



CCG Drugs, Alcohol, Substance Misuse and Possession of Weapons Policy

Introduction

Chichester College Group (hereafter referred to as the Group) aims to provide students with the knowledge, attitude, and skills to be able to make an informed decision about drugs, alcohol, illegal substances, and weapons through a combination of education and prevention.

The Group acknowledges that a positive ethos helps students to feel valued and part of the Group community. In so doing, it helps to foster positive self-images, which may help students to cope better in situations involving drugs, alcohol, substance use or the possession/use of weapons.

The Group is committed to the welfare and health and safety of all its students and will take action to safeguard their well-being. The Group also recognises, however, that people may take risks from time to time, and that for some, misusing drugs, alcohol, and substances is one of these risks.

The Group is committed to an equality of opportunity that is intended to be an integral part of college life. The aim is to create an environment in which people treat each other with mutual respect regardless of age, race, colour, gender, marital status, disability, religion, or sexual orientation.

Scope

This procedure applies to all students.
This policy should be read in conjunction with:

Care, Support and Medicines Policy
IT Security Policy
Acceptable Use Policy
Freedom of Speech and Guest Speaker Policy
Data Protection Policy
Whistleblowing Policy & Procedure
Positive Behaviour Management (including fitness to study)
CCG Safeguarding Students, Apprentices, Higher Education and Adults at Risk

Overview and Policy Details

Products containing CBD or other substances with psychoactive effects are prohibited unless they are lawfully prescribed or legitimately supplied for medical use.

In accordance with current legislation and national policy developments, the use, possession or supply of vape products by students under the age of 18 on college premises is prohibited. The College reserves the right to prohibit specific products, including disposable vapes, in line with evolving legislation and public health guidance.



Cannabis, cannabis-derived vaping products (including THC-containing substances), and synthetic cannabinoids (e.g. “Spice”) are prohibited. These substances are controlled under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, and their possession, supply or production is unlawful.

Occasionally, incidents arise where a student’s use of drugs, alcohol or other substances outside of the Group impacts their behaviour, safety or wellbeing on site or during Group-organised activities. The same applies where a student is found to be in possession of a weapon either on or off site where it affects the safety or good order of the Group.

This policy provides a clear framework to:

- enable staff to respond appropriately and lawfully
- ensure consistency in decision-making
- clarify expectations to students
- ensure safeguarding and welfare are central to all responses

The Group prohibits the possession, use, supply or production of illegal drugs on its premises or during any Group activity, in accordance with the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971.

For the purposes of this policy:

- “Illegal drugs” refers to controlled drugs as defined by the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971
- This includes substances that are not prescribed to the individual or are misused outside of medical guidance

The Group also prohibits:

- drug paraphernalia (e.g. grinders, pipes, bongs, vaping devices used for illegal substances)
- psychoactive substances intended to produce a “high” where these pose a risk to health, behaviour or safety

Legal Context

The Group is committed to reducing harm associated with the use of drugs, alcohol and other substances and to maintaining a safe and supportive environment for all students and staff on site and during Group-organised activities.

The Group does not endorse the use of illegal drugs or the misuse of alcohol or other substances. The possession, use, supply or production of illegal drugs or prohibited substances on Group premises or during Group activities is prohibited.



The Group also prohibits the possession of drug-related paraphernalia, including but not limited to items used to prepare, use or conceal drugs (e.g. grinders, pipes, bongs or devices adapted for drug use), where these are associated with misuse or illegal activity.

This policy is intended to ensure that the Group responds to drug, alcohol and substance misuse, and the possession of weapons

in a way that is:

- lawful and consistent
- proportionate to risk
- informed by safeguarding responsibilities

All students will be treated fairly, consistently and without discrimination, while recognising the seriousness and, in some cases, criminal nature of the behaviour.

Response to Incidents

All concerns or incidents relating to drugs, alcohol or substance misuse will be managed through the Group's Positive Behaviour and Safeguarding Procedures.

The police will be involved where necessary, particularly where there is:

- a risk of harm to the student or others
- suspected criminal activity (e.g. possession of controlled drugs or weapons)
- concerns relating to supply or exploitation

Where a member of staff confiscates a suspected illegal drug, this should be done only where it is reasonable and safe to do so, and the item must be passed to the safeguarding team as soon as reasonably practicable.

Legal Framework

Under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, it is an offence to possess, supply or produce controlled drugs without lawful authority.

Medical Use and Prescribed Medication

This policy does not prevent the legitimate use of medication prescribed for medical conditions, where used in accordance with the Group's Care, Support and Medicines Policy.

Staff Conduct

Where concerns relate to a member of staff, these will be managed under the Group's employment policies and procedures and may constitute gross misconduct where appropriate.

Education, Intervention and Referral

The Group will provide targeted education and awareness on the risks associated with drugs, alcohol and substance misuse, including cannabis vapes, THC products and synthetic cannabinoids



(e.g. Spice). The Group will also ensure a consistent and lawful approach to the possession of weapons.

Students who are required to use tools (including knives) as part of their course must store these securely when not in use.

Education Activities

Awareness is promoted through events and initiatives designed to educate students on the risks and impacts of substance misuse.

Intervention and Support

The Group recognises that substance misuse may impact a student's academic progress, physical health and mental wellbeing, and may present risks to others. Where concerns arise, a safeguarding-led response will be taken to ensure appropriate support and guidance.

Students can access support through:

- Pastoral Support Tutors
- Counselling services
- Wellbeing/Safeguarding teams
- External substance misuse services

Staff Response and Referral

Staff who have concerns should seek advice from relevant support services within the Group.

Where appropriate, a multi-agency or case conference approach may be used to assess risk and agree support strategies.

Students will be involved in discussions wherever possible, and parents/guardians/carers may be included with the student's consent, where appropriate.

Disruptive or Dangerous Behaviour

The use of drugs, alcohol or other substances can significantly affect an individual's judgement, behaviour and safety.

Where a student is suspected to be under the influence of drugs, alcohol or substances, the CCSO, Duty Safeguarding Officer, Head of Learning or Teaching and Learning Manager must be informed immediately.

A safeguarding-led response must be taken which prioritises the student's safety and wellbeing.

This may include:

- assessing the student's condition and immediate risk
- ensuring the student is supervised and safe
- arranging for the student to leave site safely where appropriate

For students under 18, parents/guardians/carers must be contacted as soon as reasonably practicable and asked to collect the student where necessary.



Where the student resides in Group accommodation, the Accommodation Team and Duty Safeguarding Officer must be informed to ensure appropriate support and safety planning.

The police may be contacted where there are concerns about illegal activity, possession of controlled drugs or weapons, or where there is an immediate risk of harm.

The Group's Positive Behaviour Management Procedure will be applied as appropriate, alongside safeguarding processes.

Where staff have reasonable grounds to suspect that a student is in possession of:

- illegal drugs
- alcohol (where prohibited)
- drug paraphernalia
- a weapon

they must act in accordance with the Group's behaviour and safeguarding policies, informed by relevant statutory guidance.

Staff must:

- report concerns as soon as possible to a designated senior member of staff (Head of Learning, Teaching and Learning Manager, CCSO or Duty Safeguarding Officer)
- support the assessment of risk and next steps

A decision will then be made by an authorised member of staff as to whether a search is required.

Any search must be conducted in accordance with DfE 'Searching, Screening and Confiscation' guidance and the procedures set out in Appendix A.



College Accommodation

All accommodation contracts and terms and conditions make clear that the possession or use of illegal substances, psychoactive substances, drug paraphernalia, or weapons is prohibited within Group accommodation.

Where such concerns arise, the procedures outlined in Appendix A will be followed.

Response and Confiscation

During weekends and outside normal working hours, the Duty Supervisor and a second member of the accommodation team will manage incidents.

Where appropriate and safe to do so, staff may:

- confiscate prohibited or suspected illegal items, and
- secure them safely until they can be handed to the safeguarding team and/or police as soon as reasonably practicable

All actions must be proportionate, risk-assessed, and prioritise student safety.

Safeguarding and Escalation

Concerns relating to substance misuse or possession of weapons must be treated as safeguarding issues.

The on-call Officer must be informed. Action may include:

- contacting parents/carers/agent for students under 18 as soon as reasonably practicable
- involving the police where there is suspected criminal activity or risk of harm
- implementing appropriate support and risk management measures

Behaviour and Residency

Breaches may result in action under the Group's Positive Behaviour Management Procedure, which may include termination of the residency agreement, where this is necessary and proportionate. This applies to all students, regardless of age.

Alcohol

Students aged 18 and over may possess alcohol in accommodation only where this is in line with Group rules and expectations, and where it does not result in:

- unsafe behaviour
- disruption
- risk to others

Host Families



Host families must report any concerns regarding a student's possession or use of substances, paraphernalia, or weapons, or where a student appears to be under the influence. The Accommodation team will respond in line with safeguarding and behaviour procedures, including police involvement where appropriate.

Room Searches

Authorised staff, including Hall Supervisors, may carry out room searches where there are reasonable grounds for concern, in accordance with:

- Group policy, and
- relevant legislation and DfE guidance

Searches must be:

- lawful, proportionate and justified
- conducted with due regard to privacy and dignity
- recorded in line with safeguarding procedures



Possession of Weapons - Legislation

The following legislation is relevant to the College's powers to search for weapons and to use reasonable force:

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 (Section 165) inserts Section 85C into the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 and provides staff at Further Education institutions with the power to use reasonable force where necessary. This includes preventing a student from committing an offence, causing injury, damaging property, or prejudicing good order and discipline.

The Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006 (Section 46) provides a power for principals and authorised staff in Further Education institutions to search students for weapons without consent, where there are reasonable grounds for suspicion. Reasonable force may be used where necessary to carry out such a search.

The Offensive Weapons Act 1996 (Section 4) (which inserts Section 139A into the Criminal Justice Act 1988) makes it an offence to possess an article with a blade or point, or an offensive weapon, on school or college premises. A defence may apply where there is a good reason or lawful authority, including use for work, educational purposes, religious reasons, or as part of a national costume.

These powers should be exercised in accordance with relevant statutory guidance, including Searching, Screening and Confiscation, and the College's behaviour and safeguarding policies.

Consequences

Following a breach or suspected breach, where there are reasonable grounds to believe that a student is in possession of, or under the influence of, illegal substances, alcohol, drug paraphernalia or a weapon, the College will respond in line with its Behaviour and Safeguarding policies, informed by relevant legislation including the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 and other applicable law.

The following actions may be taken:

- Progression to Stage 4 of the Positive Behaviour Management process, where appropriate
- Temporary exclusion from College pending a Stage 4 meeting
- Parents/guardians will be informed where the student is under 18
- The police may be informed where appropriate



Following the Stage 4 meeting, one or more of the following actions may be implemented:

- Agreed targets and conditions for the student to remain in College
- Support from internal College services
- Referral to appropriate external agencies
- A Stage 4 review period
- Permanent exclusion, where necessary and proportionate

Policy review area	HR, Students, Teaching, Learning & Quality, HE, Governance, Finance, H&S, Commercial and International, Information & Funding, IT, Information Management, Sales, Marketing & Comms, Estates & Facilities
Lead Manager/Owner	Director of Safeguarding
Approval level	Group Leadership Team/Corporation
Approval date	September 2025
Review cycle	Every two years
Next review	September 2027



Appendix A - Student Search Record

Student Search Record		
Student name:	Date:	Time:
Location: (including room number if Halls of Residence)		
Name(s) of staff involved in search:		
Details of student (s) who are being searched: Student agreed to voluntary search <input type="checkbox"/> Student refused voluntary search <input type="checkbox"/>		
Student ID No:	Course:	
Reason for search: Suspicion of use of drugs/alcohol <input type="checkbox"/> Suspicion of being in possession of a weapon <input type="checkbox"/> Suspicion of being in possession of stolen items <input type="checkbox"/> Suspicion of being in possession of pornographic images <input type="checkbox"/> Suspicion of being in possession of drugs/alcohol <input type="checkbox"/>		
Details of suspicion: (description of what has led to the search)		
Details of what was found:		
Date and time given to Safeguarding team:		
Signature(s) of staff involved:	Signature of Student:	
Parent/guardian/agent contacted - Yes/No		



Prompts for Student Search

Searches may be conducted for prohibited items as defined in Section 550ZA of the Education Act 1996 and DfE guidance.

These include:

- Knives or weapons
- Alcohol
- Illegal drugs
- Stolen items
- Pornographic images

Any item that the member of staff reasonably suspect has been, or is likely to be, used:

- to commit an offence, or
- to cause person injury to, or
- to damage property.

Before a Search

The authorised member of staff must have reasonable grounds to suspect that the student is in possession of a prohibited item.

Before conducting a search, the staff member must:

Explain clearly to the student:

- the reason for the search
- what is being searched for
- how, where, and when the search will take place
- Give the student an opportunity to ask questions
- Inform the student if body-worn video equipment is in use

Staff should seek the student's co-operation and, where appropriate, obtain consent (searches may be carried out without consent, but co-operation should still be sought).

If the student refuses:

- Staff should explain the consequences and next steps in line with the Positive Behaviour Policy
- Consider whether the search can lawfully proceed without consent (for prohibited items)



- Parents/Guardians/Carers should be informed as soon as reasonably practicable following the decision to search or refusal
- The police must be contacted where there is a suspected weapon or illegal item requiring police involvement
-

If a student appears under the influence of drugs or alcohol:

- Appropriate safeguarding action must be taken
- Parents/Guardians/Carers should be contacted
- The response should prioritise student safety rather than automatic removal from site

During a Search

Searches must be conducted in line with the following legal requirements:

- The searching staff member must be the same sex as the student, and
- There must be a second member of staff present as a witness

Exception

A search may be conducted by a member of the opposite sex and/or without a witness only where the staff member reasonably believes there is a risk of serious harm if the search is not carried out immediately and where it is not reasonably practicable to meet the usual requirements.

Transgender/Non-binary Students

- The search must be conducted in a manner that respects the dignity, privacy, and safeguarding needs of the student
- Decisions should be made on a case-by-case basis, balancing safety, legal requirements, and the student's needs
- Wherever possible, the student's views should be considered, but staff must ensure compliance with safeguarding and statutory guidance

Location of Search

- Must take place in a suitable, private area, out of sight of other students
- Must be on college premises or where staff have lawful control of the student (e.g. educational visits)

Extent of the Search

Staff may:

- Ask the student to hand over the item(s) voluntarily



- Ask if the student has any other items

Staff may search outer clothing only, defined as clothing not worn next to the skin (e.g. coat, jacket, hat, gloves, scarf, shoes)

Staff must not require removal of clothing next to the skin

Staff may also search:

- Bags
- Lockers
- Desks
- Personal possessions (with consent, unless searching for prohibited items where legal powers apply)

Parental Communication

- Parents/carers should be informed as soon as reasonably practicable after a search has taken place
- Advance notification is not required and should not delay necessary searches

After a Search:

A written record must be made for every search, whether or not an item is found (best practice strongly recommended in DfE guidance)

- The Student Search Record form must be completed and submitted via the safeguarding system
- A cause for concern must be raised for the student/s involved

Items Found

Prohibited or illegal items must be:

- confiscated
- stored securely
- passed to the police as soon as reasonably practicable where appropriate
- Other items may be confiscated and dealt with in line with the Positive Behaviour Policy



Appendix B - Sikh Kirpan Guidance

The carrying of bladed articles on college premises is governed by criminal law. Under the Criminal Justice Act 1988 (section 139A), as amended by the Offensive Weapons Act 1996 and subsequent legislation, it is an offence to possess an article with a blade or point on educational premises.

However, there is a specific legal defence where the article is carried for religious reasons, including the wearing of the Sikh Kirpan.

The Equality Act 2010 protects individuals from discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief. This includes the right of Sikh individuals to wear the Five Ks, which are articles of faith:

- Kesh (uncut hair)
- Kangha (comb)
- Kara (steel wristband)
- Kaccha (short trousers)
- Kirpan (ceremonial sword)

The Group recognises the religious and cultural significance of the Kirpan and will support students and staff in practising their faith, while ensuring safety within the college environment.

Approach and Expectations

Students and staff may wear a Kirpan as part of their religious observance. The Group will take a proportionate and risk-assessed approach, balancing:

- the individual's rights under the Equality Act 2010, and
- the Group's duty to maintain a safe environment

Staff should be aware of this guidance and respond with sensitivity, respect and consistency.

Practical Safety Considerations

Where a Kirpan is worn:

- it should be sheathed and secured appropriately
- it should be worn discreetly where possible
- it should not be used in any way that may cause harm or alarm

There is no legal requirement to impose specific size limits, but the Group may take a proportionate view where size presents a demonstrable safety risk.



Safeguarding and Risk Management

The Group will undertake risk assessments where necessary, particularly in:

- practical or workshop environments
- sports activities
- situations where there may be an increased risk of injury

In these circumstances:

- alternative arrangements may be agreed (e.g. temporary safe storage)
- decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis, in consultation with the individual