



St Bede's

Catholic School
& Sixth Form College

STATEMENT OF POLICY ON SUBSTANCE USE AND MISUSE

Governing Body Approval : School Staffing and Standards Committee	
Name: Mrs J Leech (COG)	Signature:
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At St. Bede's we aim to serve our community by providing high quality education in a Catholic context. We are a comprehensive school guaranteeing equal opportunities, a responsive curriculum and a supportive community.

The School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

The Policy on Substance Use and Misuse for St Bede's Catholic School and Sixth Form College (hereafter the drugs policy) covers the two key elements, educational entitlement and the management of drug related incidents.

This policy was developed by St Bede's Catholic School and Sixth Form College in consultation with the Governing Body. This policy has links with the following school policies: Health and Safety, Administration of Medicines; Discipline and Pupil Behaviour, Safeguarding and Confidentiality. This policy has due regard to the Government guidelines summarised in Appendix 1.

Drugs Statement

It is an offence under Section 8 of the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 for the management of establishments (this includes schools) to knowingly permit the supply or production of any illegal drugs on their premises. It is also an offence to allow premises to be used for the smoking of cannabis or other drugs.

This policy reflects local and national aims and priorities expressed within the Government three year drug strategy "Drugs: Protecting Families and Communities 2008 – 2011" (2008) the Government strategy on Alcohol, "Safe, Sensible and Social" (2007). It also incorporates the key messages contained in DfE and ACPO drug advice for schools (DfE/00001-2012).

To whom does the policy apply?

This policy applies to all of the following people when they are on the school premises: pupils, staff, parents/carers and visitors. Breaches of this policy by any of those mentioned will be dealt with by the Headteacher/Governing Body. This policy also applies to pupils and staff when off-site on educational visits or whilst on the way to and from school, this includes all educational visits, including those abroad.

Although the school is not responsible for pupils travelling to and from school, we will work with parents and/or other agencies should any problems be identified. The school is responsible for pupils during break and lunchtimes (except when it has been agreed by parents/carers that children will travel home for lunch) and this policy applies during these times. It also affects the use of school premises after normal school hours. Organisers of any after school events should be made aware of the policy and their responsibility to implement it.

Definition of a drug.

For the purpose of this policy the following definition of a drug will apply:

“A substance people take to change the way they feel, think or behave.”

This broad definition allows for the inclusion of all medication (see schools Medication Policy), legal/illegal drugs (including ALCOHOL and TOBACCO, LEGAL HIGHS and E CIGARETTES, also known as psychoactive substances) volatile substances and all over the counter and prescription medicines.

Overall Aims of the Policy

- To provide a framework for effective drug education.
- To provide systems for dealing with drug related incidents within the school environment.
- To ensure that the school’s drug education programme reflects the aims and values of the school and its governing body.

Roles and responsibilities

Governing Body

As part of their general responsibilities for the management of the school, the Governors have agreed this policy. They will continue their involvement through regular evaluation of it.

Headteacher

The Headteacher takes overall responsibility for providing a safe place of work for all staff and pupils and as such takes responsibility for this policy, its implementation and for liaison with the Governing Body, parents/carers, Diocese, LA and appropriate outside agencies in the event of a drug-related incident. Pupils who are suspected of being at risk from drugs will be supported and monitored with assistance from relevant agencies such as Children’s Services, Child Protection Officers and Police.

Safeguarding Leads and PSHE Co-ordinator

The above named people with the Headteacher have a general responsibility for supporting other members of staff in the implementation of this policy. They will provide a lead in the dissemination of information relating to drug education. They are responsible for identifying and providing good quality resources and in service training.

The Headteacher or in his absence, the Director of Student Support, is the first point of contact for advice/support in dealing with a drug-related incident.

Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are encouraged to support the school’s drug education programme. They are responsible for ensuring that guidelines relating to medication in school are followed (see Health and Safety, Administration of Medicines Policy).

Parents/carers 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. The Headteacher will consider if there are any special circumstances, which may temper this right. The child protection service may be contacted in the first instance and advice sought (see school's Safeguarding Children policy/procedures).

All Staff

Drug prevention is a whole school issue. All staff, both teaching and support, should be aware of the policy and how it relates to them should then be called upon to deal with a drug-related incident. This includes lunchtime supervisors and the site team and cleaning staff. If they have any queries or training requirements these should be made known to the Director of Academy Services. The caretaker regularly checks the school premises – any substances or drug paraphernalia found will be recorded and reported to the Director of Student Support or the Headteacher and dealt with in accordance with this Policy.

Equal Opportunities Statement

A Drug Education programme will be provided to all pupils with consideration of any particular needs.

SECTION 1 – DRUG EDUCATION

Aims and objectives of drug/health education

The aim of our drug education is to provide opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge, skills, attitudes and understanding about drugs and appreciate the benefits of a healthy lifestyle, relating this to their own and others' actions.

The main aims of our drug education programme are to:

- Enable each pupil to develop confidence and self-esteem.
- Raise pupils' awareness of the world of drugs so that they can make informed and responsible decisions about their own drug use in order to reach their full potential.
- Encourage a healthy respect for all substances taken into the body.
- Enable pupils to explore their own and other's feelings, views, attitudes, and values towards drugs and drug-related issues.

Education about the use of and the dangers associated with legal, illegal and recreational drugs as well as 'legal highs' are explored within the PSHE programme. In class students will learn the facts about drugs. They discuss misconceptions and gain a better understanding of the risks associated with the use of such substances. This is further strengthened in Healthy Lifestyle drop down days where students hear from health professionals.

Teaching programme, strategies and resources

The PSHE Coordinator will review the drug education provision on an annual basis through discussions with the teachers involved with the delivery of the programme and through pupil voice.

Where the teaching and learning includes issues which may be sensitive, staff and pupils will work within clearly understood and applied ground-rules set by the teacher or member of staff delivering the session.

Drug Education will be assessed in a number of ways including:

- Pupil self-assessment and the opportunity for reflection.
- Discussion and peer group reflection.
- Teacher assessment of pupil attainment by observation and review of pupil written work.

Drug Education provision

KEY STAGE 3

KNOWLEDGE

Knowing and understanding:

- rules and procedures about the use and misuse of drugs on school premises
- why people choose to use drugs
- different categories of drugs and how they can affect others as well as ourselves
- terms commonly used in relation to drugs, e.g. use, misuse, tolerance, dependence, withdrawal, adulteration, overdose
- legal responsibilities involving the use of drugs
- the range of advice and help available

SKILLS

Being able to:

- identify risks to health and other aspects of our lives
- recognise myths and stereotypes
- make informed and considered decisions and communicate our choices to others
- give, and secure, advice and help as needed

ATTITUDES

Beginning to make sense of:

- the range of attitudes and beliefs about drug use that exist in our community and society
- the way in which the media (including advertising, magazines and the music scene) affects our thinking on drugs
- how to behave responsibly and safely
- accepting personal responsibility for our choices

- how our actions affect others as well as ourselves

KEY STAGE 4

KNOWLEDGE

Knowing and understanding:

- the school's policy on drug related incidents
- facts about drugs including their common names, appearance and effects on the individual, their relationships and others in the community
- specific risks associated with particular drugs including levels of seriousness, local and national policing issues, penalties and the consequences of conviction
- the range of local and national information, advice and support on drugs available

SKILLS

Personally and collectively being able to:

- recognise the risks involved in those settings in which drugs are used
- manage behaviour associated with drug use and develop alternative assertive coping strategies
- talk with friends, family and other adults about drugs and drug use
- find support for ourselves and provide support to others in a range of drug use settings

ATTITUDES

Making sense of:

- patterns of drug use locally and nationally and their impact upon individuals, community and society
- people's perceptions of behaviour in relation to drugs
- media influences on our use of drugs in a variety of contexts
- how to accept responsibility for our own actions and the impact of these on others

KEY STAGE 5

In Years 12 and 13 the knowledge and understanding, attitudes and skills developed through earlier key stages should be reinforced and extended. Students will be involved in the planning and implementation of programmes, so that their expressed needs are met.

Monitoring and evaluation of the drug education programme

The Headteacher has responsibility for the overall monitoring of drug education. The views of pupils and teachers are essential for evaluation of the drug education programme. Feedback will be gained through discussions and written responses when necessary.

Changes, if needed, will be made to the planning and teaching of the programme in light of the evaluation and evidence of best practice.

Resources

All resources for drug education are regularly reviewed and updated by departments delivering drug education and as part of our PHSE programme in line with the education aims of this policy and reflecting Drug Advice for Schools (DfE00001/2012). Drug education resources are also available from the school's lead for PSHE.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Children registered as having Special Educational Needs/Disabilities have the same right to good drug education as any other pupils and will be taught alongside all other pupils. However, teachers must be aware of and respond to their needs in drug education lessons just as in any other, taking account of targets set in the pupils' IEP.

Children vulnerable to substance misuse

Vulnerable pupils and those with SEND will be provided with additional support through differentiation which will enable them to access their curriculum entitlement. Staff are able to gain additional support and guidance from the schools lead for PHSE on appropriate resourced and educational approaches.

Use of Visitors and outside agencies

Visiting facilitators can enhance the delivery of drugs education and some pupils do respond better if they perceive the deliverer to be an "expert" rather than their "normal" teacher. However, visitors will only be used in the programme if they can offer an expertise, approach or pupil response which cannot be achieved by the teachers and of course all will be appropriately vetted. Where visitors and outside agencies are involved, their contribution must have been planned as part of an overall programme of Drug Education.

SECTION 2 – DEALING WITH DRUG-RELATED INCIDENTS

This section provides a framework for dealing with incidents surrounding the use, suspicion of use and finding of drugs and substances. The school does not condone the use of drugs but will endeavour to support any pupil with a drug problem in line with its pastoral responsibilities.

"School staff are best placed to decide on the most appropriate response to tackling drugs within their school". (DfE drug advice for schools 00001-2012 page 6). Parents/carers have the right to be informed of any drug related incident that affects their child. An exception to this is when the child is deemed "at risk" and the Child Protection Service has been contacted. In this case, it is up to the Child Protection Lead to decide the course of action.

Staff should be aware that if they (a) fail to take action in a drug-related incident or (b) allow drug use to continue on school premises, they could contravene the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971. It should be noted that if the preservation of a confidence (a) enables criminal offences to be committed, or (b) results in serious harm to the pupil's health and welfare, criminal proceedings could ensue.

If a pupil is, or appears to be, under the influence of a drug (including misuse of medicines)
– **Seek First Aid.**

The Director of Student Support will oversee and co-ordinate the drug issues and the key roles and responsibilities.

When dealing with individual cases of drug use we have the following responsibilities:

- the paramount duty of care for the education, safety and well-being of pupils
- the observance of, and compliance with, laws relating to drugs
- ensuring all records and correspondence is objective, factual and confidential (recognising that in the best interests of the pupil certain people have a 'need to know' in order to harness any support which may be available)

Each case will require an individual response.

- (i) If substances are found that can be identified as illegal drugs, or unauthorised substances as explained below, or are suspected to be illegal drugs:

Parents are informed.

Parents would normally expect to be informed if their son or daughter had been involved in a drug related incident. Some pupils may be very worried about the reaction of parents to such news. In a few cases their fears could be justified. There would be legitimate reasons for not contacting parents where it is clear that parental over-reaction would result in physical harm to the pupil, or when it is known that parents are directly involved in the situation that caused concern, as outlined above. Pupils should be encouraged to confide in parents; the school should share ways of doing this and then give support.

- Deciding whether, when or how to involve the police are not always clear cut, however, in normal circumstances:
- Police informed - advice sought or handed over for legal action.
- Support offered for student and family.
- Exclusion.

Unauthorised Substances

No substances are to be brought onto the school premises unless authorised by the Headteacher or through the agreed protocol for the use of medicines on the school premises. This includes alcohol, tobacco, volatile substances, psychoactive substances, (legal highs), e-cigarettes and medicines (This list is not exhaustive, other substances may be included at the discretion of the Headteacher). This applies to anybody using the building regardless of age or whether they are staff or pupils of the school.

Pupils found in contravention of this section of the school policy, on school premises, will be dealt with in the following way:

- Parents will be contacted by the relevant teacher. Parents' support will be sought in stressing to the pupil how the use of unauthorised substances in school is a serious breach of school rules.
- A suitable sanction will be considered. The severity of the sanction will depend upon various factors such as the age of the pupil, the circumstances of the incident, whether it is a pupil's first offence and whether it affected other pupils.
- The substance and associated paraphernalia such as matches or lighters found in a pupil's possession in school will be confiscated. They will be placed in a labelled envelope and kept securely until parents are able to collect them.
- In some cases the confiscated articles may be passed to the police.

What to do in the event of finding a drug/unauthorised substance or suspected illegal substance

Take possession of the drug/substance and inform the Headteacher, Director of Student Support or if not available a senior member of staff.

1. In the presence of a witness the article should be packed securely and labelled with the date, time and place of discovery.
2. The package should be signed by the person who discovered it and stored in the safe within the administrative areas of the school.
3. Police should be contacted immediately if deemed to be appropriate and arrangements should be made to hand the package over to them. Staff should not attempt to analyse or taste any found substance.

In the event of discovering a hypodermic needle the incident should be recorded and the following procedure should be followed in order to protect all persons:

EXTREME CARE SHOULD BE TAKEN

1. Do **NOT** attempt to pick up the needle.
2. Cover the needle with a bucket or other container.
3. If possible cordon off the area to make it safe.
4. Inform the Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher or senior member of staff.
5. Contact Environmental Health: Telephone 03000 261016.

What to do in the event of finding or suspecting a pupil is in possession of a drug.

1. Request that the pupil hand over the article(s).
2. Having taken possession of the substance/paraphernalia, the drug incident managements procedure detailed in this document should be followed.
3. Pupils should be placed in isolation until the matter has been investigated.
4. Parents should be contacted as quickly as possible.

If a pupil refuses to hand over articles a search may be required – it should be noted that:

- Teachers can search school property, i.e. cupboards and trays without permission.
- Further searches can be conducted by the Police where appropriate.

Pupils whose parents/carers or family members misuse drugs

If a pupil is experiencing difficult home circumstances or if a pupil chooses to disclose that there are difficulties at home and it is not deemed a safeguarding issue, St Bede's will follow the procedures set out in this policy.

Procedures for dealing with Parents/carers under the influence of drugs on the school premises

Staff should attempt to maintain a calm atmosphere. If staff have concern regarding discharging a pupil in to the care of a parent/carer attempts should be made to discuss alternative arrangements with the parent/carer, for example requesting another family member escort the child home. The focus of the staff must be the maintenance of the pupil's welfare, as opposed to the moderation of the parent's behaviour.

Where the behaviour of the parent/carer immediately places the child at risk of significant harm or repeated behaviour places the child at risk or the parent/carer becomes abusive or violent, staff should consider whether to invoke child protection procedures and/or the involvement of the police.

When to contact the police

There is no legal obligation for the school to contact the police when a drug incident or offence has been discovered. Contacting the police is at the Headteacher's discretion. However, the school has established close liaisons with the local police and any information about illegal sales of drugs including legal highs, alcohol and tobacco will be reported to them. In the event of a drug-related incident in the school, the school would co-operate with the police should they wish to search premises. A member of staff will accompany any search and any damage will be noted.

In the event of a serious incident the police may request to interview pupil(s). Parent(s)/carer(s) must be notified. They may refuse to give consent or prefer the interview to take place in their own home, in which case the police will make arrangements. Parents/Carers may give authority to a responsible adult, e.g. a teacher to be present during the interview.

Dealing with the Media

If there has been a drug related incident, the Headteacher will be informed and he/she will deal with any enquiries from the media in order to protect the interests of the child and the school.

Discipline

In normal circumstances parents will be contacted. If the Headteacher assesses that the situation is a child protection issue then First Contact will be contacted in the first instance.

This school does not condone drug misuse. However, in deciding an appropriate sanction the Headteacher must consider the interest of the child balanced against the best interest of the whole school community. Whilst exclusion is a possible sanction (fixed or permanent) it would only be used as a last resort. A range of responses may also be considered that may include:

- A targeted pastoral support programme.
- Referral to an appropriate agency.
- Home-School contract.
- Behaviour support plans.
- A managed move.
- Fixed term exclusion.
- Permanent exclusion.

Consideration should be given to:

- The age of the pupil.
- Whether one pupil or a group of pupils is involved.
- Whether there is evidence of particular peer pressure.
- Whether it is the pupil's first offence combined with specific circumstances of the situation.

Implementation of the policy

A copy of this policy is provided in the policies folder within First Class Noticeboard and copies are available to view and download via the schools website.

Monitoring and evaluating the policy

This policy will be reviewed annually by the lead member of staff for this area. This will include evaluation of teaching and learning activities, current resources and staff training and the use (if any) of outside visitors.

Appendix 1 – Summary of Government document

Introduction

This is advice from the Department for Education and the Association of Chief Police Officers. It is non-statutory and has been produced to help answer some of the most common questions raised by school staff in this area, as well as promoting understanding of the relevant powers and duties in relation to powers to search for and confiscate drugs, liaison with the police and with parents.

Where the document refers to drugs, this includes alcohol, tobacco, illegal drugs, medicines, novel psychoactive substances (“legal highs”) and volatile substances, unless otherwise specified.

Searching and Confiscation

Separate guidance on searching and can be found in Screening, Searching and Confiscation; Advice for Headteachers, Staff and Governing Bodies.

General power to confiscate

Schools’ general power to discipline, as set out in Section 91 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, enables a member of staff to confiscate, retain or dispose of a pupil’s property as a disciplinary penalty, where reasonable to do so.

Where the person finds other substances which are not believed to be controlled drugs these can be confiscated where a teacher believed them to be harmful or detrimental to good order and discipline. This would include novel psychoactive substances or “legal highs”. If school staff are unable to identify the legal status of a drug, it should be treated as a controlled drug.

Involving parents and dealing with complaints

Schools are not required to inform parents before a search takes place or to seek their consent to search their child.

There is no legal requirement to make or keep a record of a search, but is advisable in order to respond to any future complaint by a pupil or parent. Schools would normally inform the individual pupil’s parents or guardians where alcohol, illegal drugs or potentially harmful substances are found, though there is no legal requirement to do so.

Complaints about searching should be dealt with through the normal school complaints procedure.

Working with the Police

A senior member of staff who is responsible for the school’s drugs policy should liaise with the police and agree a shared approach to dealing with drug related incidents. This approach should be updated as part of a regular review of the policy.

Legal drugs

The police will not normally need to be involved in incidents involving legal drugs, but schools may wish to inform trading standards or police about the inappropriate sale or supply of tobacco, alcohol or volatile substances to pupils in the local area.

Controlled drugs

In taking temporary possession and disposing of *suspected* controlled drugs schools are advised to:

- ensure that a second adult witness is present throughout;
- seal the sample in a plastic bag and include details of the date and time of the seizure/find and witness present;
- store it in a secure location, such as a safe or other lockable container with access limited to senior members of staff;
- notify the police without delay, who will collect it and then store or dispose of it in line with locally agreed protocols. The law does not require a school to divulge to the police the name of the pupil from whom the drugs were taken but is it advisable to do so;
- record full details of the incident, including the police incident reference number;
- inform parent/carers, unless this is not in the best interest of the pupil;
- identify any safeguarding concerns and develop a support and disciplinary response.

Drug Dogs and Drug Testing

The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) recommends that drug dogs should not be used for searches where there is no evidence for the presence of drugs on school premises. However, schools may choose to make use of drug dogs or strategies if they wish. It is advisable that the school consults with the local police.

Recap

What is a Drug Incident?

It is a situation affecting school pupils that involves:

- the discovery, use, sharing or sale of drugs within the school or during school activities

It is not:

- rumour, speculation or disclosure by pupils about their own or others' drug use

Reasons for Concern

1. If alerted to a potential problem through rumour: **PROCEED WITH CAUTION. Report the incident/information immediately to designated safeguarding lead.**
 - To confront is unhelpful.

- Consider how reliable sources might be and reflect on what might be gained/lost by a detective exercise.
 - Observe a suspect pupil: if this observation indicates a possible use/misuse of drugs, refer to a designated lead.
2. If a pupil discloses that he/she uses drugs, or drugs or drug taking equipment is found on school premises, or a pupil is found in possession of drugs, using drugs or in an intoxicated state: **REFER TO DESIGNATED LEAD**
 3. If a member of staff comes into possession of a substance which they know or suspect to be a controlled drug, whether it has been found or confiscated from a pupil, **HAND IT TO THE DESIGNATED LEAD WHERE IT CAN BE HANDED TO THE POLICE, SECURELY STORED OR DESTROYED AS APPROPRIATE.**
 4. No member of staff should retain what they suspect might be a controlled substance on their person or on school premises. Staff should not attempt to analyse the substance themselves, by tasting it or by any other means.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality and its limitations can be a difficult issue. Confidential information which is handled inconsistently or carelessly is destructive and its implications are felt widely. **However, staff should not make promises of absolute confidentiality to young people which in certain circumstances they may not be able to keep.**

Signs to look out for:

The signs listed below **MAY** indicate that individuals or groups of young people are misusing drugs. **Their presence alone is not conclusive proof of drug or solvent misuse: many of them are a normal part of adolescence.** The presence of several signs together may point to a need for greater vigilance.

Warning signs in INDIVIDUALS

- Changes in attendance, and being unwilling to take part in school activities.
- Decline in performance in school work.
- Unusual outbreaks of temper, marked swings of mood, restlessness or irritability.
- Reports from parents that more time is being spent away from home, possibly with new friends, or with friends in older age groups.
- Excessive spending or borrowing of money.
- Stealing money or goods.
- Excessive tiredness without obvious cause.
- No interest in physical appearance.
- Sores or rashes, especially on the mouth or nose.
- Lack of appetite.
- Heavy user of scents, perfumes etc. To disguise the smell of drugs.
- Wearing sunglasses at inappropriate times (to hide dilated or constricted pupils).

Warning signs in GROUPS

- Regular absence on certain days.
- Keeping at a distance from other pupils and away from supervision points.
- Being the subject of rumours about drug taking.
- Talking to strangers on, or near, the premises.
- Stealing which appears to be the work of several individuals rather than one person.
- Use of drug takers' slang.
- Exchanging money or other objects in usual circumstances.
- Associating briefly with one person who is much older and not normally part of the peer group.

Objects that MAY indicate drug misuse

Foil containers or cup shapes made from silver foil, perhaps discoloured by heat

Metal tins

Spoons discoloured by heat

Pill boxes

Plastic, cellophane or metal foil wrappers

Small plastic, or glass phials or bottles

Twists of paper

Straws

Sugar lumps

Syringes or needles

Cigarette papers and lighters

Spent matches

Plastic bags or butane gas containers

Cardboard or rubber tubes (heroin)

Stamps, stickers, transfers or other similar items

Shredded cigarettes

Home rolled cigarettes and pipes (cannabis)

Paper folded to form an envelope (heroin)

Appendix 2 – Legal Highs

The law on so called “legal highs” has changed

So called “legal highs” (psychoactive substances) are substances which seek to mimic the effects of drugs such as cocaine and ecstasy, but are not currently controlled as class A, B or C drugs.

It is now illegal to supply any so-called “legal highs” for human consumption. This includes selling them or giving them away for free (even to friends) when they are going to be taken for their psychoactive effects.

Importing them from abroad will also be a crime.

Police will take action where they find people committing these offences. Punishments range from a prohibition notice, which is a formal warning, to 7 years in prison.

Police and other agencies also have new powers. They will be able to stop and search people they think are supplying and they will seize and destroy so called “legal highs” where they find them.

Drugs that are already illegal, such as cocaine, ecstasy, heroin and a number of so-called legal highs that have already been controlled as class A, B or C drugs, are not affected by these changes to the law. It is a crime to have these drugs in your possession at all. Police will keep taking action when they find these substances as before.

What are the risks of so called “legal highs”?

A psychoactive substance is defined in the new law as a drug which is capable of affecting a person’s mental functioning or emotional state, but is not currently controlled as a class A, B or C drug. The sections below give examples of this in more detail.

In fact, for many so-called “legal highs”, there has been little or no useful research into the short or long-term risks from human consumption. Psychoactive substances have widely different strengths and effects on different people. You can become addicted too.

The three main categories of drugs do not detail every reported risk of every single “legal high”

- **Stimulant psychoactive substances** which act like amphetamines (“speed”), mephedrone, naphyrone, cocaine or ecstasy can make you feel overconfident and disinhibited, induce feelings of anxiety, panic, confusion, paranoia, and even cause psychosis, which can lead you to put your own safety at risk. This type of drug can put a strain on your heart and nervous system. They may give your immune system a battering so you might get more colds, flu and sore throats. You may feel quite low for a while after you’ve stopped using them.
- **“Downer” or sedative psychoactive substances** similar to cannabis, benzodiazepines (drugs like diazepam or valium), or GHB/GBL, can reduce

inhibitions and concentration, slow down your reactions and make you feel lethargic, forgetful or physically unsteady, placing you at risk of accidents. This type of drug can also cause unconsciousness, coma and death, particularly when mixed with alcohol and/or with other “downer” drugs. Some people feel very anxious soon after they stop taking “downers” and if a severe withdrawal syndrome develops in heavy drug users, it can be particularly dangerous and may need medical treatment.

- **Psychedelic or hallucinogenic”** which act like LSD and magic mushrooms can cause confusion, panics and strong hallucinatory reactions (“bad trips”), and their effects can make you behave erratically and put your own safety at serious risk – including from self-harm. Some psychedelic drugs create strong dissociative effects, which make you feel like your mind and body are separated. Both of which can interfere with your judgement, which could put you at risk of acting carelessly or dangerously, and of hurting yourself, particularly in an unsafe environment.