



The guidance employs the United Nations definition of drugs:

‘Drugs are substances which affect the way people think, feel and behave. This includes tobacco, alcohol, volatile substances, and illegal drugs as well as prescription and over-the-counter medicines.’

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# Joining Forces

Drugs: Guidance for police working with schools and colleges

## A Summary

*Joining Forces – Drugs: Guidance for police working with schools and colleges* is for all police forces in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and focuses on police involvement with schools and colleges in three key areas: policy development; drug education; and managing drug-related incidents.

This Summary contains a brief overview of the content of the guidance. The full version should be read for the full detail and interpretation, and can be accessed at [www.drugscope.org.uk/acpopaper](http://www.drugscope.org.uk/acpopaper) and [www.teachernet.gov.uk](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk)

### Why is the guidance necessary?

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Police involvement in drug education, drug policy development and drug incidents in schools and colleges has varied from one constabulary to another and from one area or Basic Command Unit (BCU) to another. This guidance is based on the best available evidence and supports the development of local protocols, offering an opportunity for greater consistency and coherence.

*Joining Forces* clarifies the role of police in schools with respect to drugs, supports the development of partnership approaches and highlights the importance of putting the needs and interests of young people at the centre of local agreements.

### Who is this guidance for?

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The guidance has been written for chief officers and senior managers, police working directly with schools, including Safer Schools Officers (SSOs), force drug co-ordinators and youth strategy officers. It will also be of interest to teachers and headteachers, college principals and student services managers, healthy schools co-ordinators, school drug advisers, school drug co-ordinators, Drug (and Alcohol) Action Team (D(A)AT) co-ordinators and education advisers based in local authorities. The guidance is also intended for use by those training officers to work with schools.

### What is in the guidance?

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The guidance is divided into five main sections and a series of Appendices.

Each of the **five main sections** deals with a separate aspect of police involvement with schools and colleges on drug issues. The **Appendices** set out the context for Wales and Northern Ireland and provide an extensive range of supporting materials to assist police in the development of policy and practice with respect to drugs in schools or colleges.

## Section 1: Introduction

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The Introduction provides an overview of key issues which formed the background to the development of this guidance. Each issue is covered in more detail in the guidance.

This section:

- includes a summary of the police responsibility for reducing drug use by young people and for recording crime on school premises
- describes the partnership arrangements which are intended to improve outcomes for children and young people
- describes drug use and drug-related crime with respect to young people and reviews the evidence for the effectiveness of police-delivered drug education in schools.

The *key messages* of Section 1 are:

- Most young people do not use drugs.
- Police are not obliged to record crime committed on school premises.
- Police add value to (but do not substitute for) drug education delivered by teachers.



## Section 2: Working with schools and colleges

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Section 2 sets out what police should expect when working with schools and colleges on drug issues.

This section:

- describes the roles of those responsible for drug issues in schools and colleges at institutional, community and local strategic levels
- describes shared approaches to planning and implementation of drug policy and drug education, including information and intelligence sharing
- stresses the importance of evaluation to establish the effectiveness of police involvement in drug issues in schools and colleges.

The key messages of Section 2 are:

- Police are key partners with a range of other agencies in reducing drug use among young people at school, community and local strategic levels.
- Teachers should always be present when a police officer is working with a group of pupils to maintain discipline and to ensure appropriate follow-up.
- Information sharing between agencies is vital to identifying and supporting young people who have additional needs, or who may be in danger of falling into crime.



## Section 3: Drug education – introduction and context

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This section:

- describes how drug education is an entitlement of every young person within the science curriculum and as part of Personal, Social and Health Education
- reviews the evidence for effective drug education
- considers the value of whole school, whole community approaches and the key components of the drug education curriculum.

The key messages of Section 3 are:

- effective drug education addresses knowledge, skills and attitudes; and
  - is developmentally and culturally appropriate;
  - challenges misconceptions;
  - uses interactive teaching techniques and
  - involves parents / carers as part of a wider community approach.
- Healthy Schools Programmes provide a context in which police can work with their partners to reduce the harm from drugs.



## Section 4: Good management of drugs in schools and colleges

This section:

- describes what a school drug policy should include
- contains references to the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971; the Drugs Act 2005; the Serious and Organised Crime and Police Act 2005 (SOCPA) and the *ACPO's Policing Cannabis Possession Guidelines*
- addresses the responsibilities of staff and police with respect to drugs in schools
- describes intelligence sharing between schools and the police under the National Intelligence Model
- discusses approaches to detection of drugs on school premises.

The *key messages* of Section 4 are:

- Police and their partners in education should develop local protocols for the management of drug-related incidents in schools and colleges.
- There should be a range of responses for support and discipline for young people involved in drug-related incidents.
- School staff are not obliged to give the name of a pupil involved in a drug-related incident. They should ask police to identify and dispose of substances which they suspect may be illegal drugs.
- It is not always necessary or proportionate to arrest young people found in possession of illegal drugs on school premises. Depending on the seriousness of the incident and the circumstances, they may be dealt with through the school's or college's own disciplinary procedures. Young people's needs should be assessed and they should be referred for advice, counselling or treatment, as appropriate. The school or college should keep a record of any decisions made.
- Schools and police should exercise extreme caution when considering the use of drugs [sniffer] dogs without a warrant. Drugs dogs should not be used for searches where there is no evidence for the presence of drugs on school premises. Demonstration and educational visits should not be used as a covert detection exercise.

## Section 5: Training and quality issues for police

This section:

- focuses on training for police working with schools and colleges on drug issues
- provides examples of training for police involvement in drug education
- describes the competencies arising from the Children Act 2004 which are expected of police officers who work with schools.

The *key messages* of Section 5 are:

- Police working with schools and colleges are part of the wider children's workforce. They should have the competencies that are common to this workforce.
- Police working with schools and colleges on drug issues should also have a basic knowledge and understanding of substance misuse and an understanding of strategies and interventions which can delay or prevent first use of drugs as well as prevent the escalation of experimental use to more problematic use.
- Those responsible for training police to deliver drug education should set learning outcomes based on the evidence for and principles of effective drug education.

