



Substance Use Policy

VIS aims to provide our students with a first-class, well-rounded education while being immersed in a beautiful and safe mountain environment. Critical thinking, creativity and open-mindedness to the cultures and beliefs of others inspire learning at our school. With a strong emphasis on sports and the arts, we believe in developing the personality of each student and helping them to become principled global citizens.

Key Contact Personnel

Nominated Member of Leadership Staff Responsible for the policy: (Julia Pickard, Head of Primary, Designated Safeguarding Lead)

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Substance Abuse Policy

This policy addresses the education of children concerning behaviour changing substances such as alcohol, tobacco, solvents and drugs and the procedures for managing incidents relating to these substances. Whilst recognising education around substance misuse is vitally important, disciplinary sanctions will be enforced. Any student who uses or possesses behaviour changing substances, or seeks to procure them, transport them or brings them to school, cannot expect to remain a member of VIS.

Drugs and behaviour changing substances

These expressions refer to the possession, use, transportation and supply of controlled drugs and the paraphernalia of drugs or substances intended to resemble drugs, or any other behaviour changing substances.

Rationale

The world in which we live presents young people with many challenges which affect their health and wellbeing. Exposure to alcohol, tobacco and drugs is part of this reality. Our school needs to reflect on how we might provide for the needs of our students and respond appropriately to what are sometimes sensitive and emotive issues.

The central objective of our policy is the welfare, care and protection of the VIS community. VIS acknowledges that it has an important role to play in education about substance abuse, resilience and addictive behaviours, particularly concerning prevention. We believe that the entire school community needs to work together and that cooperation is essential to the acceptance and implementation of the policy.

This policy applies to members of the VIS community and links in with other policies in the School, which includes the Student Behaviour Code and Staff Code of Conduct.

School Ethos

The school believes that the balanced personal and social development of each member of the school community is essential. When the community fosters good relationships, people feel valued and respected, and there is genuine tolerance, fairness and support for those experiencing difficulties. As a health promoting school we have an important role in enabling students to increase control over and improve their health.

The wellbeing of students is enhanced by:

- providing a safe and healthy environment
- promoting a positive attitude towards health
- increasing knowledge about health
- actively promoting self-esteem and self-awareness
- working in partnership with parents/guardians and students.

Education

Education about the use of substances, prescription and over the counter drugs, alcohol, tobacco, solvents, vaping is best carried out by teachers through the inclusion of the health and wellbeing programme in the curriculum as well as external speakers visiting the school.

Parents also have a pivotal role to play in reinforcing this education. The school informs parents of these programmes, and parents are notified when outside agencies deliver these programmes or presentations.

Testing Procedures

VIS is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all students in the school and this responsibility applies both to individual students and to the whole community. Therefore, fully random, as well as random, samples within a targeted group may be used as part of our anti-drugs programme.

The type of testing is normally done through saliva and urine samples, however, in certain necessary circumstances the school may choose to use a blood sample. If a student who has tested positive, or who has admitted being involved with substances either during term time or outside of term time, is permitted to remain at school, the Headmaster reserves the right to make it a condition that there is repeat testing of the student in the future at intervals determined by the school. This may include the random testing of the student concerned. Any further positive test is likely to lead to permanent exclusion. Concerning positive tests arising from substance misuse outside school time, or admission of use (holidays/weekends) the same rules apply, because substance abuse, at any time by VIS students, is an issue for the school. In this way, a consistent and unambiguous message is conveyed to VIS students that drug use is unacceptable at any time during their school career. Appropriate support is in place for students associated with substance misuse while at VIS. Where circumstances require, the school will inform the police of possession, consumption or supplying of illegal substances. A student who refuses to give consent to be tested will be asked to explain the refusal. The school will be entitled to draw inferences from this response and general demeanour. Any deliberate delaying or non-compliance may result in the school's reasonable judgement to carry the same sanction as a positive test.

Any samples collected for the purposes of substance testing will be collected using recognised procedures to ensure that samples are genuine and not interfered with in any way. The school will regularly review and update the range of tests used. The initial testing is performed at the school's expense. If further tests are required, either at the request of parents, or if the school deems it appropriate, then costs may be passed to parents. In cases of positive results, parents will be notified as soon as is reasonable unless there are exceptional circumstances that the school must consider.

Parental Involvement

All parents have access to these policies on our website along with other related policies including Health and Safety, Safeguarding, the Student Behaviour Code and Anti-Bullying. Parents are encouraged to support the school's efforts to educate students in substance use prevention and to manage substance use incidents.

Alcohol

Alcohol is a powerful drug, but one which is socially acceptable in some societies. In Switzerland, it is illegal for young people under 16 years of age to buy and consume alcohol.

Drinking alcohol is banned for all students. Alcohol may not be brought into school under any circumstances. Students who bring alcohol into the school will face disciplinary action and are likely to be suspended or, in extreme cases, expelled. Houseparents and duty staff are responsible for determining whether, in their opinion, a student has drunk to excess, taking into consideration a student's self-control and general behaviour at the time.

As is the case with other school policies, VIS's alcohol policy equally applies to all school trips and visits, both inside and outside of term time.

Vaping and Smoking

VIS has a firm no vaping or smoking policy on campus, which applies equally to students and staff. Vaping and smoking is banned in the interest of health and consideration for others. In Switzerland it is forbidden to sell tobacco or certain vaping products to anyone under 18, and school-aged children may not smoke. In this policy the terms "vaping", "smoking" and "tobacco products" include cigarettes, electronic cigarettes, vaping devices, loose tobacco, snuff, chewing tobacco and any other vaping or smoking-related paraphernalia. These rules apply to all students at all times whether on or off campus.

Vaping and smoking is forbidden anywhere on campus (including all buildings, roofs, balconies, public and private areas) and off campus (including Villars, the surrounding areas, on expedition, school trips and visits). It is hoped that students' home (holiday, exeat or weekend) lifestyle habits do not vary widely from their school life. Students who hold positions of responsibility, or who are representing the school, may have these privileges taken away as a result of vaping or smoking violations. Students caught vaping or smoking, or who have vaping or smoking products found on their person or in their room are subject to disciplinary sanctions. Students whose breath or fingers smell of vaping or smoking products, in the opinion of a member of staff, will be considered to have been vaping or smoking. Students found in the presence of other students who are vaping or smoking can expect to face similar sanctions to vaping or smoking offenders. Additionally, nicotine tests may be used. Caught or suspected students will be required to turn out their pockets and bags and, depending on the circumstances, a room search may be carried out. All vaping or smoking paraphernalia will be confiscated. The student is referred to their houseparent or assistant houseparent with full details of time, place and those involved for further investigation and appropriate sanctions. This will be recorded centrally as a smoking offence.