

29th May 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

Substance Misuse Update

Recent information and intelligence from Hampshire Police and the Portsmouth Drug and Alcohol Support Service (DASS) raises the following serious concerns (in relation to local young people) that I wanted parents to be aware of:

- The use of substances may compromise the respiratory and immune system putting any user at a potentially greater risk of catching illness (including Corona Virus)
- There have been reports of cannabis being mixed with spice (NPS - a synthetic cannabinoid) side effects could include heart palpitations, some people experience more hallucinations/psychosis when using spice. Some versions of spice also contain opioids thus having the potential for dependence and withdrawals being significant, however it would not be obvious from just looking at it, and some dealers may not share this information with the end user
- There have been reports in another local area, of some adults crushing and smoking Buscopan, this is used for IBS however one of the ingredients (Hyoscine also known as Scopolamine) comes from the deadly nightshade plant. It is a strong psychedelic and people can exhibit strange behaviours such as talking to walls, and are at increased risk of harming themselves by walking into traffic, jumping off buildings etc.
- Taxis are being more widely used to 'deliver' drugs
- Following the death of two young people at the Portsmouth Mutiny Festival in 2018 further recent media reports have revealed additional deaths which appear to be directly related to substance use (involving young people)

This updated information above serves as further warning to us all about the known risks involved with substance misuse. We want all our young people to remain safe and free from harm and as with all safeguarding matters 'talking and sharing' are often the most powerful means to tackle problems if they arise. We would encourage all parents to openly discuss these concerns and the risks involved when taking any substance. Parents/carers should also remain alert to the signs of potential substance/drug use (see below). If you have any concerns regarding young people and substance misuse at this time the following services/information sources will be of use:

- Young people, parents or professionals can contact DASS on:
dass@secure.portsmouthcc.gov.uk or call/text: 07951497898 or 07557753131.
- 'Talk to Frank' - online advice and information: <https://www.talktofrank.com/> online support with live chat available 2pm – 6pm 7 days a week
- NSPCC general information and guidance for parents on drugs and alcohol:
<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/talking-drugs-alcohol/>

Springfield School
Central Road, Drayton,
Portsmouth, PO6 1QY

Headteacher
Ms S F Spivey BSc, MA

Tel (023) 9237 9119
Fax (023) 9238 8784
Twitter @SpfldUK
Email contact@springfield.uk.net

Web www.springfield.uk.net

The De Curci Trust is a charitable company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales with company number 10646541. Its registered office address is Springfield School, Central Road, Portsmouth, PO6 1QY, United Kingdom. Springfield School is a business name used by The De Curci Trust.

Trustees
C Batstone, A Cufley, S Hamilton, L Sinnott, D Smith, S Spivey, T Webber, L Wilby.



Signs and indicators of substance misuse:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Late for school/college/work, grades dropping, truancy• Changed habits, lack of motivation or goals• Mood swings, aggression, apathetic• Conflict with parents/authority figures when there was none before• Loss of appetite, weight loss, binge eating, eating at odd times• unusual irritability or aggression• a tendency to become confused• abnormal fluctuations in concentration and energy• impaired job/school/college performance• poor time-keeping• Sudden increase of money available to them (consider running/dealing/counting lines)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased short-term sickness• A deterioration in relationships peers / colleagues / teachers etc.• dishonesty and theft (arising from the need to maintain an expensive habit)• New friends and/or older friends they seem reluctant for parents/carers to meet• Missing from home, particularly overnight• Sleeping long periods of time• Slurred speech and/or behaviour similar to someone when drunk• New/odd smells.• Excessive sweating• Evidence of lies• Borrowing more money or stealing from family/friends• Increase in anxiety or paranoia
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Yours sincerely

Mr Wilburn
Deputy Headteacher