Happy in His loving care

St Augustine Webster Catholic Voluntary Academy
Drugs Policy

Date Agreed By Governors	September 2026
Next Review	September 2027 or sooner if guidance or provision changes
Policy Holder	Head teacher

Mission Statement
We consider ourselves a big happy family that is welcoming, caring and successful. Our school is a place where we show mutual respect, understanding and tolerance of all people in the world, and where we take responsibility for our actions. It is a place where self-belief and confidence are nurtured but, most of all, a place where we live out our virtues and keep Christ at the centre of everything we do.
We are Happy in His Loving Care.

Purpose
St Augustine Webster Catholic Voluntary Academy is committed to keeping pupils, staff and visitors safe and to helping pupils make healthy, informed choices. Unauthorised drugs, alcohol, tobacco, vapes and other harmful substances are not permitted on the school site, during school activities or while pupils are representing the school. Any concern will be handled calmly, fairly and with the pupil's welfare and safeguarding needs at the centre of the response.

This policy explains the school's approach to education, prevention, possession, use, supply and drug-related incidents. It should be read with the Behaviour Policy, Child Protection Policy and the Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy. It has regard to current Department for Education guidance on drugs, searching and confiscation, behaviour, suspensions and permanent exclusions, and statutory Relationships Education and Health Education guidance.

Meaning of Drugs
In this policy, drugs include:

- controlled and illegal drugs, including substances represented or believed to be illegal drugs
- alcohol, tobacco, cigarettes, nicotine products and vapes, whether or not they contain nicotine
- new psychoactive substances, solvents, aerosols and other volatile or intoxicating substances
- prescription and non-prescription medicines when possessed, supplied or used without authority or contrary to agreed arrangements.

Medicines held or administered under the school's agreed medical procedures, including school-held paracetamol, are not treated as a drug incident unless they are misused, shared, taken without authority or otherwise create a concern.

Aims
- provide accurate, age-appropriate education about medicines, alcohol, tobacco, vaping and illegal drugs
- reduce harm and prevent possession, use or supply of unauthorised substances
- give staff a clear and safe procedure for responding to concerns and emergencies
- identify safeguarding, health or pastoral needs and provide or seek appropriate support
- respond consistently while considering the circumstances and needs of the individual pupil.

Roles and Responsibilities

Academy Trust and Local Governing Body
- will ensure that an appropriate policy, resources and oversight arrangements are in place
- will receive proportionate information about implementation, patterns of concern and action taken, without unnecessary personal information.

Headteacher

- has overall responsibility for implementing this policy and deciding the school response to significant incidents
- will ensure staff understand the policy and receive suitable information or training
- will determine whether police or other services should be involved and whether action is required under another school policy.

Designated Safeguarding Lead

- will advise on safeguarding action, referrals, early help and support for pupils and families
- will ensure that relevant concerns and decisions are recorded and shared lawfully with those who need to know.

All Staff

- must place immediate safety first, report concerns promptly and follow this policy
- must not investigate beyond their role, make promises of confidentiality, taste or deliberately smell an unknown substance, or place themselves at avoidable risk.

Drug Education and Prevention

Drug education forms part of the school's planned Relationships Education, Health Education, science and wider personal development curriculum. Teaching will be factual, age appropriate and sensitive to pupils' different experiences. It will help pupils understand the safe use of medicines; the risks of alcohol, tobacco, vaping, solvents and illegal drugs; the law; peer influence; and how to seek help. Staff will use approved resources and will not glamorise, frighten or invite inappropriate personal disclosure. Any disclosure or safeguarding concern arising in a lesson will be followed up under the Child Protection Policy.

The school will support prevention through clear expectations, staff vigilance, safe storage of medicines and hazardous substances, appropriate supervision, pastoral support and work with parents and relevant services.

Managing Medicines and Hazardous Substances

Prescription and non-prescription medicines will be brought into, stored and administered in school only under the Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy. They must not be carried, shared or taken by pupils unless this has been specifically agreed. Emergency medicines will remain readily accessible in accordance with the pupil's healthcare arrangements. Cleaning products, solvents, aerosols and other hazardous materials will be stored securely and used under appropriate supervision. The school site is smoke-free and vape-free. Staff, pupils and visitors must not smoke or vape on the site or during school activities.

Responding to a Suspected Drug Incident

The member of staff will remain calm, obtain help and take the following proportionate steps:

- protect pupils and others from immediate danger and move other pupils away where necessary
- request first aid and call 999 where a person is unconscious, has difficulty breathing, has a seizure, is severely confused or distressed, has chest pain, has taken an unknown substance, or staff otherwise believe there is an urgent risk
- place an unconscious person who is breathing in the recovery position, monitor them and follow the emergency operator's instructions; do not leave them alone or make them vomit
- inform the Headteacher and K Matthews as soon as possible
- preserve any substance or associated item safely without unnecessary handling
- record what was seen, heard, found and done, including times and the people present.

If there is uncertainty about a person's condition, staff will seek urgent medical advice. Parents will normally be informed promptly, but this may be delayed where doing so could increase a safeguarding risk or interfere with police action. Medical information available at the scene will be given to ambulance staff.

Searching Pupils and Their Possessions

Searching will be carried out only in accordance with current Department for Education guidance and the school's Behaviour Policy. Staff should not conduct an informal personal search simply because they suspect a pupil may have a substance. The Headteacher, or a member of staff authorised by the Headteacher, may search a pupil without consent only where the legal conditions are met. This includes reasonable grounds to suspect that the pupil has a prohibited item, such as an illegal drug, or an item identified in the Behaviour Policy as searchable under the school rules.

Before a search, the authorised member of staff will consider the pupil's age, communication needs, SEND, safeguarding history and any risk of harm. The pupil will be told why the search is taking place and how it will be carried out. The statutory

requirements concerning the sex of the searcher, witnesses, location, clothing and searches of possessions will be followed. Any exception because of an immediate risk of serious harm will be recorded. Parents will be informed where required by the guidance.

Confiscation Handling and Disposal

- A suspected controlled drug will be secured promptly, with handling kept to a minimum. Where practicable, two members of staff will witness its transfer into a sealed container and record the date, time, place, description and those present.
- The school will normally deliver suspected controlled drugs to the police as soon as reasonably practicable. It will follow police advice and current statutory guidance on lawful disposal.
- Alcohol, tobacco, cigarettes, vapes, unauthorised medicines and other items may be retained, returned to a parent, passed to the police or disposed of safely, depending on the item, the law and the circumstances. They will not be returned to a pupil.
- Unknown substances will not be tasted, deliberately smelled or tested by staff. Needles or sharps will not be picked up by hand and will be dealt with using the school's sharps procedure and equipment.
- All confiscation, transfer, return or disposal decisions will be recorded.

Investigation and School Response

The Headteacher will arrange a fair and proportionate investigation. Pupils will be given an opportunity to explain what happened. Staff will distinguish between possession, use, supply, coercion, exploitation, accidental contact and a medical or safeguarding need. Relevant evidence will be recorded, and information will be shared only where necessary.

The response may include education, pastoral work, parent involvement, a risk assessment, early help, specialist support and a sanction under the Behaviour Policy. The school will consider age, intent, vulnerability, SEND, previous incidents, the substance, risk to others and any evidence of supply or exploitation. Only the Headteacher may suspend or permanently exclude, in accordance with current statutory guidance. Permanent exclusion is reserved for a serious or persistent breach where continued attendance would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupil or others.

Police and Other Agencies

The Headteacher will decide whether to involve the police, except where an emergency requires any member of staff to call 999. Police involvement will be considered for suspected illegal possession or supply, exploitation, weapons, violence or other significant risk. The school will continue to meet its safeguarding duties. A police decision not to act does not prevent an appropriate school response on the balance of probabilities.

Safeguarding and Support

Drug-related behaviour may indicate abuse, neglect, exploitation, peer pressure, family difficulty, mental ill health or another unmet need. K Matthews will consider early help, children's social care or specialist support. Pupils affected by another person's drug use will also be supported. Information will be recorded on CPOMS and managed under the Child Protection Policy and data-protection requirements.

Parents and Carers

Parents and carers will normally be informed when their child is involved. If a parent or carer appears intoxicated when collecting a child, staff will not release the child where this would create a risk. A senior leader and K Matthews will seek a safe alternative and contact children's social care or the police where necessary.

Staff Visitors and Contractors

A concern that an adult on site is impaired or has an unauthorised substance will be reported immediately to the Headteacher or senior leader. Pupils will be protected and, where this can be done safely, the person will be prevented from driving or carrying out safety-critical duties. Emergency services or police will be contacted where required. Staff concerns will be managed under safeguarding, conduct and disciplinary procedures, with Trust or designated officer advice where appropriate.

Recording Confidentiality and Review

Drug incidents, searches, confiscation, medical action, parent contact, referrals and decisions will be recorded promptly and factually. Records will be stored securely and shared on a need-to-know basis. The Headteacher will monitor incidents for patterns, equality considerations and lessons learned. Governors will receive proportionate assurance. This policy will be reviewed annually and sooner following a significant incident or relevant change in law or guidance.

Key Guidance

Department for Education Drugs advice for schools and Searching screening and confiscation in schools

Department for Education Behaviour in schools and statutory suspension and permanent exclusion guidance
Department for Education statutory Relationships Education and Health Education guidance
Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
Misuse of Drugs Act 1971.

Policy Revisions Since the Previous Policy
Updated the policy to September 2026, refreshed the guidance, scope of DSL clarified, curriculum and authorised medicines link.
Corrected the procedures for authorised searches, confiscation, controlled-drug transfer, sharps and police involvement.
Strengthened emergency action, safeguarding, pupil support, adult intoxication arrangements and proportionate sanctions