

Where to go for more information

Contact the academy

If you have any questions or concerns about drugs or alcohol and what it means for your child, please do not hesitate to contact the academy and speak to Helen Jackson, Head of Student Support and Family Services, on 01977622850.

See our policies

You will find more details in our safeguarding policy, available on our website.

We also have a service for pupils to contact us with any concerns:

SafetyNet@delacyacademy.org.uk

External sources

The following sources may also be useful for further information:

Health and Wellbeing Information

Tel: 0808 802 4444

www.getthelowdown.co.uk

Information on drugs

www.knowthescore.info

Talk to FRANK:

0800 77 66 00

TALKTOFRANK.COM

De Lacy Academy Drugs & Alcohol

What are the different types of drugs that cause problems ?

The most commonly used, readily available and strongly addictive drugs are tobacco and alcohol. There are numerous others that can be addictive. Alcohol and cannabis are sometimes seen as 'gateway' drugs that lead to the world of other drugs like cocaine and heroin.

Drugs are also classed as 'legal' and 'illegal'. The obviously illegal drugs include [cannabis \(hash\)](#), speed (amphetamines), ecstasy (E), cocaine and heroin. Using 'legal' drugs (like cigarettes, alcohol, petrol, glue) does not mean they are safe or allowed to be misused. It just means they may be bought or sold for specific purposes and are limited to use by specific age groups.

Many young people smoke, drink alcohol and may try drugs. It is important you are aware of this and do not ignore it at a time when they are just having fun or experimenting. It doesn't take much for the young people to soon lose control and to need help to recover from this problem.

How Common Is it?

By the age of 16, up to half of young people have tried an illegal drug. Young people are trying drugs earlier and more are drinking alcohol. Young people are being hospitalised more and more frequently, and at a younger age, because of alcohol-related liver disease.

KEY TERMS

Illegal Drugs: illegal for anyone to consume at any age

Legal Drugs: substances that can be sold for specific purposes but are used as drugs, though they are not safe and should not be misused.

Why do young people use drugs and alcohol?

Young people may try or use drugs or alcohol for various reasons. They may do it for fun, because they are curious, or to be like their friends. Some are experimenting with the feeling of intoxication. Sometimes they use it to cope with difficult situations or feelings of worry and low mood. A young person is more likely to try or use drugs or alcohol if they hang out or stay with friends or family who use them. Drugs and alcohol can have different effects on different people. In young people especially the effects can be unpredictable and potentially dangerous. Even medications for sleep or painkillers can be addictive and harmful if not used the way they are prescribed by a doctor. Drugs and alcohol can damage health. Sharing needles or equipment can cause serious infections, such as HIV and hepatitis. Accidents, arguments and fights are more likely after drinking and drug use. Using drugs can lead to serious mental illnesses such as psychosis and depression.

When does it become an addiction or a problem?

It is very difficult to know when exactly using drugs or alcohol is more than just 'usual'.

Addiction becomes more obvious when the young person spends most of their time thinking about, looking for or using drugs. Drugs or alcohol then become the focus of the young person's life. They ignore their usual work, such as not doing their schoolwork, or stop doing their usual hobbies/sports such as dancing or football.

How do I know if there is a problem or addiction?

Occasional use can be very difficult to detect. If the young person is using on a regular basis, their behaviour often changes. Look for signs such as:
unexplained moodiness

- behaviour that is 'out of character'
- loss of interest in school or friends
- unexplained loss of clothes or money
- unusual smells and items like silver foil, needle covers.

Remember, the above changes can also mean other problems rather than using drugs.

What do I do if I'm worried?

If you suspect young person is using drugs, remember some general rules.

- Pay attention to what the child is doing, including schoolwork, friends and leisure time.
- Learn about the effects of alcohol and drugs.
- Listen to what the child says about alcohol and drugs, and talk about it with them.
- Encourage the young person to be informed and responsible about drugs and alcohol.
- Talk to other parents, friends or teachers about drugs - the facts and your fears and SEEK HELP.

If someone in the family or close friend is using drugs or alcohol, it is important that they seek help too. It may be hard to expect the young person to give up, especially if a parent is using it too.

My child is abusing drugs. What do I do?

- If your child is using drugs or alcohol, seek help.
- Do stay calm and make sure of facts.
- Don't give up on them, get into long debates or arguments when they are drunk, stoned or high.
- Don't be angry or blame them –they need your help and trust to make journey of recovery.

Where can I get help?

You can talk in confidence to a professional like your GP or practice nurse, a local drug project or your local child and adolescent mental health service (CAMHS). They can refer your child to relevant services, and will be able to offer you advice and support.

You can seek help through school by talking to Mrs Helen Jackson, a teacher or a social worker. You can find information from your local area telephone book or council website, or ask for the address from your health centre.

If your child is found in possession of an illegal substance on school premises they are at risk of permanent exclusion.