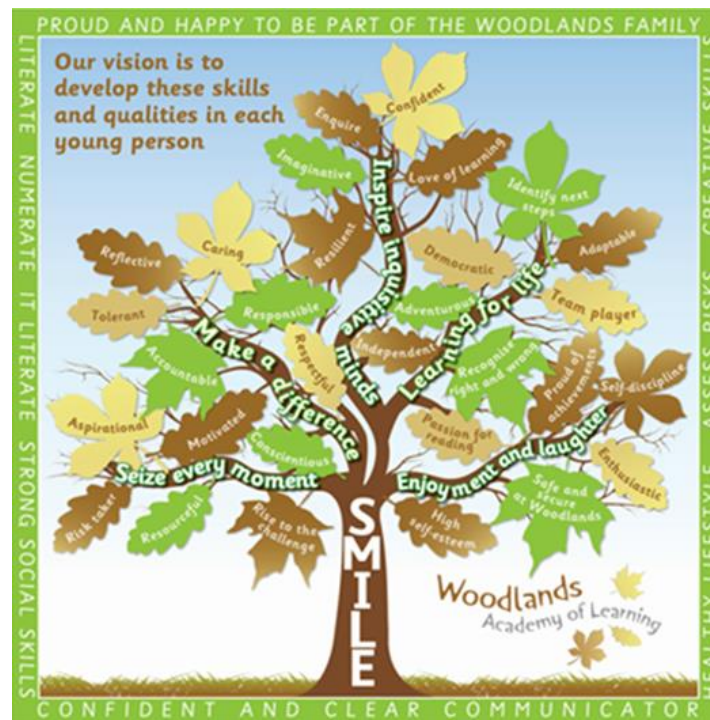




Safeguarding and Welfare Policy: Responding to Cannabis or Other Substance Odours from Pupils' Homes

October 2025



The school has a statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils. We are committed to ensuring that every child is protected from harm and able to learn in a safe, supportive environment. The school recognises that situations may arise where a pupil arrives at school smelling of cannabis or other substances due to possible exposure within the home environment. In such circumstances, our primary concern is the safety and wellbeing of the child. Staff have a duty to act on any safeguarding concerns in line with the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures.

Any incident of this nature will be treated sensitively, with appropriate consideration given to the child's circumstances. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will be informed, and further action may include discussion with parents or carers and, where appropriate, referral to relevant external safeguarding agencies.

Our overarching priority is to safeguard pupils from potential harm and to work in partnership with families and agencies to ensure their ongoing wellbeing.

1. Purpose

This policy aligns with KCSIE 2025, which highlights the importance of recognising indirect indicators of harm such as parental substance misuse. Schools have a duty to act when concerns arise about a child's welfare, even if the child is not directly using substances themselves.

2. Principles

- The welfare of the child is the school's paramount concern.
- Any concern relating to drugs, alcohol, or substance misuse will be treated as a safeguarding matter.
- The school promotes a graduated and supportive response, working with families and external agencies where needed.
- The school does not make assumptions about use or exposure but seeks to understand and support.
- Concerns should be raised even if the child appears unaffected

3. Incident

This procedure applies when:

- A pupil arrives at school smelling of cannabis or other substances (on clothing, hair, bags, etc.);
- There are repeated or ongoing incidents; or
- There are associated concerns (e.g. unusual behaviour, disclosures, or possession of related items).

4. Graduated Response

Stage	Response	Action Taken
1. Initial Concern	First time a pupil presents with a noticeable smell of cannabis or another substance.	Class teacher or staff member informs the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Incident is recorded on CPOMS. A letter 1 is sent home to inform parents and invite discussion.
2. Repeated Concern	Second or repeated occurrence	A second letter (2) to be sent to parents Offer a meeting with parents to discuss support Consider Early Help Assessment or referral to external agencies (e.g. Family Support or School Nursing).
3. Ongoing or Serious Concern	Concerns persist or escalate; evidence of drug use or exposure in the home.	Referral to children's social care in line with safeguarding procedures. Police consultation if there is a risk of criminal activity involving a child. Continued monitoring and support in school.

5. Recording and Monitoring

- All incidents are recorded on the school's safeguarding system- CPOMs.
- The DSL monitors patterns and ensures appropriate follow-up.
- Governors are informed (in anonymised form) through safeguarding reports.

6. Support for Pupils and Families

- The school aims to work in partnership with parents and carers.
- Support may include signposting to Families First, parenting support, or local substance misuse services.
- Pupils are supported through PSHE lessons promoting healthy lifestyles, decision-making, and safety.

7. Confidentiality

All matters are handled confidentially and in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education Information is shared only with relevant professionals.

To be reviewed October 2027



Dear Parent/Carer,

We wanted to make you aware that we have noticed a strong smell, which appears to be cannabis, on your child's **bag/coat**.

Please be assured that we are **not making any assumptions or judgements**. However, as part of our safeguarding responsibilities, we do need to remind all parents and carers to ensure that cannabis is **not smoked near children** and that **any related materials are kept safely out of children's sight and reach**. We would also like to remind you that cannabis use can affect a parent or carer's ability to notice and respond appropriately to a child's needs

We will continue to **monitor the situation** and appreciate your understanding and support in helping us to maintain a safe and healthy environment for all children.

If you would like to discuss this matter further or would like any advice or support, please don't hesitate to contact the Pastoral team.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs J Graham

Pastoral support

Dear Parent/Carer,

Following our previous correspondence, we must inform you that we continue to notice a strong smell of cannabis on your child while at school. We fully appreciate that there may be an explanation for this; however, as part of our statutory safeguarding responsibilities, we have a duty to address any concerns that may affect a child's health, safety, or wellbeing.

We must therefore remind you that children **should not be exposed** to cannabis smoke and that any related substances or materials must be securely stored, well out of children's sight and reach. Exposure to cannabis can have a detrimental impact on a child's wellbeing and may also affect a parent or carer's capacity to provide safe and appropriate care.

If this matter continues, we will be required to share our concerns with safeguarding professionals in line with our safeguarding policy. This may include a referral to external agencies to ensure that the necessary support is in place.

Should you wish to discuss this matter or seek advice, please contactat your earliest convenience.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Yours sincerely,