

Drugs Policy

(Reviewer: Lloyd Dannatt, March 2025)

Approved by SMT March 2025)

The College considers that the use of illegal drugs, New Psychoactive Substances (known formerly as “legal highs”, etc.) and substance abuse (including aerosols, glue and poppers) is likely to undermine a young person’s health, safety, independence, opportunities and respect for the law; and will also damage the integrity of the school community by exposing other pupils to temptation and to the risk of criminal proceedings.

Hurstpierpoint College has a zero tolerance policy toward the use of illegal drugs. This applies to all members of the College at all times, whether on or off campus, throughout term time, weekends and vacation time. For the avoidance of doubt, this policy applies 24 hours per day, 365 days per year. The school believes that a combination of education and deterrence forms the best basis for a drug free school. A continuing programme of education about drugs and substance abuse is therefore maintained throughout the school so that pupils are aware of the inherent dangers. A case of drug use, possession of drugs, purchasing or facilitating the purchase of drugs by pupils is treated as a very serious breach of school discipline as detailed in the “Big 12”, as such any pupils should expect to leave the College.

As a result, the school takes the following measures to act as a deterrent:

1. Sniffer dogs are deployed periodically around the College premises. If one of the dogs indicates the possible presence of drugs, the pupil(s) indicated will be required to take a drugs test (saliva swab / urine /or hair sample). See also the Search policy.
2. Following agreement with Governors, parents, staff and the pupils’ School Council, it was agreed that random drug testing would occasionally be carried out. In such instances, a sample population of the school’s pupil body will be tested for drug use using saliva swabs. It is expected that all pupils will be prepared to undergo such random tests and parents will not ordinarily be contacted in advance of these random tests.
3. When there is a strong suspicion that a pupil has been using drugs (unexplained change in behaviour, behaviour associated with drug taking, credible rumours/tip offs, school I.T. filter notifications, etc) the pupil will be informed that they are required to take a drugs test, in addition a room and phone search may be carried out – see search procedure. This may take the form of a saliva swab or a urine test, though it may be necessary to take a hair sample. The supervising senior member of staff will decide on the most appropriate test to be taken on each occasion.
4. Any pupil involved in vaping, which includes possessing or using vapes or snus or any other nicotine product will be expected to undertake a drugs test.

Drug Tests

When a drugs test is deemed necessary, it will be discreetly administered by the Head of Section, Deputy Head of College, Deputy Head Pastoral. In exceptional circumstances, it may be appropriate to delegate this responsibility to another member of staff that a member of the SMT deems to be appropriate.

The school will make reasonable efforts to contact parents prior to a test being carried out and notify them of the result as soon as possible afterwards. A member of the pastoral and / or safeguarding team will be present to support the pupil throughout.

Saliva Swab tests will be discreetly administered in an office or similar room and by one of the staff indicated above with the supportive member of staff present. Ideally a photograph showing the result will be kept.

Urine tests will be administered by one of the staff indicated above. The test will be conducted discreetly in a House toilet area. The supervising member of staff will be of the same gender and will wait just outside the cubicle. An additional member of staff, also of the same gender, will be positioned at the entrance to the toilet area to ensure that no other pupil is able to enter. The test will be conducted when the House is quiet to maintain discretion.

Hair tests will be sent off to a suitable lab for analysis and results shared with the pupil and parents as soon as possible. Any disciplinary decisions, both immediate and subsequent, will be made based on all information available at the time.

Refusal to take a test will be interpreted as a positive result. If the result is positive, then the school will follow the Serious Misconduct section of the Pupil Behaviour policy and the pupil must expect to be required to leave the school; at the very least, they will be suspended pending a final decision.

Following any test, support for the pupil will be available via the safeguarding and pastoral team.