



CAST Angling Project – Drugs and Prohibited Items Policy

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Definition of Drugs and Prohibited Items

The definition of drugs used in this Policy is the definition given by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime: “a substance people take to change the way they feel, think, or behave”. This refers to:

- Legal drugs – alcohol and volatile substances (poppers).
- Misuse of over the counter and prescription medicines.
- Illegal psychoactive substances (under The Psychoactive Substances Act 2016).



- Illegal drugs (those controlled by The Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 (Amendment) Order 2010) including ecstasy, cannabis, crack/cocaine, heroin, LSD, and khat.
- Other drugs, such as anabolic steroids.

Throughout this Policy, the term 'drugs' is used to refer to all of the above. With regards to tobacco and e-cigarettes, please refer to the CAST Smoking Policy for further information on the allowances and restrictions.

The definitions of other key terms that will be used herein are:

- 'Drug use' describes any drug taking that can potentially lead to harm through intoxication, breach of the law or school rules, or future health problems.
- 'Drug misuse' is drug taking which leads to social, psychological, physical, or legal problems through intoxication, regular and excessive consumption, and/or dependence.

The prohibited items included in this Policy, in addition to the drugs described above, are:

- Knives and offensive weapons.
- Stolen items.
- Fireworks.
- Pornographic images/videos.
- Any article that the member of staff reasonably suspects has been, or is likely to be, used to commit an offence or to cause personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the learner).

For the purpose of this Policy, a weapon is:

- A firearm of any description, including starting pistols, air guns, and replica/toy guns.
- A knife (defined to include all variations of a bladed object), including pocketknives, craft knives, scissors, etc.
- Explosives, including fireworks, aerosol sprays, lighters, and matches.
- An object, such as a laser pen, that, even if manufactured for a non-violent purpose, is being kept, carried, or modified to use/threaten to use to cause harm.

Introduction

All young people are likely to be exposed to the effects and influences of negative peer pressures in the wider community, and they are now increasingly exposed to opportunities to try both legal and illegal drugs. Substance and prohibited item misuse affects all communities – crossing gender, cultural, and social boundaries. No education, parent, or carer can afford to be complacent or think that children and young people are not at risk.



Education establishments have a key role to play in ensuring that young people understand the risks involved and have the confidence, knowledge, and skills to avoid them. They cannot alone solve the problem of drug and prohibited item misuse in society, but the implementation of an effective educative programme in all provisions is an essential step in keeping our young people safe. It is widely recognised that education has a valuable role in creating places of security and stability for young people. Young people who are disconnected from education are at a greater risk of abuse, criminal exploitation, and county lines, and as such maintaining young people in a positive education environment is paramount in reducing the risk to the individual and the community as a whole. Furthermore, establishing strong positive relationships with family members, teachers, or other socially responsible adults provides a sense of connectedness for all young people.

Education has a major contribution to make in reducing and/or preventing drug misuse by:

- Creating protective environments which discourage drug/substance/prohibited item misuse.
- Imparting knowledge and skills and supporting young people to make healthier choices.
- Promoting positive behaviours and reducing risk-taking behaviours.
- Providing direct support and/or signposting young people to appropriate services whenever concerns arise.

Education establishments therefore have a responsibility to consider their response to such drugs and prohibited items. This responsibility was made statutory within the Children's Act 2004 and Education and Inspections Act 2006. It is underpinned by the latest guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) and the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) which frames drug misuse in safeguarding terms and stipulates that permanent exclusion should not be the automatic response to incidents. The guidance ensures that the response to such incidents is robust, rational, and safe.

The possession or use of drugs, illicit substances, or prohibited items should always be viewed as a safeguarding and welfare issue first and foremost. At CAST, we place our safeguarding duties at the heart of any response to such incidents.

Knowledge alone will not change behaviour but taken in context, effective personal development can shape attitudes, values, and aspirations that bring about resilience in young people.

The Department for Education (DfE) advises all education establishments to have an up-to-date Policy relating to drugs and prohibited items consistent with national and local guidance.



Remit and Extent of the Policy

In CAST, a drug- or prohibited item-related incident refers to any possession, usage, or supply of an unauthorised drug/prohibited item, as defined within this Policy. Incidents can include emergencies, observations, discovery, disclosure, suspicion, and rumour.

CAST does not permit the possession, usage, or supply of any illegal or legal drug (unless an authorised legal drug) or prohibited item and will investigate and respond in line with this Policy to any incident which:

- Takes place on CAST premises.
- Takes place near to the CAST premises.
- On the journey to and from CAST.
- Within the timetabled day.
- On visits (supervised or not).
- Takes place during any other CAST event.

These rules apply equally to all staff, learners, and visitors within the school.

Alcohol is not an authorised drug for any learner. Staff accompanying learners are not permitted to consume alcohol when responsible for learners.

Staff Responsible for Issues with Drugs or Prohibited Items

The Operations Director is responsible for the development, monitoring, and review of the drugs education curriculum. This involves supporting and training staff as well as liaising with external agencies to strengthen the curriculum delivered.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy have overall responsibility for issues relating to drugs and prohibited items, including managing such incidents, monitoring and reviewing this Policy, and liaising with the police (where required) and external agencies to provide additional support to learners at risk of misuse.

Staff Training and Support

All staff are DBS checked and the company is fully compliant with current safeguarding practises and procedures for Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE). The safeguarding of young people is the prime focus of the provision and, as such, a number of safeguarding policies and procedures have been developed/implemented. To underpin this approach, all staff members have been trained in Level 2 Advanced Safeguarding Children. The Designated Safeguarding Leads are additionally trained as Level 3 Designated Safeguarding Leads.



To facilitate and provide differentiated teaching appropriate to individual learning needs, project tutors are qualified with the Level 3 Award in Education and Training. Staff are also trained to meet the needs of young people with learning, communication, sensory and/or physical difficulties and undertake regular refresher courses. All staff are additionally trained in drugs and prohibited items awareness.

Continued professional development is in place, accessible, and encouraged for all staff.

Aims of Education Regarding Drug and Prohibited Item Misuse

We aim to give our learners accurate information regarding drugs and prohibited items to help them develop the skills and attributes to make their own healthy, safe, and responsible decisions. We also aim to reduce the number of young people misusing drugs, minimise the risk of criminalisation, and to help those concerned to get the help and advice they need.

To achieve this, our drugs and prohibited items education programme will help learners to:

- Gain knowledge and understanding about the effects, risks, and dangers of drugs and to correct myths and misconceptions.
- Develop skills to make informed decision, such as communication, self-awareness, negotiation, research, and help/advice.
- Develop skills to manage situations involving drugs and peer pressures, such as assessing and avoiding risks, assertiveness, and the confidence to refuse.
- Explore their own and other people's attitudes to drugs, drug use, and drug users including challenging stereotypes, dispelling myths, and exploring media and social influences.

We take a whole provision approach to drugs and prohibited items through:

- A planned drugs and prohibited items education programme through SMSC.
- Carefully considered responses to drug and prohibited item related incidents which are informed and supported by the views of the whole provision.
- Clear rules and sanctions related to drugs and prohibited items, understood by the whole provision.
- Access to specialist support and advice when required.
- Training and support for staff.

At CAST, we have an effective system of learner support and a carefully structured SMSC programme that incorporates drug/prohibited items education.



Management of Knives and Offensive Weapons

It is illegal to carry knives and other offensive weapons on and around CAST premises. Accordingly, it is the Policy of CAST to forbid the possession, custody, and use of weapons by any unauthorised person in, on, or around the provision site and off-site activities. All weapons issued for the purpose of teaching a curriculum activity are logged and stored in a locked safe that is accessible only by SLT.

Management of Drugs in CAST

CAST has a separate Policy for the safe and secure management of prescription drugs in the Medication Administration Policy.

There are circumstances when some legal drugs (prescribed) are authorised for use in CAST – any learner requiring access to prescription drugs for medical reasons will be supported as per the Medication Administration Policy. Parents and learners must inform CAST where this is needed and learners must not be responsible for the safety of their own medication, unless previously agreed. Any medication must be handed in to CAST to be kept securely until needed in line with the above Policy.

CAST Responses to Incidents Involving Drugs and/or Prohibited Items

In all incidents involving drugs and/or prohibited items, the following principles will apply:

- The Senior Director, DSL, and Deputy DSL will be informed immediately.
- All situations will be carefully considered before deciding a response.
- Permanent exclusion will not be the automatic response and will only be considered in the most serious cases.
- The health and safety needs of the pupil will always come first, whilst also taking into account the health and safety needs of the provision as a whole.
- The relevant contacts at the referring school and (potential) multi-agency involvement will be involved at all stages of a concern/investigation.
- Parents/carers will be involved at an early stage and throughout any investigation unless this would not be in the learner's best interest.
- Decisions regarding the sanction will depend on whether the offence is one of a series or a first event, previous support has been offered to the learner, and whether the learner was in possession or supplying. Any extenuating circumstances will also be taken into consideration.
- The Senior Director, in consultation with the DSL (or Deputy), will decide whether a disciplinary and/or counselling response should follow.



- All incidents will be reported to the Senior Director and DSL (Deputy), and these will be logged in a secure, online system.

Possible responses to such incidents may be: (1) support and (2) sanctions.

Support – support is provided for learners who have concerns about their own or their families use of drugs and/or prohibited items. We assess the welfare and support needs of the young person and identify the most appropriate support for them. Support is also provided for those who have been involved in a drug/prohibited item-related incident which is in breach of the CAST rules. Learners who have been involved in an incident will participate in a specific drug/prohibited item education programme and may be referred for specialist support if needed.

Sanctions – where a CAST rule relating to drugs and/or prohibited items is broken, sanctions will be given. The nature of the sanction will depend on the nature and degree of the offence. Decisions will be made by the Operations Director and be consistent with the Behaviour Policy. CAST uses a range of sanctions including tailored SMSC, withdrawal from activities, fixed-term exclusions, or permanent exclusions.

Procedures for Managing Incidents

Reporting a Drug- and/or Prohibited Item-Related Incident

All incidents are reported to the DSL and Operations Director.

There is no legal obligation to report an incident involving drugs and/or prohibited items to the police. Each incident will be assessed internally, and the appropriate steps will be taken.

The police will be informed of any incident involving the sale of drugs.

Recording a Drug- and/or Prohibited Item-Related Incident

The Operations Director and DSL will decide on any responses, including the use of sanctions and/or counselling/support. Only the Operations Director has the authority to exclude a learner for a fixed or permanent period.

Medical Emergencies

Where a learner is unconscious due to the use of drugs, staff that are first aid qualified should be called immediately, however the learner must not be left alone.



The learner will be placed in the recovery position and an ambulance will be called. The referring school DSL and parents/carers will be informed immediately.

An assessment of the incident will be initiated immediately which will include establishing whether a substance has been taken and whether evidence has been gathered.

Situations Involving a Learner Intoxicated at CAST

Where a learner is seen to be intoxicated by drugs, they will be moved to a quiet room, be continually supervised, and be helped to calm down. A first aid trained member of staff and the DSL will be called immediately.

The referring school DSL and parents/carers will be notified immediately (unless it is not in the best interests of the learner for their parent/carer to be informed). In most cases, the learner will be taken home and sanctions considered.

Discovery/Observation

This refers to situations when a pupil is discovered to be using, supplying, or holding a substance/item that is not permitted on the CAST premises and which is described in this Policy (suspected or confirmed).

If the substance/item is suspected to be illegal, staff can take temporary possession of it in the following procedure:

- The substance/item will be confiscated in the presence of a second member of staff as witness.
- The substance will be sealed in a plastic bag with details of the date and time of the seizure/find and the witness present. This will be stored in a secure location (such as a safe or locked container) with access limited to the SLT and the DSL.
- The learner will be supervised within a safe place whilst an investigation is undertaken.
- Details of the incident will be reported to the DSL (or Deputy) to be recorded.
- The referring school DSL and relevant multi-agency staff will be informed.
- Parents/carers will be involved, unless it is not in the best interest of the young person to do so.
- The learner involved will be given reasonable sanctions as decided by the Operations Director.



If the substance/item is legal, but unauthorised at CAST, it will be disposed of or handed to the learner's parent/carer unless it is not in the young person's best interest to do so.

Searches

If a member of staff has reasonable grounds for suspecting that a learner is in possession of a drug or prohibited item, or it is in their personal property, they will request that the learner voluntarily produces the drug/item. Where a search is required, any staff involved must be authorised by the Senior Leadership Team to undertake and, wherever possible, be of the same sex as the learner. The search must take place where staff have lawful control of the learner under the guidance of the DfE: *Screening, Searching and Confiscation, 2022*.

For further information, please see the CAST Search and Confiscation Policy.

Dealing with Drug-Taking Materials

CAST staff undertake regular site checks and are aware of the procedures involved when handling drug-taking materials, such as needles, in line with health and safety advice.

Learners are informed of who the CAST Health and Safety Officer is during their initial induction, and this is reinforced during termly tutorials and SMSC. All learners are aware that they do not handle such materials on their own and that they report the finding immediately to a member of staff.

Disclosure

A disclosure is when a learner informs a member of staff that he/she has been using drugs (or other prohibited items) or is concerned about someone else's use.

In these situations, staff will be non-judgmental, caring, and show concern for the learner's welfare. All young people understand that staff cannot comprise total confidentiality if safeguarding concerns are raised and/or if further support is to be considered. This information will only be shared with key staff and the DSL will be responsible for coordinating the most appropriate response.

Suspicion

Staff will not assume the use of drugs or another prohibited item on the basis of rumours or behaviour alone. If there is a suspicion, however, evidence will be collected over a period of time before a decision is made to question the learner involved.



Dealing with Drug-Related Incidents

Any learner involved in an incident of drug misuse in CAST will be dealt with immediately. The specific sanctions and support procedures outlined below are used as a starting point for handling such incidents:

Type of Misconduct	Minimum Response
Smoking tobacco products or vaping (using e-cigarettes) on CAST or public transport.	Learner spoken to by a member of the Senior Leadership Team. Parents/carers/referring school/multi-agency support informed if necessary. Learner offered support if necessary.
Smoking tobacco products or vaping (using e-cigarettes) on non-designated areas of the premises.	On the first occasion, the learner will be spoken with by a member of Senior Leadership Team and parents/carers/referring school/multi-agency support informed if necessary. On a second occasion, the learner may be sent home. Further steps will be discussed with parents/carers/referring school.
Possession of alcohol. Distribution of alcohol. Consumption of alcohol. Solvent abuse (including glue and nitrous oxide). Substance abuse (including legal highs and poppers). Incorrect use of controlled/prescribed medicines. Possession of Class B or C drugs.	Learner will be sent home immediately and given a fixed term exclusion.
Possession of Class A drugs. Supplying of Class A, B, or C drugs.	Learner will be sent home with a fixed term exclusion, and a permanent exclusion may be given at the discretion of SLT and School Partnerships. The police will be contacted.

Warning Signs of Possible Misuse (Guidance)



Some signs of drug/prohibited item misuse can be confused with signs of other (relatively innocent) problems. It is therefore important that all staff take extreme care when considering such incidents and do not jump to conclusions.

In order to support staff in their identification of possible drug misuse, they are provided the following three categories of signs. If concerns continue to arise, staff should liaise with SLT and gain further training/advice.

Equipment that may be involved in drug use:

- Needles or syringes.
- Containers made from silver foil.
- Small bottles or pillboxes.
- Stash cans – disguised as everyday objects (such as aerosols or drinks containers).
- Drinks cans with extra holes or signs of scorching.
- Twists of paper.
- Straws.
- Cigarette lighters.
- Empty solvent containers.
- Spoons discoloured by heat.
- Sugar lumps.
- Spent matches.
- Plastic bags.
- Stamps/stickers/transfers.
- Grinders.

Physical symptoms/signs of drug use:

- Sudden changes in mood/behaviour.
- Unusual outbreaks of temper.
- Loss of appetite or increase in consumption of set foods.
- Use of aerosols to cover the smell of drugs/solvents.
- Drowsiness, sleepiness, or slurred speech.
- Unusual stains or marks on the clothing or body (particularly around the mouth and nose).
- Staining on hands.
- Marked interest in glue or solvent-based products.
- Soreness or redness around the eyes, nose, or mouth.
- Flushed face or neck.
- Dilated pupils.
- Unsteadiness.
- Small groups beginning to meet in secretive places.

Social symptoms/signs of drug use:

- Isolating oneself/keeping away from peers/
- Being the subject of a rumour regarding drugs.



- Use of drug-related slang.
- Excessive spending or borrowing of money.
- Unexplained loss of money or belongings from home.
- Perpetual stealing of money or goods that are then sold.
- Changes in attendance patterns.
- Reluctance to participate in activities.
- Loss of interest in known hobbies.
- Sudden changes in friendship group.
- Marked performance decline at CAST.
- Strangers on or around the school premises.
- Excessive and secretive use of mobile phone.

Child Criminal Exploitation/County Lines

When speaking with learners and responding to an incident involving drugs/prohibited items, staff will be vigilant to the learner's vulnerability to criminal exploitation and, in particular, County Lines.

Any concerns about a young person that indicates they may be a victim of exploitation will be shared immediately with DSL. Such indications may include (but are not limited to):

- Erratic school attendance.
- Changes in attitude and engagement to learning.
- Unexplained or disproportionate access to money and/or expensive items.
- Unexplained absences or reports of being missing.
- Possession of several mobile phones.

We understand that learners who are not accessing education due to low levels of attendance or exclusion are at greater risk of all forms of exploitation. Any attendance issues will be addressed in line with the CAST Attendance Policy. Furthermore, any fixed-term exclusions will be for the shortest time necessary and in line with the CAST Behaviour and Reward Policy. Permanent exclusion will be the last resort and only in the most serious circumstances where no other option is available.

Confidentiality

The welfare of young people is central to our Policies and practices, and we understand that learners need to be able to talk to staff in confidence without fear of being judged. Staff cannot, however, promise total confidentiality and this is made clear to learners during their induction, tutorials, and SMSC sessions.

If a learner discloses to a member of staff that they are taking drugs/using prohibited items, or is concerned about someone else, the member of staff will
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refer them to the DSL and appropriate support will be offered. This information is only shared with the DSL and key member of staff.

If staff are concerned that a young person's safety is at risk, staff will follow the CAST Child Protection Policy and procedures.

CAST also displays information on local drug and alcohol services that offer confidential information, advice, and treatment which are readily accessible for learners.

Working with Parents/Carers

Parents/carers have an important role in supporting their child's drug and prohibited items education.

If an incident occurs, parents/carers will be informed immediately. There may be some exceptional circumstances, however, where involving parents/carers may put the young person at risk of abuse and, in these exceptional cases, CAST will exercise some caution. The decision will be taken by SLT in liaison with the DSL (and Deputy) and with the child's welfare as a priority.

Police Involvement

In most cases, a drug- or prohibited items-related incident will be a CAST matter and will not require police involvement. We do, however, work closely with community police and will contact them immediately if an illegal (or suspected illegal) drug/item has been found or if illegal drug dealing is taking place. We will only call 999 in an emergency.

Relevant Policies

- Attendance Policy.
- Behaviour and Reward Policy.
- Child Safeguarding Policy.
- Children Missing from Education Policy.
- Disciplinary Guidance and Procedures Policy.
- Health and Safety Policy.
- Medication Administration Policy.
- Restrictive Physical Interventions Policy.
- Risk and Needs Assessment Policy.
- SMSC Policy.
- Staff Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Rules Policy.
- Search and Consent Policy.