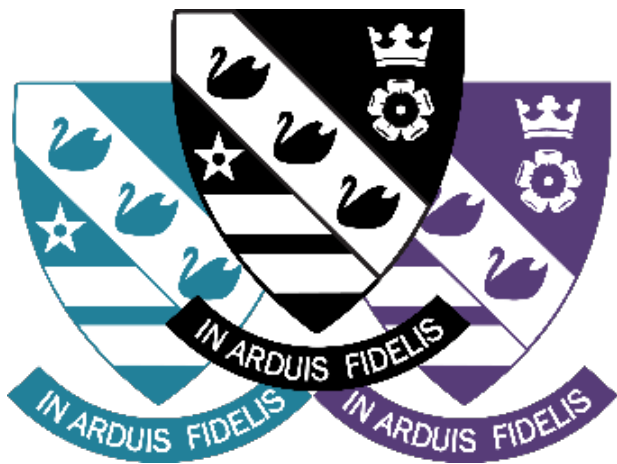


SELBY HIGH SCHOOL

SPECIALIST SCHOOL FOR THE ARTS AND SCIENCE



Drugs and Substance Misuse Policy 2026

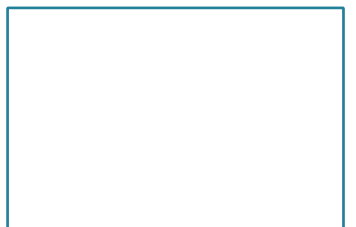
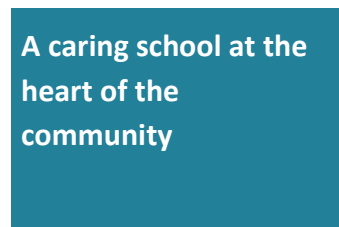
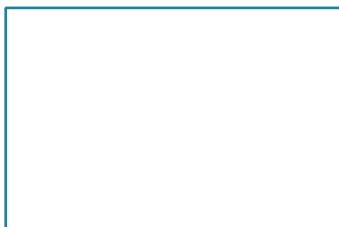
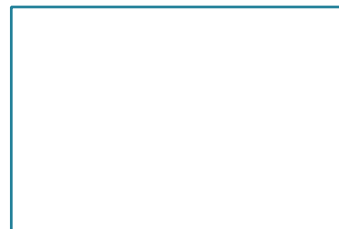
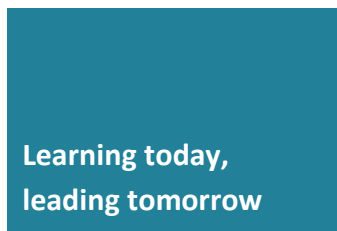
Ratified by the Board of Governors

Date: April, 2026

Signed: Andy Reed

Chairperson: Andy Reed

Review Date: April, 2029



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The Aims of This Policy

- Clarify the legal requirements and responsibilities of the school. This policy is not solely about enforcement but also about education, prevention and safeguarding.
- Promote students' wellbeing and reinforce and safeguard the health and safety of pupils and others who use the school. (Schools have a clear role to play in preventing substance misuse and supporting vulnerable pupils as part of school's pastoral responsibilities.)
- Clarify the school's approach to substances for all staff, pupils, governors, parents/carers, external agencies and the wider community.
- Give guidance on developing, implementing and monitoring the substance misuse education programme.
- Enable staff to manage substances on school premises, and any incidents that occur, with confidence and consistency, and in the best interests of those involved.

This guidance incorporates information and advice from the following sources:

Government & Legal Guidance

- UK Government drug and alcohol advice pages.
- Department for Education guidance on behaviour and discipline in schools.
- NHS information on drugs, alcohol, and addiction.
- Home Office drug laws and classifications.
- NSPCC safeguarding advice and helplines.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education.

This Drugs policy should be read in conjunction with the Home School Agreement, together with the following policies:

- Positive Relational Behaviour Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- SEND Policy
- Values Curriculum
- Supporting Students at School with Medical Conditions

Named Personnel

The Principal will take overall responsibility for the policy and its implementation, and for liaison with the governing body, parents/carers/guardians, LA and appropriate outside agencies. The Principal also has the responsibility to ensure that staff dealing with substance/drug issues, are trained.

The Governor responsible for the oversight and delivery of drugs education is Andy Reed.

Definition

For the purpose of this policy a **drug** is generally defined as any substance which, when taken into the body, changes the way a person feels, thinks, behaves, or functions physically, emotionally, or mentally. This includes but is not limited to:

- **Illegal Drugs:** Substances controlled by law (e.g., the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 in the UK), such as cannabis, ecstasy, heroin, crack/cocaine, LSD, and ketamine.
- **Legal/Authorised Drugs:** Alcohol, tobacco, and e-cigarettes/vapes.
- **Volatile Substances:** Solvents, glues, and gases that can be inhaled.
- **Medicines:** Both over-the-counter (painkillers) and prescription medicines.
- **New Psychoactive Substances:** Frequently referred to as "legal highs".

It is recognised that there is no such thing as a safe substance and any substance use has associated risks and benefits. For simplicity this guidance refers to:

- 'substance use' as the use of any drug, legal or otherwise
- 'substance misuse' as drug use which leads, or has led to, a pupil experiencing social, psychological, physical or legal problems related to intoxication or regular excessive consumption and/or dependence upon their drug(s) of choice
- 'problematic substance misuse' is where the individual has little control over their behaviour, they are frequently and regularly under the influence of a substance and they present as a problem for themselves or the environment in which they exist.

The guidance refers to substance misuse incidents as situations or specific events involving a suspected or proven drug in unauthorised possession or use by anyone covered by this policy, which includes adults as well as pupils, in any situation for which the school is ultimately responsible.

The School's Stance on Substance Misuse

The school does not permit the misuse of substances nor the use or presence of illegal drugs or unauthorised substances on site or associated with any activity, anywhere, for which the school is responsible, including on journeys to and from school.

Medicines may be authorised to be brought on site by students or their parents/carers/guardians, but only by prior and recorded arrangement in accordance with our Supporting Students at School with Medical Conditions Policy.

Drug incidents will be dealt with fairly with the well-being, health and safety of the whole school community being paramount as well as acknowledging the pastoral needs of individual students.

Whilst the school acknowledges the advice from the DFE that drug-related incidents should not automatically lead to exclusion, the governing body believes that clear sanctions form part of the school's response.

Where illegal drugs are used or supplied in school, to and from school, or during school-based activities, it is likely that a significant suspension will be put in place, and where circumstances are particularly serious, permanent exclusion may be considered.

A second similar drug-related offence is likely to invoke Permanent Exclusion.

Who does this policy apply to?

- All staff, governors, students, contractors and visitors using the school site. This includes users of the building for other events and activities.
- All staff, students and volunteers on school trips and residentials.
- Students on their way to and from school.
- The school will also investigate evidence that students are using illegal or dangerous substances when they are not in school. If staff or members of the public report that they have seen Selby High School students using illegal or dangerous substances, this will be fully investigated by the school. The school will always follow its legal safeguarding duties. In these instances, support will be offered through the school or other agencies. The police may be notified in line with school policy.

County Lines

There is growing awareness of the threat of 'county lines', drug supply, violence and exploitation which may impact on young people in North Yorkshire and needs to be considered when managing a substance related incident. Consideration needs to be given when teaching about Child Criminal Exploitation or "grooming" as part of a planned PSHE curriculum that this also includes being groomed to supply substances.

Sources of Help

Whilst students are made aware of the potential consequences of substance use or dealing in school, they are equally encouraged to talk to somebody and seek help and advice if they are concerned in any way about substance use or misuse.

At Selby High School students are made aware of where they can go to for help in a number of ways for example through assemblies, via the pastoral team, the safeguarding display, and the school website. In addition, the school website has safeguarding pages that include links to sources of help. This includes:

[Talk to Frank](#)

[NY Rise: Drug & alcohol support service for young people](#)

[Young Minds](#)

[Childline](#)

[The Mix](#)

[NHS](#)

[Compass](#)

[Vaping And E-Cigarettes: The Facts For Parents And Carers](#)

Implementation of the Policy

The school actively co-operates with a number of agencies such as the Local Authority, Police, the healthy child nurse/other health professionals and drug agencies e.g. NY Rise - [NY Rise](#). It is important to both share information and seek advice in the best interest of the student(s).

In the case of an incident involving drugs the school places the utmost priority on safety. Medical emergencies will be dealt with by the designated First Aiders and by summoning appropriate medical help before any other issues are addressed.

In addition to curriculum coverage there will be an annual input by members of the Senior Leadership Team, and where relevant the police, regarding drug issues as part of the whole school assembly procedure.

Roles and responsibilities

Governors

Governors are responsible for ensuring that an up-to-date policy for drug education and managing drug incidents is maintained and disseminated to all staff and is accessible to all interested parties, including parents/carers/guardians. The Governing Body will continue their involvement through regular evaluation of provision and policy.

Principal (delegated to Assistant Principal, Student Welfare)

The Principal has responsibility for the day-to-day management of all aspects of the school's work, including teaching and learning. The Principal's responsibilities in respect of drugs and alcohol are to:

- Provide a safe place of work for all staff and students and as such takes responsibility for this policy, its implementation, and for liaison with the Governing Body, parents, LA and appropriate outside agencies.
- Ensure the effective delivery of the drug and alcohol education within the curriculum is being monitored.
- Act upon any concerns which may arise from students' drug and alcohol behaviours.

Director, Values Curriculum

The school has a Director of Values Curriculum who is responsible for all aspects of the subject including education on drugs and alcohol. In respect of drugs and alcohol, responsibilities are to:

- Ensure the implementation and quality of schemes of work for Life Development that incorporates education on substance use and misuse including illegal drugs, cigarettes and e-cigarettes and alcohol.
- Ensure the curriculum meets the statutory requirements of the Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education curriculum (Statutory from September, 2026).
- Ensure that all staff are confident in the skills to teach and discuss issues related to substances.
- Access appropriate training.
- Liaise with any service provision to support aspects of drugs and alcohol education.
- Contribute to the review / updating of the Drugs Policy on a three-year cycle or sooner if necessary.

Role of the school safeguarding lead

- The Designated Safeguarding Lead (Sarah Langridge) is the designated member of staff who oversees support for students following any drug incident whether on site or in the community, and any drug incident in school should be referred to her.

Students

- Students are not allowed to take drugs or alcohol at school or whilst engaged in any off-site activity representing the school, for example any educational visits, trips abroad and work experience.
- Students are not allowed to use cigarettes or e-cigarettes at school or whilst engaged in any off-site activity representing the school, for example any educational visits, trips abroad and work experience.
- Students should not take drugs or alcohol, or use cigarettes or e-cigarettes whilst travelling to or from school when in Selby High School uniform.
- Students should be asked to contribute to the review of the drugs policy through feedback about the education provided and if it is meeting their needs.
- Unless there is a serious breach of the policy, students should be able to remain in school and access support for substance misuse issues that they self-identify or are brought to the school's attention.

Parents/Carers

These following websites provide supporting information for parents/carers to enable them to access information about a range of substances but also information about how to talk to their children about these important issues. This information could be available on the school website for parents/carers to access alongside information about support service in North Yorkshire for young people to help with substance misuse issues.

Talk to Frank www.talktofrank.com	• Information on a range of substances both legal and illegal • Information on how to talk to your child about these issues
Drinkaware https://www.drinkaware.co.uk How to talk to your child about alcohol Drinkaware	• Raising awareness and providing information alcohol, health issues, legislation and drinking • Has a specific section aimed at parents/carers about how to talk to

	your child about alcohol – including a short film
North Yorkshire Healthy Child Team https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/education-and-learning/support-schools/healthy-child-service#:~:text=Parents%20and%20carers%20can%20contact,by%20calling%2003003%20030%20916.	The healthy child service links health, education and social care to improve the health of all children aged 6 to 19 (up to 25 for SEND). It plays an important role by working to address the health needs of children and young people
Compass Phoenix (North Yorkshire) Compass Phoenix (North Yorkshire)	The aim of the Compass Phoenix service is to improve outcomes for children and young people in relation to their emotional wellbeing and mental health by strengthening the range of mental health support available to children and young people.
North Yorkshire Rise NY Rise - targeted and specific support relating to drugs and alcohol working under the umbrella of Waythrough Waythrough - comprehensive advice and support which includes more than support for drugs and alcohol	These services, commissioned by North Yorkshire County Council and delivered by national charity Humankind alongside The Richmond Fellowship, is aimed at reaching young people aged 18 and under (and 19 – 24 with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) who need support around drugs and alcohol.

Parental Consent

Safeguarding and the best interests of the young person are paramount, particularly if they are engaging in risk taking behaviour and require support to address this. Therefore, whilst a student will be encouraged to involve their parents/carers/guardians, if they do not want to do so and this is preventing them from accessing services such as the school health service, Targeted Youth Support Adviser, Compass Phoenix, NY Rise then a referral would ordinarily be made with parental consent, however where a child is deemed to be Gillick Competent (1985) in the professional view of the agency, referrals can be made with sole consent of the young person. In these cases the following criteria will be used:

Usually, young people over 16 (Compass Phoenix - permits 13+ self referrals) should be able to consent to treatment and confidentiality. The Fraser guidelines (1999) identify that young people under the age of 16 can consent to medical advice and treatment, provided that:

- They understand the advice and have the maturity to understand what is involved - Gillick Competency.
- The professional cannot persuade them to inform the person who holds parental responsibility or allow the professional to inform that person.
- Their physical or mental health will suffer if they do not have treatment.

- It is in their best interests to give such treatment without parental consent.
- In the case of contraception or substance misuse, young people will continue to put themselves at risk of harm if they do not have advice or treatment (Fraser guidelines (Mental Health Act 1983 Code of Practice 1999) quoted in SCODA 2000).

Link to Fraser and Gillick Guidelines <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-protection-system/gillick-competence-fraser-guidelines#:~:text=Medical%20professionals%20need%20to%20consider%20Gillick%20competency,competence%20%2D%20see%20case%20history%20and%20legislation.>

Young People's Drug and Alcohol Support Services - NY Rise

Some students engaged in risk taking behaviours related to drugs and alcohol may at times require further support from NY Rise. The school should refer the student, with their consent to the service. The school will allow its premises to be used for any targeted intervention work with the student(s).

NY Rise will provide the full range of specialist interventions required by students who have been screened as having moderate or high levels of need with regard to their substance misuse and/or sexual health.

Drug Education Curriculum

The DfE and ACPO drug advice for schools (2012) suggests that “ School staff are best placed to decide on the most appropriate response to tackling drugs within their school. This is most effective when:

- it is supported by the whole school community;
- drug education is part of a well-planned programme of PSHE education delivered in a supportive environment, where pupils are aware of the school rules, feel able to engage in open discussion and feel confident about asking for help if necessary”

Selby High School's aim for the drugs and alcohol curriculum is to increase student's **knowledge** and understanding and clarify misconceptions about:

- The short and long term effects and risks of drugs.
- The rules and laws relating to drugs.
- The impact of drugs on individuals, families and communities.
- The prevalence and acceptability of drug use among peers.
- The complex moral, social, emotional and political issues surrounding drugs.

and develop student's personal and social **skills** to make informed decisions and keep themselves safe and healthy:

- Assessing, avoiding and managing risk.
- Communicating effectively.
- Resisting pressure.
- Finding information, advice and help.
- Devising problem solving and coping strategies.
- Developing self-awareness and self-esteem.

The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education statutory guidance (2025) sets out the following aims for the curriculum in relation to drugs and substance misuse:

Drugs, alcohol and tobacco – by the end of secondary school, pupils should know:

- The facts about which drugs are illegal, the risks of taking illegal drugs, including the increased risk of potent synthetic drugs being added to illegal drugs, the risks of illicit vapes containing drugs, illicit drugs and counterfeit medicines, and the potential health harms, including the link to poor mental health.
- The law relating to the supply and possession of illegal substances.

- The physical and psychological risks associated with alcohol consumption. What constitutes low risk alcohol consumption in adulthood, and the legal age of sale for alcohol in England. Understanding how to increase personal safety while drinking alcohol, including how to decrease the risks of having a drink spiked or of poisoning from potentially fatal substances such as methanol.
- The physical and psychological consequences of problem-use of alcohol, including alcohol dependency.
- The dangers of the misuse of prescribed and over-the-counter medicines.
- The facts about the multiple serious harms from smoking tobacco (particularly the link to lung cancer and cardiovascular disease), the benefits of quitting and how to access support to do so.
- The facts about vaping, including the harms posed to young people, and the role that vapes can play in helping adult smokers to quit.

Well-being online – **by the end of secondary school, pupils should know:**

- The risks of illegal behaviours online, including drug and knife supply or the sale or purchasing of illicit drugs online.

The curriculum will enable students to explore their own and other people's **attitudes** towards drugs, drug use and drug users, including challenging stereotypes and exploring media and social influences.

Drug education is part of the Values Curriculum and also National Curriculum Science and is timetabled across the year groups. An outline of the planned curriculum can be found on the school website at: <http://www.selbyhigh.n-yorks.sch.uk/News/Curriculum/>.

Research has shown that the most effective drug education utilises a variety of teaching and learning styles and students are most engaged when actively involved rather than passively listening. Our programme will therefore have an emphasis on interactive work and will engage students in critical thinking, discussing, sharing views and opinions, exploring attitudes and values, researching, reflecting on and applying knowledge and understanding about substance use and misuse. Establishing a safe learning environment and using third-person distancing techniques will be encouraged so that students will better appreciate that substance use and misuse involves making choices, taking responsibility and predicting or accepting consequences.

Drug education is delivered by teachers, and from time to time with support from partners including the police, health professionals, and other partners such as theatre companies.

Searching and Confiscation

The law permits school staff to take temporary possession of a substance suspected of being an illegal drug for the purpose of protecting a student from harm and to prevent an offence committed in relation to that drug.

1. Request that the student hand over the article(s) preferably in front of another adult witness.
2. Having taken possession of the substance/paraphernalia, the procedure should be followed as above (finding a substance).

Staff should refer to the Searching and Confiscation guidance in the Positive Relational Behaviour Policy

When to Contact the Police

The school recognises that responses to drug-related incidents should prioritise safeguarding, education, and early intervention. However, there are circumstances where it is appropriate to involve the police.

The decision to contact the police will be made by the Principal or Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), taking into account the specific context, level of risk, and the school's safeguarding responsibilities, in line with Department for Education guidance and Keeping Children Safe in Education.

The police will normally be contacted in the following circumstances:

- Where there is reason to believe that a student is involved in drug supply or distribution
- Where a student is found in possession of a significant quantity of illegal drugs
- Where there is evidence of organised or repeated drug-related activity
- Where violence, threats, or coercion are linked to drug-related incidents
- Where there is a risk to the safety of students, staff, or the wider community
- Where the school identifies possible involvement in county lines or exploitation

The police may also be contacted:

- Where there is uncertainty about the nature of a substance or a need for safe disposal
- Where a drug-related incident is part of a wider safeguarding concern
- Where advised to do so by external safeguarding partners

Situations where police involvement may not be necessary:

- The school will consider alternative responses, such as internal sanctions and safeguarding support, where:
 - There is no immediate risk to others
 - The incident is isolated and better addressed through pastoral support and education

In such cases, the school will prioritise early help, which may include referral to appropriate services such as North Yorkshire Rise.

The school will always act in the best interests of the child, balancing the need for safeguarding with its duty to uphold the law.

Suspected Drug use off the School Premises

Under the DfE guidance on behaviour and discipline, schools should consider their response to incidents that happen outside the school gate where they:

- could have repercussions for the orderly running of the school
- pose a threat to another student or member of the public
- could adversely affect the reputation of the school

In all of these circumstances the Principal should also consider whether it is appropriate to notify the police in their local authority of the actions taken against a student. If the behaviour is criminal or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police should always be informed. In addition, school staff should consider whether the misbehaviour may be linked to the child suffering, or being likely to suffer, significant harm. In this case the school staff should follow the Child Protection policy.

Vapes and E-Cigarettes

The school recognises the increasing prevalence of vaping among young people and is committed to responding in line with current legislation, safeguarding guidance, and public health advice.

Legal Status

- It is illegal to sell nicotine-containing e-cigarettes (vapes) to anyone under the age of 18 in the UK. ([healthmedia.blog.gov.uk](https://www.healthmedia.blog.gov.uk))
- From 1 June 2025, it is illegal to sell or supply single-use (disposable) vapes in the UK under environmental and public health legislation. ([GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk))
- The Tobacco and Vapes Bill will introduce further restrictions on vaping products, including tighter controls on marketing, packaging, and youth access.

Use of Vapes by Young People

- Vaping is not risk-free and is not recommended for children or non-smokers. ([ASH](https://www.ash.org.uk))

- National data indicates that a significant proportion of secondary-aged pupils have tried vaping, with regular use increasing in recent years. ([NHS England](#))
- There is growing concern about **illicit/modified vapes** containing substances such as THC, spice, or ketamine
- Reports suggest **significant use of THC vapes among young people** in some areas
- The school treats vaping as a health and safeguarding concern, particularly due to nicotine addiction and potential links to wider risk-taking behaviours.

Safeguarding and Health Approach. In line with Department for Education guidance and NHS advice

- Incidents involving vaping will be addressed through a combination of sanctions, education, and support.
- Students may be referred to appropriate support services where there are concerns about dependency or underlying needs.
- Repeated or serious incidents should be treated as a safeguarding concern, particularly where there is evidence of supply or exploitation.

Preventative Education

Educating young people to allow them to make informed and sensible choices is a key preventative measure when considering the use of vapes and e-cigarettes.

As such, this topic is covered as part of our Life Development curriculum, with age-appropriate content delivered throughout KS3 and KS4. See the curriculum pages of our school website for more information.

Searching & Confiscation

The principal and authorised staff have the statutory powers to search a student or their possessions where there are grounds to believe that a prohibited item has been brought into school. Vapes and e-cigarettes are prohibited items within school and as such they can be searched for, within the framework of the statutory guidance (see above for further information and a link to statutory guidance).

Where a student is found in possession of a vape, e-cigarette or associated paraphernalia, this will be confiscated and disposed of by the school and not returned to the student.

Consequences

The possession of or use of a vape or e-cigarette within school, or on the way to or from school is a serious concern and as such, a consequence will be given. Possession or use of a vape or e-cigarette will result in a period of time in the Hub as a minimum, dependent upon the circumstances of the incident.

Current and Emerging Drug Trends

Increasing Ketamine Use Among Young People

- Ketamine use has **risen significantly in recent years**, with more young people entering treatment
- Prevalence among 16–24s has increased compared to previous years
- Now seen as one of the **most concerning emerging drugs in youth settings**.

Nitrous Oxide (Laughing Gas) and Inhalants

- Continued concern despite legal changes (Class C drug since 2023)
- Increasing numbers of young people in treatment for inhalant misuse
- Use remains visible due to:
 - accessibility

- social media trends
- large canisters (“whippets”)

Illicit and Synthetic Drugs (e.g. Spice, Nitazenes)

- Reports of **synthetic cannabinoids (spice)** being used by some pupils
- Emergence of **highly potent synthetic opioids (e.g. nitazenes)** linked to increased harm and deaths
- These substances are:
 - unpredictable
 - often mixed into other drugs
 - harder to detect

Continued Use of Cannabis and Other Substances

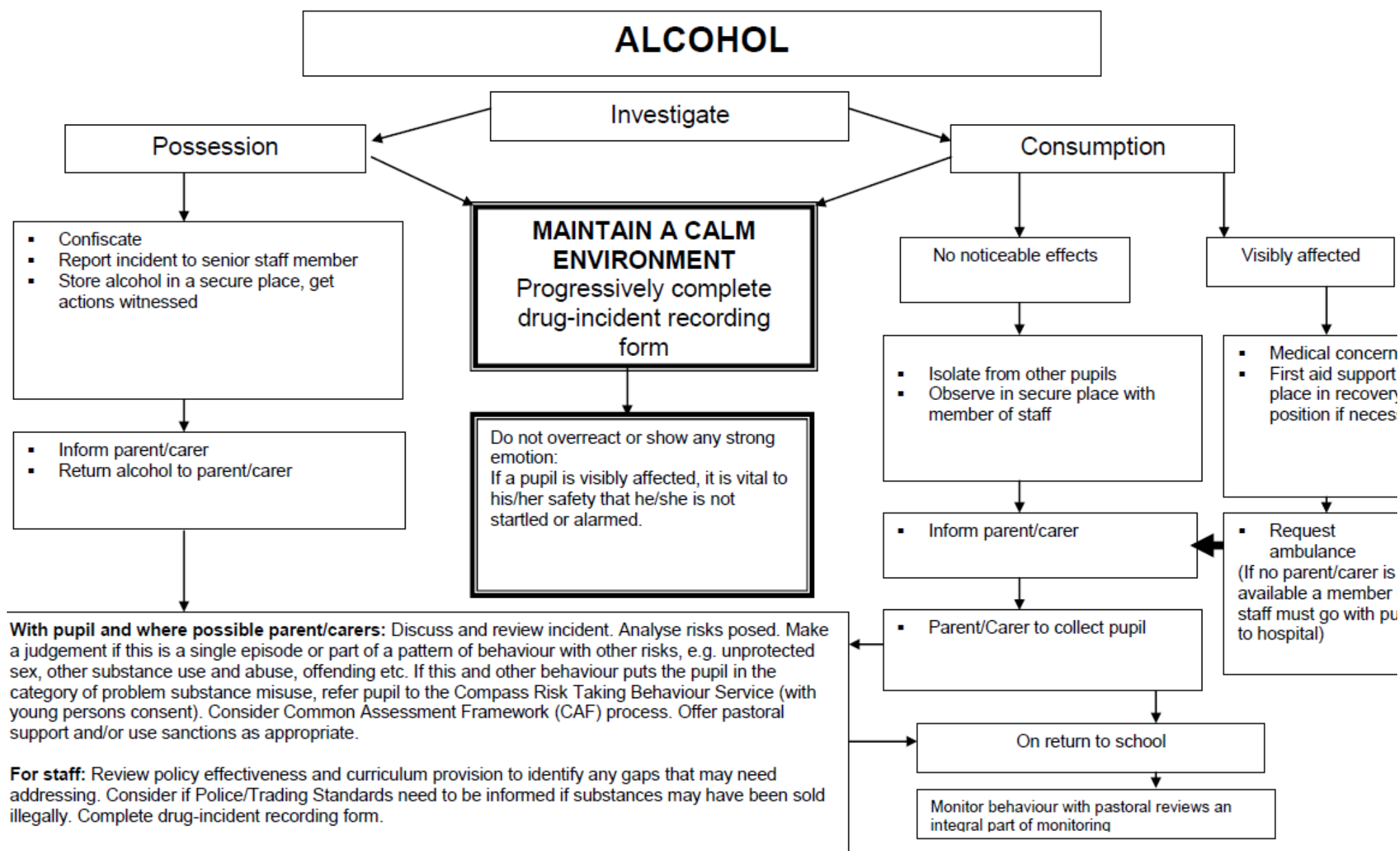
- Cannabis remains the **most commonly used drug** among young people
- Around:
 - **9% of pupils report recent illicit drug use**
- Use increases significantly with age (e.g. by age 15)

Changing Drug Trends and Accessibility

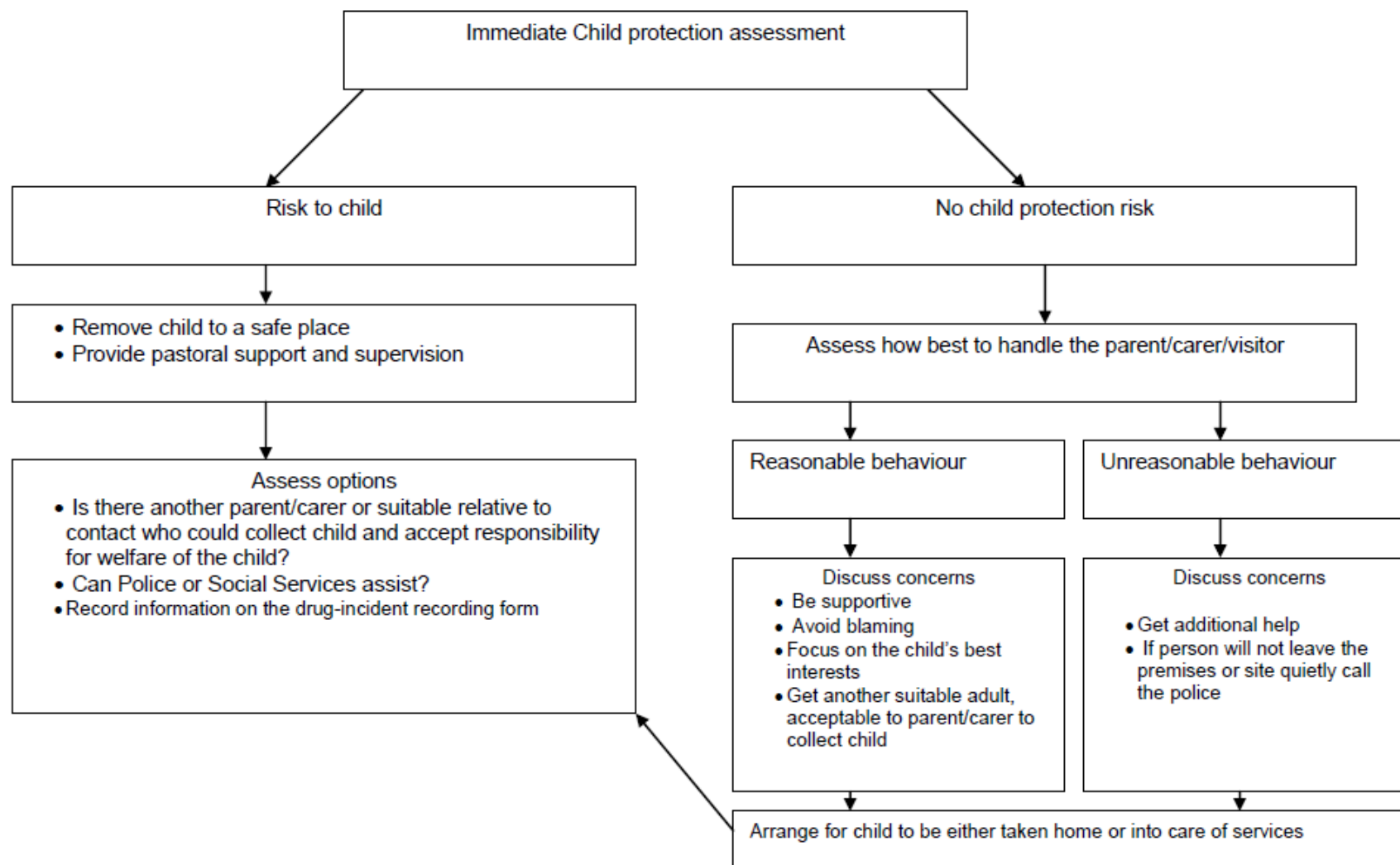
- Drug trends are **constantly evolving**, including:
 - online access
 - social media influence
 - misleading marketing (e.g. vapes, flavoured products)
- Some substances are perceived as **“low risk” when they are not**.

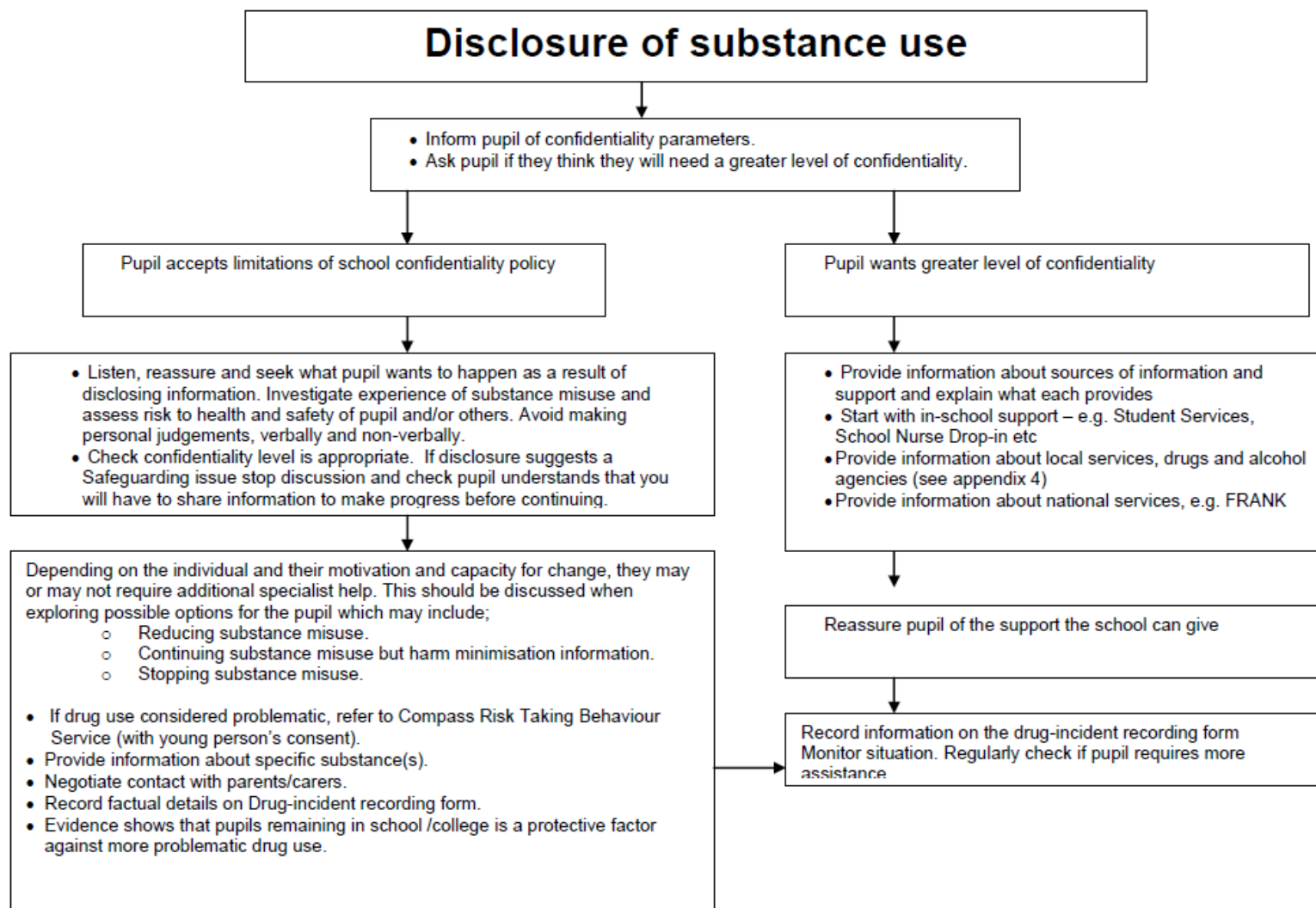
Review of the Policy

A full review of the drug policy should take place annually. This is the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the PSHEE & C coordinator in conjunction with the Principal.

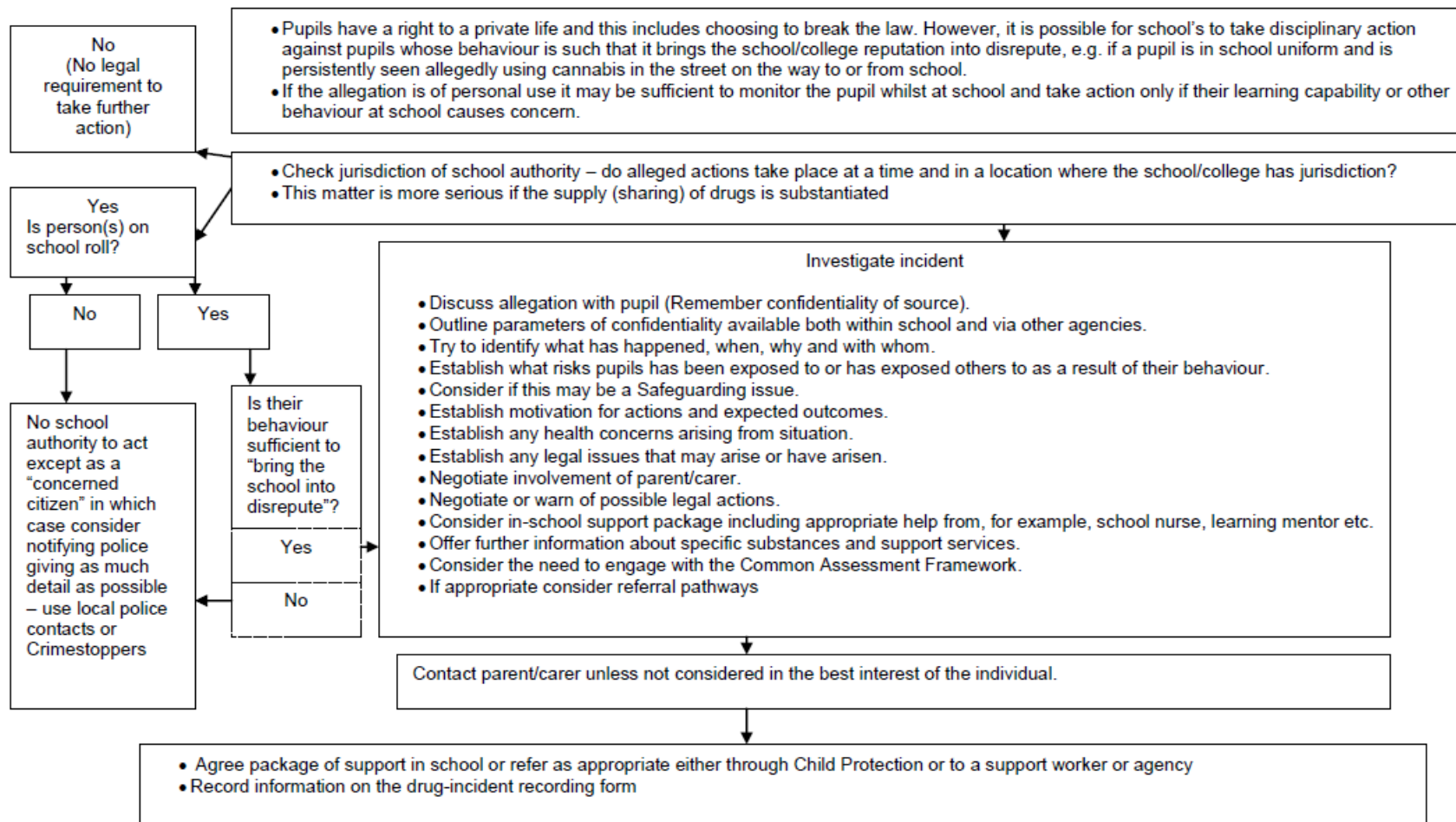


Parents/Carers/Visitors affected by alcohol or other substances on school premises

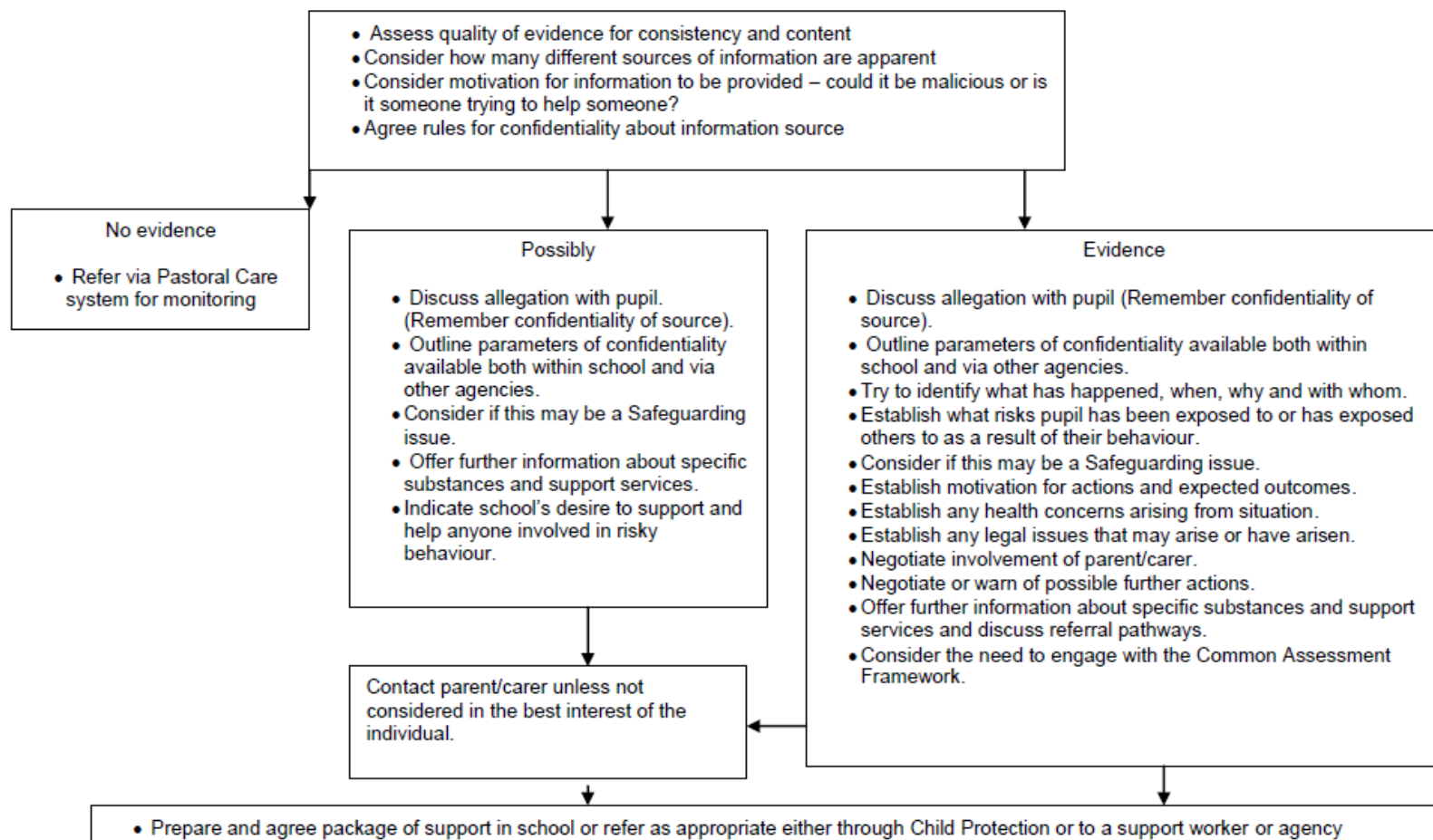




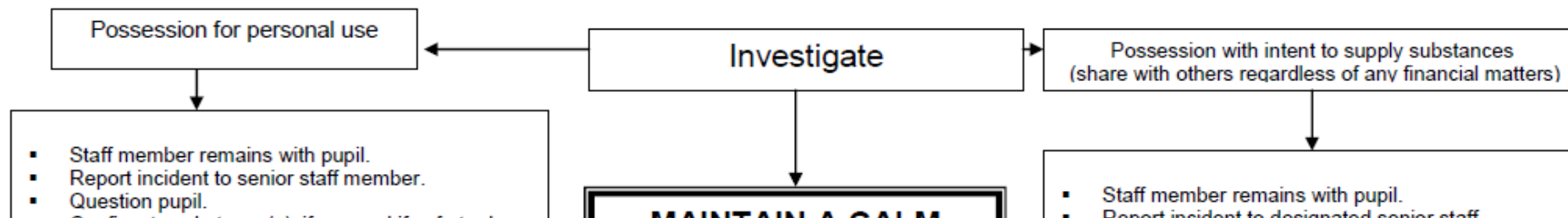
Pupil using/supplying substances out of school

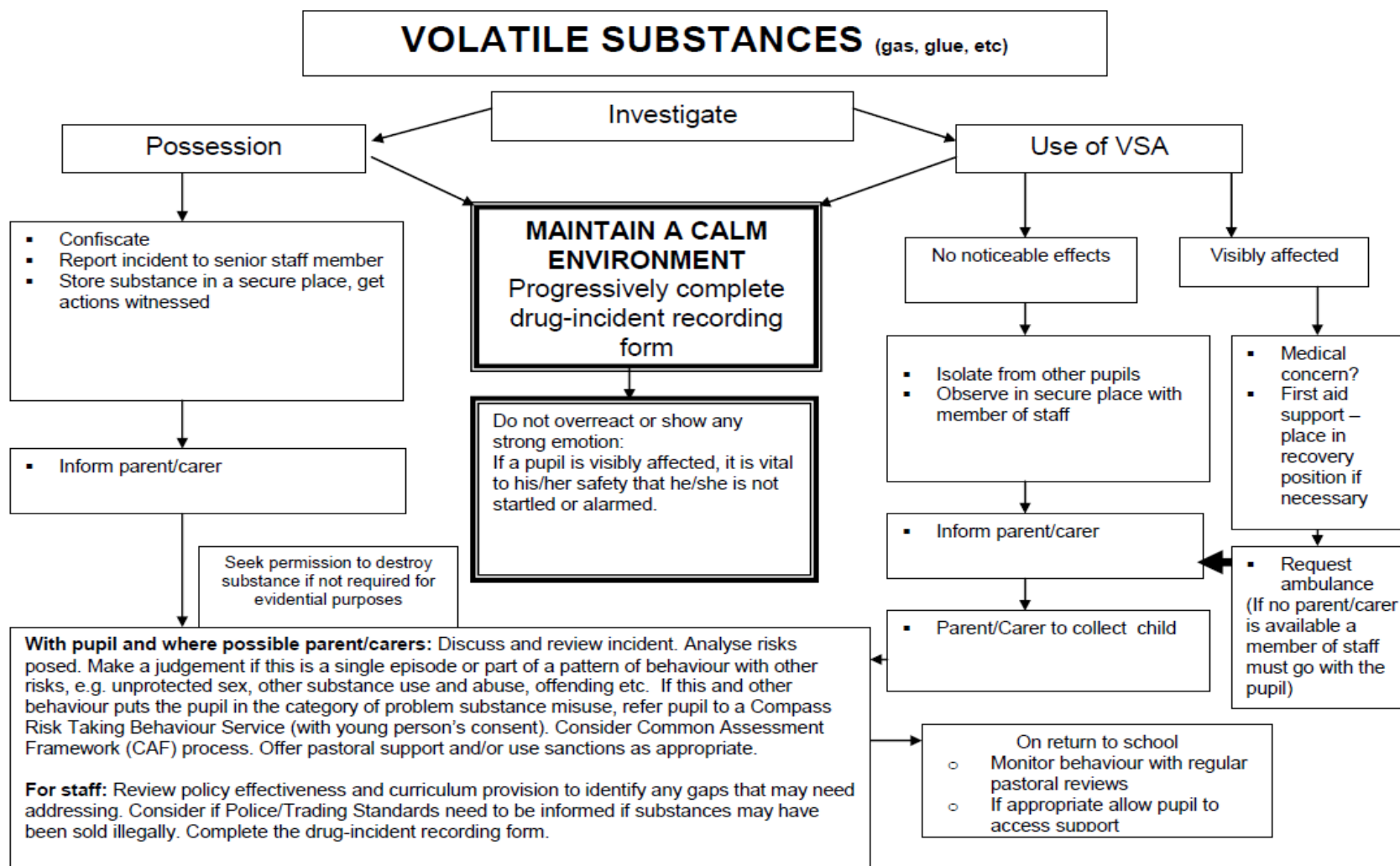


Rumour of substance use or misuse in school



ILLEGAL DRUGS – possession/supply





ILLEGAL DRUGS – possession/supply

