Alcohol, Tobacco and Substance Misuse Policy

Version	2026.1
Effective from	August 2026
Extent of Policy	Sedbergh School
Policy Owner	Director of Safeguarding
Governance	Regulatory Committee
Review by	August 2027
Frequency of Audit	Annual
Circulation	Parents by request
Publication	The Hub Website

We have extensive health education and PSHE programmes at Sedbergh School that focus upon equipping all our pupils with a proper understanding of the potential risks from excessive consumption of alcohol and risks of smoking in all its forms, including vaping. They concentrate on preventing harm, and teaching the importance of young people making healthy, informed choices. The programmes involve pupils of all ages and continue in an age- and stage-appropriate manner throughout the child's time at the school. They extend across the curriculum, involving PSHE, Science and Drama lessons. We also have Assemblies on the topic, and make use of specialist visiting lecturers to cover the serious risks from abuse of alcohol, tobacco and illegal substances. (Please refer to our separate policy on drugs and drug testing.) The School seeks to take active steps at all times to promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing of all our pupils and it is in this context that this policy has been developed and is implemented in all School settings, including School trips and visits.

Our Medical staff play an active role in promoting greater awareness about the risks involved, and will offer informed medical advice. In addition, pupils can discuss their individual worries about drinking, smoking, vaping and other substances with their Housemaster/Housemistress, Tutor or AHSM. They can also refer themselves to the Medical Staff and to the Independent

Listener for individual guidance, without fearing sanctions or adverse report. Anonymous reporting is available for pupils to use if they wish to raise a concern and seek help on behalf of another pupil. We regularly invite groups of parents and guardians to discussion groups and meetings, and are very conscious of the importance of working together in order to promote pupils' wellbeing.

We do not allow the pupils at Sedbergh School to bring alcohol, tobacco or vaping materials, or other prohibited products (such as 'snus', nicotine pouches, or energy drinks with high caffeine content) onto the premises, or to consume these substances on the journey to or from School. Pupils are forbidden to visit licensed premises unless accompanied by their parent(s) or guardian or with the express permission of their Housemaster/Housemistress on each and every occasion. The purchase, use or possession of alcohol, smoking, vaping materials or other prohibited substances, are forbidden. This rule applies to all School trips and visits, whether in this country or overseas, irrespective of whether or not pupils are wearing School uniform at the time. Sedbergh School is a public place; smoking, vaping and the use of other prohibited substances in all their forms are therefore prohibited for everyone, including staff and visitors, unless in a designated area.

We will offer beer and wine to parents and guardians at certain formal events, including plays and concerts to which they are invited. We believe that pupils in their final two years at the School should learn that the moderate consumption of alcohol has its place in our culture. We therefore offer limited quantities of wine and beer (but never spirits) to members of Years 12 and 13 whose parents have provided written permission. Such events are always supervised by staff, and soft drinks, as well as food, are always available. Younger pupils are not allowed alcohol. Pupils may be asked to provide a breath sample to determine the level of alcohol at the discretion of School staff. This will be performed using a properly calibrated alcometer.

Sixth Form Bar

Pupils in Years 12 and 13 over the age of 16 whose parents have provided written permission may use the Sixth Form bar. For these pupils there will be access to a very limited amount of alcohol carefully controlled by the members of staff on duty. Pupils may be breathalysed before being permitted access to any alcohol in School.

Visiting licensed premises

Pupils may only visit the public houses of Sedbergh between the hours of 5.30pm and 7.15pm with their parents or guardian and the permission of their Housemaster/Housemistress on each and every occasion. On such visits, pupils must wear School uniform and may not drink alcohol.

Pupils will not be given permission to consume alcohol before any of our whole-School socials.

In exceptional circumstances, a Housemaster/Housemistress may allow a pupil to visit licensed premises with the parents of another pupil. In such circumstances, pupils must have permission from his/her Housemaster/mistress. The guest is the responsibility of the parent at all times and the above rules apply.

Balls & Dinner Parties

Sedbergh pupils will have numerous opportunities to attend various balls and dinner parties during term time. At these events, pupils in the sixth form will have access to beer or wine during dinner, but not before or after the meal has finished. Pupils attending such events will not be given permission to attend licensed premises before the event.

In all circumstances, the law of the land must be observed.

Sanctions

- Pupils who breach these guidelines on alcohol can expect age-appropriate sanctions to be applied. Sanctions for pupils will usually be either suspension or expulsion from School depending on the circumstances. Senior school pupils who drink excess alcohol can also expect to lose the right to visit Public Houses and/or the sixth form bar in future.
- Due to the risk of harm and seriousness of the potential consequences, pupils found to have brought spirits into School or drunk spirits during term time are liable to suspension from School. The same applies to pupils on School trips or visits, including those that take place outside term time, and pupils who breach the rules in these circumstances can expect to be sent home early from the trip. The cost of returning home will be borne by the pupil's parents.
- Any pupil found to be in possession of prohibited equipment or substances, or who is caught smoking, vaping or using any other prohibited substances will be put in the following Saturday night detention.
- Due to the ease with which vaping equipment can result in harmful addictions or potentially be used to access unauthorised substances, pupils found to have been vaping are likely to be asked to undertake a drugs test. (Please see Drugs & Drug Testing Policy.)
- Pupils who supply vaping equipment or other prohibited items for other pupils, or those who are repeat offenders, are liable to be suspended or permanently excluded from School, depending upon the seriousness of the offence.

A pupil may be referred for a session of counselling or an appointment with the Medical Centre where we have reason to believe that he or she has issues with either alcohol, tobacco or other unauthorised substances, or where there are repeated infringements.

The School's policy on the use of licensed premises also applies to Exeats taken in Sedbergh.

Dr J M Burns
Director of Safeguarding
August 2026

Action Point:

UNDERTAKING	BY WHOM
Housemasters/Housemistresses should ensure that parental permission is in place for all sixth form pupils intending to consume alcohol at the sixth form bar or School social.	HSMs