Drugs Education

(Reviewer: Caty Jacques, Lloyd Dannatt; August 2026)
Approved by SMT August 2026

1. Aims and Objectives of Hurst's Drugs Education Policy

A drugs education programme is an educational entitlement of all pupils. The drugs education programme at Hurst (Years 7-13) will promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, intellectual and emotional development of the pupils in the College, and will help to prepare them for the opportunities, experiences and responsibilities of adult life.

For the purposes of this policy, the term "drugs" includes medicines, alcohol, tobacco, nicotine products, vaping products, volatile substances and illegal drugs.

We aim to:

- Increase pupils' knowledge and understanding and clarify misconceptions about:
  - the short- and long-term effects and risks of drugs
  - the rules and laws relating to drugs
  - the impact of drugs on individuals, families and communities
  - the prevalence and acceptability of drug use among peers
  - the complex moral, social, emotional and political issues surrounding drugs
- Develop pupils' personal and social skills to make informed decisions and keep themselves safe and healthy, including:
  - assessing, avoiding and managing risk
  - communicating effectively
  - resisting pressures
  - finding information, help and advice
  - devising problem-solving and coping strategies
  - developing self-awareness and self-esteem
- Enable pupils to explore their own and other peoples' attitudes towards drugs, drug use and drug users, including challenging stereotypes, and exploring media and social influences.

2. Overview of the Drugs Education programme

Drugs education is taught within PSHE lessons from Year 7 to Year 9, and through a variety of visiting speakers from Year 9 to Year 13. Topics included in these programmes include:

- **Alcohol and:**
  - the law and the College's position on alcohol
  - the dangers and effects of alcohol on the body
  - the culture around alcohol by considering society's views, family values, the media and commercial interests
  - the law controlling the sale and purchase of alcohol
  - the links between drinking, anti-social behaviour, personal safety, crime and sexual behaviour
- **Tobacco and associated products:**
  - the law and the College's position on smoking and vaping

- the impact of smoking, vaping and nicotine products on immediate physical functioning and physical appearance as well as the influence of friends, family, society and the media on decisions about smoking, vaping and nicotine products.
- the understanding of how we are influenced by our perception of peers' behaviour and how to stand up to peer pressure

- **Cannabis and:**
  - the law and the College's position on cannabis and drugs in general
  - the impact of smoking cannabis on immediate physical functioning and physical appearance as well as the influence of friends, family, society and the media on decisions about cannabis.
  - the perception of smoking cannabis as a method of getting high or simply to appear more grown up should also be explored.
- **Recreational drugs and:**
  - the law and the College's position on drugs
  - the dangers and effects of illegal drugs on immediate physical functioning and physical appearance as well as the influence of friends, family, society and the media on decisions about drugs
  - the perception of taking illegal drugs to 'fit-in' with a peer group will also be explored.

3. Structure of the Drugs Education programme

At Key Stage 3 pupils learn more about the effects and risks of drugs and the laws relating to drugs. They learn the skills to recognise and manage risk and to resist pressures. They continue to develop the skills to make choices for a healthy lifestyle and learn about where to go for help and advice.

At Key Stage 4 pupils build on their knowledge and learn more about the effects of drug misuse on family, friends, community and society. They gain greater understanding through clarifying their opinions and attitudes in discussions and debate and considering the consequences of their decisions.

At Key Stage 5 pupils further develop their understanding of risk, personal responsibility, the law, addiction, substance misuse and the impact of drugs and alcohol on physical health, mental health, relationships, future study and employment.

4. Methodology and Approach

It is important that drug education is delivered within a safe, secure and supportive learning environment. Ground rules will be set out with the teachers' and pupils' right to privacy respected and boundaries of discussions made clear. To aid this, distancing techniques can be adopted through role play and anonymous question boxes. Likewise, group agreements can help foster mutual respect and an environment in which pupils feel comfortable and ready to listen to and discuss each other's opinions.

5. Delivery

Selected staff will undergo appropriate training, and such training will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis and disseminated to other members of their departments. Outside speakers will be selected based upon their suitability as trained professionals. The effectiveness of training and trainers will be assessed and reviewed on an annual basis.

6. Confidentiality

In general, no discussion of any individual's drugs use or experiences thereof is appropriate in a class situation, whether they give their consent or not. If individual advice is sought by a pupil, the teacher should arrange for such to be available by an appropriately qualified professional.

If a pupil discloses information about themselves or others which indicates that a member of the College community, or their close family, may be at physical, emotional, safeguarding or legal risk, the teacher must consult the Designated Safeguarding Lead as soon as reasonably practicable and follow the College's safeguarding procedures.