

Mon 25th Nov 2019

Dear Parents and Carers

If you have a child at secondary school, you may have received a collective letter from local headteachers, concerning access to illegal drugs in the area. There are increasing concerns about drug-related incidents reported by students in Sussex. This has prompted schools and colleges to seek the support of parents and carers, in working alongside Police and Social Services, to safeguard our young people.

Sussex Police report that access to cannabis and other illegal drugs/psychoactive substances is becoming more commonplace within our communities and there are a number of 'known' lines of supply into West Sussex from large towns and cities outside the county. Young people are actively targeted in parks and other places where they are known to congregate and they may be offered the opportunity to sample, purchase, transport, store or supply illegal substances. Further information about local concerns is available on our [website](#). There are also links to resources to help you as parents and carers to spot signs of substance misuse and advice about things you can do to help keep your young person safe.

At Collyer's we continue the preventative work started in secondary schools, providing opportunities through the tutorial programme and wider college awareness-raising, to promote knowledge and understanding of the risks associated with the misuse of substances. Last week, our first year students attended a presentation delivered by Dave Parvin, former drugs squad officer and now senior consultant with Drugs Sense UK. This annual presentation to first year students, provides clear information on the short and long-term effects of drug use on the body, with the aim of encouraging students to make informed, sensible lifestyle choices. Thank you for your help in ensuring such good attendance at this event.

Collyer's is committed to creating a safe and focused environment, conducive to full engagement with learning for all students. Collyer's aims to respond supportively to any student in difficulty through their misuse of substances but with due regard to the College's safeguarding responsibilities and code of conduct. Where possible, the college will work in partnership with local agencies to support a student to make positive changes to enable them to continue studying. Notwithstanding this, I am sure you agree there is no place for illegal drugs on campus and substance misuse which impacts on a student during the college day constitutes a gross breach of the Student Code of Conduct. Students found in possession of, or under the influence of, illegal substances on campus will face proportionate action in line with college disciplinary and safeguarding procedures, which could include temporary suspension or permanent exclusion. A student suspected of distributing drugs will automatically be reported to the police.

The wellbeing and safety of our students is our highest priority and so we hope the information provided is helpful in starting conversations at home. Please do contact us with any concerns.

Yours faithfully

Andrea John
Vice Principal (Student Support)

Useful links:

Frank: www.talktofrank.com

Change Grow Live: www.changegrowlive.org/children-young-peoples-wellbeing-service-west-sussex

NHS: www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/drug-addiction-getting-help

