Ripon Grammar School

Drugs and Drugs Education Policy

1. Introduction

The school's position is firmly against the use of drugs and prohibited substances and the misuse of prescription and non-prescription medicines by students on site or associated with any activity, anywhere, for which the school is responsible. Substance misuse incidents will be dealt with fairly with the well-being, health and safety of the whole school community being paramount as well as acknowledging the pastoral needs of individual pupils. Sanctions will follow the school behaviour policy.

Secondly, the school will aim to give a clear moral and educational lead in warning students of the dangers of use, misuse and experimentation, and do all we can to prevent students from harming themselves and others.

Ripon Grammar School is committed to a safe, supportive environment by implementing a drug policy aligned with the "From harm to hope" 10-year strategy, which balances prevention, early intervention, and safeguarding against exploitation. The approach integrates high-quality PSHCEe education, multi-agency collaboration for student support, and a zero-tolerance stance on substance supply, treating involvement as a critical safeguarding concern. You can read the full "From harm to hope" strategy on the GOV.UK website.

This policy applies to the school buildings and grounds and relates to all people including students, staff, governors, adults, visitors and contractors using the site at any time. It also covers activities with students for which the school is responsible such as trips and off-site events and any form of transport used specifically for school purposes.

2. Policy

The school will:

2.1 Provide education on the dangers of drug use and misuse of medicine to increase student knowledge and understanding and clarify misconceptions about: the short and long term effects and risks of drug use; laws relating to drugs; impact of drugs on individuals, families and communities; prevalence and acceptability of drug use among peers and the complex moral, social, emotional and political issues surrounding drugs.

2.2 Develop students' personal and social skills to make informed decisions and keep themselves safe and healthy by: assessing, avoiding and managing risk; communicating effectively; resisting pressure; finding information, advice and help; devising problem solving and coping strategies; and developing self-awareness and self-esteem.

2.3 Enable students to explore their own and other people's attitudes towards drugs, drug use and drug users, including challenging stereotypes and exploring media and social influences.

2.4 Manage any incidents involving substance abuse safely and in accordance with medical procedures, investigative procedures and with the involvement of outside agencies, including the police, where appropriate.

2.5 Apply the school's sanctions according to the Respectful Relationships and Behaviour Policy if students are found to have used or been in possession of prohibited substances while on the school site or on an associated off site activity.

3. Procedures

3.1 Drug Education

3.1.1 Drug education is part of PSHCEe and also National Curriculum Science and is time-tabled across the year groups. Our programme of study aims to engage pupils in critical thinking, discussing, sharing views and opinions, exploring attitudes and values, researching, reflecting on and applying knowledge and understanding about substance use and misuse. Establishing a safe learning environment and using third-person distancing techniques will be encouraged so that pupils will appreciate that substance use and misuse involves making choices, taking responsibility and predicting or accepting consequences.

3.1.2 Substance misuse education is delivered by teachers, and from time to time with support from partners including the police and health professionals.

3.1.3 We are aware that some pupils and families may have different beliefs and behaviours towards drugs, especially alcohol, and we will take this into account when using materials and during interactive work to ensure that differences of opinions are respected. Resources will be chosen based on the needs of the pupils and the values and ethos of the school.

3.1.4 The teaching programme is drawn up using information from a range of sources such as the Growing Up in North Yorkshire Survey (GUNY) Questionnaire, school pupil voice surveys, PSHCEe surveys of pupil opinion re: topics, national or local data, police and partner agencies.

3.1.5 The tutorial programme will also include a variety of opportunities for pupils to consider drugs-related issues. Discussion will be central to this and its effectiveness will depend upon a relationship of openness and trust between pupils and staff. Whatever information is being considered or issues discussed, it is preferable for the tutor to avoid beginning with a 'closed' approach. It is equally important for the ground rules to include avoidance of personal anecdotes and experiences (by staff and students).

3.1.6 RGS works alongside external contributors to add value and bring to the classroom additional experience, skills or knowledge to the drugs education programme. Where students engaged in risk taking behaviours related to drugs and alcohol require further support, a referral may be made by the school to partner agencies.

3.2 Managing substance-related incidents

3.2.1 The Headmaster and authorised staff have a statutory power to search students or their possessions, without consent, where they have reasonable grounds for suspecting that the student may have a prohibited substance. This will be preferably in front of another adult witness.

3.2.2 Where a prohibited substance is found, staff will take temporary possession of a substance suspected of being an illegal drug for the purpose of protecting a student from harm and to prevent an offence committed in relation to that drug.

3.2.3 Students who are suspected of being under the influence of a prohibited substance will be supervised according to medical guidance, with substances collected, samples retained etc. as appropriate, and parents informed.

3.2.4 Where staff have concerns about a parent or carer and substance misuse the matter will be dealt with as a safeguarding incident and police may be contacted if there is immediate danger/risk.

3.2.5 The headmaster will consider the response to incidents that happen outside the school gate where they: could have repercussions for the orderly running of the school; pose a threat to another student or member of the public; or could adversely affect the reputation of the school.

3.2.6 In all of these circumstances the headmaster will consider whether it is appropriate to notify the local police. If the behaviour is criminal or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police will always be informed. In addition, school staff will consider whether the misbehaviour may be linked to

the child suffering, or being likely to suffer, significant harm. In this case the school staff should follow the school safeguarding policy.

3.2.7 There is no obligation on schools to inform the police about substance-related incidents or to disclose the name of a student involved in a substance related incident on their premises if there is a 'good reason not to'. However, if a student is found in possession of and/or believed to be supplying suspected illegal drugs on the school premises it will be RGS practice to inform the police as a school cannot knowingly allow it premises to be used for 'administering or using a controlled drug, which is unlawfully in a person's possession'.

3.2.8 If police attend an incident at school an appropriate adult will always be present during interviews, e.g. parent/carer, teacher, social worker etc. Every effort will be made by the school to contact parents/carers before their child is interviewed and to invite them to attend immediately unless a professional judgement has been made that to do so may jeopardise the welfare of the student.

3.2.9 If formal action is to be taken against a student, police will normally arrange for the student to attend a local police station with their parents/carers. Only in exceptional circumstances would an arrest be made on school premises. When it has been agreed to record an incident as a crime following discussions with the designated member of staff at the school who manages drug incidents, a detailed record is made by both the school and the officer of the actions taken.

3.2.10 Students found in possession of illegal substances on school premises might not be arrested, but will be assessed, and referred to North Yorkshire Rise or North Yorkshire Horizons, as appropriate, and dealt with through RGS's own disciplinary procedures. RGS will keep a record of any decisions made.

3.2.11 Whilst students have the same rights to confidentiality as adults, no student will be guaranteed absolute confidentiality. Staff will report any information or disclosure which raises concern that a child or children may be at risk of significant harm to the school's senior member of staff, with designated responsibility for safeguarding. The Designated person will then, in line with the school's Safeguarding Policy and procedures, take action as appropriate. Students will be informed about the remit of confidentiality and that teachers cannot offer or guarantee students unconditional confidentiality.

4. Responsibilities

4.1 **Governors:** Are responsible for the approval of this policy, ensuring it is disseminated to the wider school community and for reviewing the effectiveness of the policy. This includes ensuring the statutory requirements of Keeping Children Safe in Education (Sep 2026) and other safeguarding responsibilities are being meet.

4.2 **Headmaster:** Has responsibility for the day-to-day management of all aspects of the school's work, including teaching and learning. The Headmaster's responsibilities in respect of prohibited substances are to: support the Governors to comply with the substance misuse aspects of the Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2026 documentation; provide a safe place of work for all staff and students and as such take responsibility for this policy, its implementation, and for liaison with the governing body, parents, LA and appropriate outside agencies; keep the governing body fully informed of provision, issues and progress around substance issues; liaise with the PSHCEe subject lead to ensure the effective delivery of the substance misuse education within the curriculum is being monitored; act upon any concerns which may arise from students' substance misuse behaviours.

4.3 **Senior Leadership Team (SLT)**: Ensure a consistent approach to managing a substance misuse incident, members of the senior leadership team will manage any substance misuse incident that happen on or off the school site. These members of staff have access to appropriate training to support their role and can liaise with North Yorkshire Rise who provide substance misuse support for pupils aged 10 upwards in North Yorkshire. All substance misuse incidents will be logged and monitored and consideration given to any updates in whole school provision, curriculum and staff training.

4.4 **All Staff:** Substance misuse is a whole school issue. All staff, both teaching and non-teaching, are aware of the policy and how it relates to them should they be called upon to deal with a substance misuse related incident. This includes lunchtime supervisors, caretaker and cleaning staff. New staff are made aware of the policy and procedures. The caretakers and cleaners regularly check the school premises – any substances or

paraphernalia found will be recorded and reported to the designated member of the SLT and dealt with in accordance with this policy.

Staff training needs around substances are assessed as part of a training plan for staff, especially in relation to safeguarding. Additional training needs for those staff contributing to substance misuse education in the curriculum should be made known to the PSHCEe subject lead. Staff should have access to continuing professional development opportunities to ensure they can deliver effective substance misuse education and it should be outlined how this learning will be cascaded to others.

4.5 **PSHCEe subject lead:** Is responsible for all aspects of the subject including education on substances ensuring the implementation and quality of a the scheme of work for PSHCEe that incorporates education on substances; that all staff are confident in the skills to teach and discuss issues related to substances; consult with students to inform provision around education on substances, including using the school's Growing up in North Yorkshire survey results; access appropriate regular training, regularly monitor the curriculum organisation, planning and resources across the school, ensure procedures are in place for assessment, monitoring and evaluation of the education on substances, liaise with any service provision to effectively support aspects of the education on substances

4.6 The Deputy Head [Pastoral]: Will be responsible for monitoring the provision of drug education in liaison with the PSHCEe Co-ordinator and for reporting the results to the Senior Leadership Team and, via the Headmaster, to the Governors Curriculum Committee. The PSHCEe Co-ordinator is responsible for evaluating the programme of work and reporting the findings on an annual basis and for making recommendations for changes to the programme.

4.7 Students: Are not allowed to use substances at school or whilst engaged in any off-site activity representing the school, for example during any educational visits, trips abroad and work experience. Students should not use substances whilst travelling to or from School when in RGS school uniform. Students should be asked to contribute to the review of the substance misuse policy through feedback about the education provided and if it is meeting their needs

4.8 Parents / carers: Evidence shows parents are one of the single biggest influences on young people's substance behaviours, but parents state they lack knowledge and confidence about substances. Parents also appear unsure about where their responsibilities as educators stop and the school's responsibilities begin. Many parents can be unaware that schools undertake to educate their children about substances. Parents need to be informed about and encouraged to support the school's education on substances and have access to this policy and the school's PSHCEe curriculum on the school website. The school plays its part in ensuring that parents have up-to-date information regarding substances such as signposting to support through the school website. Parents have the right to be informed of any incident that could result in potential harm to their child. This can be a very sensitive issue for parents, and therefore, it will be handled with care and consideration. Medicines may be authorised to be brought on site by students or their parents/carers, but only by prior and recorded arrangement.

Policy Reviewed: September 2026

Appendix 1

Definition and terminology

Because people have different perceptions and understanding when they hear the word "substances" it is necessary to be clear about what the school means by substances. Clarification can reduce the risk of misunderstanding and concern about dealing with a sensitive issue, especially with younger children.

A suggested definition of prohibited substances is:

- All illegal drugs - those controlled by the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 which now includes novel psychoactive substances (previously known as legal highs)
- All legal drugs including alcohol, tobacco / e-cigarettes (vapes), volatile substances, alkyl nitrites (poppers)
- All over the counter and prescription medicines (misuse of).
  It is recognised that there is no such thing as a safe substance and any substance use has associated risks and benefits.

For simplicity this guidance refers to:

- 'substance use' as the use of any drug legal or otherwise
- 'substance misuse' as drug use which leads or has led to a student experiencing social, psychological, physical or legal problems related to intoxication or regular excessive consumption and/or dependence upon their drug(s) of choice
- 'problematic substance misuse' is where the individual has little control over their behaviour, they are frequently and regularly under the influence of a substance and they present as a problem for themselves or the environment in which they exist.

The guidance refers to substance misuse incidents as situations or specific events involving a suspected or proven drug in unauthorised possession or use by anyone covered by this policy, which includes adults as well as students, in any situation for which the school is ultimately responsible.

Appendix 2

Support Services

Healthy Child Services

The Healthy Child service links health, education and social care to improve the health of all children aged five to 19. It plays an important role by working with school and families to address the health needs of children and young people. They work with parents, carers, teaching staff and other agencies to give confidential health advice and support to children, young people and families. For further information including up to date referral contact details and forms please go to Healthy child service | North Yorkshire Council

North Yorkshire Rise

NY Rise is a young person's drug and alcohol recovery service delivering targeted prevention, early intervention and specialist substance use support to young people. They prevent escalation of drug and alcohol-related risk and harm for young people, and help them to avoid becoming dependent adults. The service is free, friendly and confidential.
NY Rise can help with:
Structured support to stop or reduce drug or alcohol use, support to improve health and wellbeing (including sexual health support and smoking cessation), education and advice about drugs and alcohol, support family members of young people working with NY Rise and offer onward referrals when needed, support people with special education needs and disabilities (SEND) and people worried about someone with SEND who needs support with drugs and/or alcohol use.

This service is for people who need support with their own or someone else's drug and/or alcohol use and young people aged 10-25 with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)
NY Rise - Waythrough
Alcohol, smoking, vaping and substance misuse > Healthy Schools North Yorkshire

The following websites provide supporting information for parents / carers to enable them to access information about a range of substances but also information about how to talk to their children about these important issues.

Talk To Frank *www.**talktofrank**.com*	Information on a range of substances both legal and illegal Information on how to talk to your child about these issues
Drinkaware https://www.drinkaware.co.uk/	Raising awareness and providing information about alcohol, health issues, legislation and drinking Has a specific section aimed at parents / carers about how to talk to your child about alcohol – including a short film
The Drink Drug Hub Providing Information & Support for Drink & Drugs - Drink Drug Hub	Information for young people and their families about drug misuse. Useful resources to share with children about the dangers of drug use.
NotMyChild NotMyChild - York & North Yorkshire Office for Policing, Fire, Crime and Commissioning	Advice to parents about the value of having early and positive conversations with their children about drugs and other substances to help prevent them from coming to harm.

Appendix 3

References

- Updated January 2019, North Yorkshire guidance on developing a substance misuse policy for schools, PRU's and settings
- 2017 Drug Strategy, Home Office https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/drug-strategy-2017
- Drug Advice for Schools from the Department for Education and the Association of Chief Police Officers (2012). https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/drugs-advice-for-schools
- Screening, searching and confiscation. Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies (DfE updated July 2023) https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/searching-screening-and-confiscation
- Police in the Classroom – A handbook for police and PSHE teachers. PSHE association and National Police Chief Council Police in the classroom

- Reviewing your drug and alcohol policy – a toolkit for schools. Mentor UK (2012) Mentor_Reviewing_your_drug_and_alcohol_policy_a_toolkit_for_schools.pdf