responsibility. Through planned themes, children are encouraged to recognise the importance of keeping healthy and safe, and things that contribute to this.

Teaching about drugs begins in Key Stage 1, when pupils are taught about the importance of drugs as medicines and their safe handling.

Knowledge and understanding

• Basic information about how the body works and how to look after the body

• The role of medicines (both prescribed and over-the-counter) in promoting health and the reasons people use them
• Understanding that all drugs can be harmful is misused
• Simple safety rules about medicines and other substances used in the home, including solvents
• People who are involved in medicines, such as health professionals, pharmacists, shopkeepers
• People who can help children when they have questions or concerns
• To make real, informed choices about their physical and emotional health

Skills

• Communicating feelings such as concerns about illness and taking medicines
• Following simple safety instructions
• When and how to get help from adults

Attitudes

• Valuing one's body and recognising its uniqueness
• Attitudes towards medicines, health professionals and hospitals

In Key Stage 2, pupils learn that alcohol is the most widely used drug and the risks associated with drinking. We teach pupils about the dangers of smoking and habit forming, and encourage them to consider its effects and risks. Pupils learn about the dangers of volatile substance abuse and other drugs, and how these relate to personal health.

Knowledge and understanding
• More detailed information about the body, how it works and how to take care of it
• Different types of medicines (both prescribed and over-the-counter), legal and illegal drugs including their form, their effects and the associated risks
• People who can help children when they have questions or concerns
• Identify risks from and effects of substances (including glue, cigarettes, caffeine and alcohol)
• Know that not everybody smokes or drinks alcohol
• Understand the term 'habit' and why these may be hard to change

Skills
• Identifying and managing risks
• Coping with peer influences
• Communicating with adults
• Decision making and assertiveness in situations relating to drug use
• Getting and giving help
• Safety procedures when using medicines

Attitudes
• Valuing oneself and other people
• Attitudes and beliefs about different drugs and people who may use or misuse them

• Responses to media and advertising presentations of medicines, alcohol, tobacco and other legal drugs such as 'energy drinks'
• Taking responsibility for one's own behaviour and safety

5. Confidentiality

Drug education requires sensitive teaching matched to the needs and concerns of pupils in the 6 class. Teachers will need to use their professional judgement where any sensitivity may be presented. Careful consideration needs to be given to the possibility that pupil's parents or siblings may have experienced drugs misuse. Establishing classroom ground rules with children is valuable for promoting a safe, positive and co-operative learning environment.

Where a pupil voices to a teacher that he or she is taking drugs, the teacher should make it clear that he or she cannot offer confidentiality. However, the teacher can advise the pupil of other sources of confidential information or advice. Pupils should also be encouraged to talk to their parents. A record will be made of the conversation on CPOMS and the Head Teacher will be informed.

6. The delivery and organisation of the drugs education programme

Drugs Education is a whole staff issue. St Leonard's CE Primary School ensures that staff are regularly updated with changes in the curriculum and changes to the policy, which have an effect on their delivery of the curriculum. Where possible staff receive in-service training on drug issues.

6.1 Outside agencies

St Leonard's CE Primary School may use outside agencies to help delivery the drug education programme if the teacher ensures that the following criteria are met:

• The content and delivery of the programme have been jointly agreed.
• The programme and methods of delivery are consistent with the aims and objectives outlined in this policy.
• The Head Teacher has given approval for the use of the outside agency.
• DBS disclosure will be required from any person delivering drug education.

7. Links with Parents, the community and the Police

St Leonard's CE Primary School has developed good working relationships with the local police. This helps to ensure that if a drug related incident is reported, it will be dealt with in a professional and discreet manner, and in keeping the best interests of the child concerned in mind.

Parents will always be informed immediately if there are any issues of drug misuse by the child.

The school has a procedure for the storage and administration of medicines that must be followed for everybody's safety. See policy for Supporting Children with Medical Conditions.

8. Drugs at school

8.1 Prescribed drugs

Please refer to 'Supporting children with medical needs'.

8.2 Other drugs

Solvents and other hazardous chemicals must be stored securely, to prevent inappropriate access, or use by pupils. Aerosols, and board cleaning fluids are used sparingly in school, and must be handled and stored carefully by all members of staff.

It is understood by the whole school community that the possession, use or supply of illegal and other unauthorised drugs within the school boundaries is not permissible and will be reported immediately to the police.

The school is designated a 'no smoking' area for staff and visitors (cigarettes and e-cigarettes) and we look to everyone, including parents/carers to support this policy. If pupils are found smoking on site, the Headteacher will be informed immediately and parents contacted.

8. Monitoring and evaluating

The school drug education policy is periodically reviewed to reflect changing circumstances and trends in drugs use. The programmes of study for drug education are continually reviewed and any changes deemed necessary are implemented.

The induction of new staff will include introduction to this policy.

The policy is available to parents if they request it and is published on the school's website.