

Joining forces to keep Hampshire's young people safe



Keeping young people safe: Headteachers and principals from across the New Forest have launched a new initiative to keep their young people safe from the harm of drugs. Called Hampshire Safe, the new scheme has received the support of Hampshire Police.

Thirteen schools and colleges across the New Forest have joined forces to form a new alliance aimed at keeping their students safe from harm.

The focus of the new partnership, called Hampshire Safe, is to educate and warn their students about the dangers of drugs.

Member schools have developed a drug prevention and substance misuse strategy and will be introducing initiatives and offering safeguarding advice throughout the year.

Speaking on behalf of Hampshire Safe, Principal of Brockenhurst College, Di Roberts CBE, said: "As headteachers and principals we all share a common concern of the dangers that drugs can present to our students.

"Although none of our schools and colleges have a serious problem with drug misuse we are determined to keep it that way.

"Our overriding message is that we will do everything we can to protect our young people.

"Prevention will be the main key to this and we will be educating our young people to the dangers of drugs.

“Deterrents will also be a part of the partnership and we will, from time to time, use specialist dogs to detect any drugs that may have been brought onto our sites.”

Hampshire Safe includes Noadswood School, Ringwood School, New Forest Academy, The Arnewood School, The Burgate School, Totton College, Brockenhurst College, Eaglewood School, Applemore College, Priestlands School, Greenwood School, Testwood School and Hounslow School.

The partnership is launching this new initiative with assemblies across all its schools and colleges and a social media education campaign aimed at students.

Nigel Pressnell, headteacher of The Arnewood School, added: “Our schools and colleges are all based in rural or semi-rural areas but the reality is that even here there are concerns over the access to drugs in our communities.

“As schools and colleges we play an important role alongside parents and the police in educating and preventing our young people from falling victims to drug misuse.

“We believe as a partnership we are even stronger in this fight in safeguarding our students from harm.”

Temporary Inspector from Hampshire Police, Paul Beale, said: “We welcome and support the robust action being taken by New Forest schools and colleges to tackle drug misuse.

“We will continue to work closely with schools to educate students about the dangers of drugs and deal with offences as they occur.”

ENDS



Dear Parent/Carer

Joining forces to keep our young people safe

As parents, carers and teachers we all want the same for our children – and that is for them to be safeguarded and fully prepared for adult life.

Young people today face many new pressures that were not such an issue when we were young. One area of concern is access to drugs and the range of substances now available.

We are determined to do our bit to not only educate your children to the harms of drug abuse but also make access to these substances far more difficult while young people are in our care.

That is why we, a 13-strong group of New Forest headteachers, have joined forces on drug prevention and formed a new partnership called **Hampshire Safe**.

We believe that by working together we can collectively not only raise awareness of the impact of substance misuse but also put measures in place to stop it from happening at our schools and colleges.

Over the next few weeks and months we shall be working with students to raise further their awareness of the impact of substance misuse.

We will also be offering parents/carers the opportunity to receive up-to-date information, using resources approved by Hampshire Police. Headteachers and principals across the New Forest and Waterside have also agreed with their governing bodies a common strategy on addressing substance misuse. This is available on your school or college's website.

As part of this anti-drug strategy, drug detection dogs will periodically be deployed with no notice in local secondary schools, colleges and pupil referral units to ensure our premises are drugs free.

We wish to reassure you that the dogs will be deployed to search a whole building and not individuals. However, during their search the dogs may detect drugs on students or in property belonging to students. Should that happen, anyone suspected to be in possession of illegal substances may be searched. Police assistance will be provided where necessary and of course parents/carers would be informed at the earliest opportunity. Additionally, students and families affected would be signposted to counselling and family support services. Any student found in possession of illegal substances could be at risk of exclusion or face prosecution.

We hope you will support us as a schools and colleges that are taking a strong stance against substance abuse.

Our schools and colleges are safe places and we will do everything we can to maintain this. Above all, we shall seek to educate our young people about the dangers of drugs, because prevention is always the best policy.

You can assist us and the police in keeping our community safe by reporting any suspicious local activity to Hampshire Police by calling 101.

Thank you for supporting this New Forest-wide initiative.

Should you wish to discuss this further, please contact your school's headteacher or college vice-principal.

For your information, the 13 schools and colleges working together are:

Noadswood School, Ringwood School, New Forest Academy, The Arnewood School, The Burgate School, Totton College, Brockenhurst College, Eaglewood School, Applemore College, Priestlands School, Greenwood School, Testwood School and Hounslow School.

Yours faithfully

Miss K Marshall

Headteacher

