

**This is a copy of the criteria for the Healthy Schools'
Understanding Substances Specialist Award**

**Please use this as a guide only as we will only
accept online submissions via our [website](#).**





Understanding Substances Specialist Award

Welcome to the Bristol Healthy Schools' Understanding Substances Specialist Award

What is the Understanding Substances Specialist Award?

The Understanding Substances Specialist Award aims to prevent, delay and reduce the use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs among young people in Bristol.

The Understanding Substances Specialist Award:

- Focuses on a whole school approach to preventing and delaying substance misuse
- Looks at how a school might address concerns when young people, staff or parents/carers are using substances.
- Highlights the importance of staff skills and clear pathways to support young people

The award has been designed in an age-appropriate way, meaning that the criteria are suitable for both primary and secondary level settings.

The secondary level criteria include more detail about protecting oneself from risk and, where appropriate, signposting young people to support services.

The award is informed by local and national guidance and evidence.

Is this the right award for us?

Typically schools decide a topic of focus based on health need. The School Community Health Profiles provided by Bristol City Council/ Healthy Schools provide a good insight and schools may also have their own data and insight.

How long does it take?

Each Specialist award takes up to a year but it may take only a few months if you already have good practice in place.

How does the online system work?

Throughout your journey you can log in and out as many times as you like, updating your evidence as you go. Your email address becomes your login. Please keep saving your changes as you go.

Most of the criteria require a Yes/No response, others ask for more detail via a text box. We never ask you to upload documents or provide additional evidence. Only this form is needed.

IMPORTANT: Do not click the back button at the top left of your browser as you complete the form. To go back to the previous section, click 'previous page' at the bottom of the survey.

Do I get guidance?

Yes, there is guidance throughout. This will either help you make sense of what we are asking for, or signpost you to helpful documents. For example, we might ask you to write a policy about something. In that case, we have provided you with an example policy and that should save you time.

If you would like a word version of all the criteria and guidance for reference, please visit our [website](#).

At any point, you can email us for help or further guidance on healthy.schools@bristol.gov.uk.

How do I know if I've passed?

To pass this award, you need to be able to answer 'yes' or 'correct' to every question (other than the text box questions) as they are all essential. If you answer 'no' or 'incorrect' to any question, you will have the opportunity, at the end of the application form, to tell us why and what you are doing to work towards this criteria.

We will consider your response but it may be that you need some extra time to put the required practice in place and should re-submit once you have done so. We will support you to achieve this.

We aim to advise you, via email, of the outcome of your application within 3 weeks of

submitting. The outcome will either be 'Pass' or 'Further work and/or clarification needed'. If the latter, we will provide you with feedback and guidance about what you need to do to pass.

If you do not pass the first time, you can re-submit your application as many times as you need, although we hope that the guidance is clear enough that this won't be necessary.

Good luck!

Establishing a Healthy Schools foundation (p.1)

The Healthy Schools team encourage all schools to sign up to the [Essential Award](#) before completing Specialist Awards. The Essential Award covers key health and wellbeing topics and sets the foundations for creating a healthy and happy school. You can sign up on the Healthy Schools website by filling out the first page of the [Essential Award application](#). By completing the Dental Health Specialist Award, you will have already made some progress towards the Essential Award.

1. Have you achieved or are you 'working towards' the Bristol Healthy Schools Essential Award?

('Working towards' the Essential Award means that you have started the online application and you are implementing the criteria.)

Yes

No

Establishing a Healthy Schools foundation (p.2)

These initial steps involve completing a brief self-assessment and making sure that you have established a foundation for your healthy school's work. This foundation will provide you with a support network, leadership, and strategic focus, all of which will strengthen your successes.

Before proceeding with the application, it's important to complete this initial self-assessment. This short survey is designed to:

- act as a benchmarking tool to determine your current status.
- provide a quick overview of where you might focus your efforts.
- identify areas where the Healthy Schools' team can provide extra support.

[Please click here to fill in the short Dental Health Award Initial Self-Assessment.](#)

The answers to this survey will not be used in your final assessment. The information will only be used at the start of your process to highlight where we can be of support. Your honest responses are greatly appreciated as they will help us better understand your starting point.

2. Whilst establishing your Healthy Schools foundation or working on the Essential Award, have you completed the following?

Action	Yes	No
Our School Improvement Plan has a section on improving health and wellbeing.		
We have a Healthy Schools Coordinator.		
We have established a Healthy Schools Steering Group. The Groups meets at least 3 times a year and has a wide representation.		
We have a pupil Healthy Schools Team with representation from across the year groups OR We have included Healthy Schools as a standing item for every School Council meeting.		
Our school has taken part in the Bristol Pupil Voice Survey or/and we commit to taking part in the next round (2024).		

Smoking and vaping-free school

3. We are a smoking and vaping free school and we have removed any areas previously designated for smoking or vaping:

- Yes
 No

4. Please describe briefly how you make it clear to pupils, parents/ carers, staff and visitors that smoking and vaping are not permitted anywhere in your grounds at any time:

Schools are subject to the same [smoke free legislation](#) as any other premises. The smoking and vaping free policy must apply to everyone using the school premises for any purpose at any time.

Responding to drug, alcohol, smoking and vaping-related incidents in school

5. We have clear processes in place for responding to drug, alcohol, smoking and vaping-related incidents within our school and all members of staff are fully aware of, and adhere to these:

- Yes
 No

6. We do not use exclusion as an automatic response to drug, alcohol, smoking and vaping-related incidents within our school:

- Correct
 Incorrect

7. Please describe briefly how drug, alcohol, smoking and vaping-related incidents are monitored and responded to within the school:

We have put together detailed [guidance on how your school should respond to drug-related incidents](#).

For smoking and vaping-related incidents:

Pupils should be made aware of the illegalities involved in smoking or using e-cigarettes underage. Key health messages should be explained, both to the individual and as part of a whole-school approach. Schools may choose to remove cigarettes or e-cigarette paraphernalia and dispose of these or ask parents to collect. If a pupil wishes to stop smoking, they should be signposted to [Childline's stop smoking advice for under 18's](#). Support should also be offered by the school's pastoral team or school nurse. If a staff member is made aware of a shop or other vendor illegally selling cigarettes or e-cigarettes to under 18's, this can be reported anonymously at <https://www.swillegaltobacco.info/>.

Drugs, alcohol, smoking and vaping education

8. We deliver age-appropriate drugs, alcohol, smoking and vaping education as part of PSHE, to all pupils, in all year groups:

Yes

No

9. Our drugs, alcohol, smoking and vaping education meets the following criteria:

	Yes	No
Lessons focus on the development of life skills (resilience, healthy decision-making, resisting peer pressure etc.) which reduce the likelihood of young people starting to drink, smoke or take drugs, and help to minimise harm if they do start.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pupils are given the opportunity to practice these skills through interactive learning.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lessons are 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.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pupils are taught about the risks and health implications of legal and illegal substances, and about how the media, role models, parents, peers and society can influence substance use.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lessons are tailored to the particular needs of the pupils, e.g. where there is a known issue with smoking, this is given extra attention.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Drug, alcohol, smoking and vaping education is taught holistically, as part of the wider PSHE curriculum, given the interrelationship between this topic and many others within PSHE, such as mental health, sex and relationships and safety.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Useful teaching guidance and resources, including lesson plans:

- [Alcohol Education Trust](#): Teachers area
- [Bristol Healthy Schools](#): Understanding Substances
- [PSHE Association](#): Alcohol teaching resources

- [PSHE Association](#): Drug and alcohol education
- [Public Health England](#): Smoking lesson plan
- [Mentor UK](#): Information and teaching resources for schools
- [National Institute on Drug Abuse for Teens](#): Lesson plans

10. All members of staff delivering education on drugs, alcohol, smoking and vaping, have the knowledge and skills to be able to do this confidently and effectively:

- Yes
- No

High quality PSHE training should cover the knowledge and skills required to deliver drugs and alcohol education, especially if your school is using a high quality PSHE programme, which has drugs and alcohol education woven throughout.

The focus of any training should be on the ability and confidence of teachers to support pupils to develop life skills and make healthy choices.

Drug and alcohol organisations, such as the [PSHE Association](#), the [Alcohol Trust](#) and [Mentor UK](#) also offer specialist training and consultancy services which your school may wish to access.

11. Please list all relevant training that members of staff have undertaken within the last 2 years that has equipped them with the skills to deliver effective drug and alcohol education:

Understanding the needs of our school population

12. We have a good understanding of the needs of our school population in relation to drugs, alcohol, smoking and vaping:

- Yes
- No

13. Please describe briefly what you do to understand the needs of your school population in relation to drugs, alcohol, smoking and vaping:

This could include: Pupil Voice and other pupil questionnaires/ surveys, effective use of pupil data and information gathered by the pastoral team, school nurses, parents/ carers and the wider community, including police and local support services, PSHE lessons, focus groups, circle time, comments boxes and a dedicated email box for pupils' questions or concerns.

Identifying pupils and others at risk of, or using drugs, alcohol, smoking or vaping

14. We have clear strategies in place to identify pupils at risk of, or using drugs, alcohol, smoking or vaping and/or affected by the substance use of parents/ carers or others:

Yes

No

15. Please describe briefly some of the strategies you have in place to identify those at risk of, or using drugs, alcohol, smoking or vaping:

Identification

At risk groups include, but are not limited to, pupils in care/ on the edge of care, living with parents/carers who smoke or misuse substances, at risk of exclusion and/or involved with criminal justice services.

Strategies to identify pupils at risk could include: effective use of data such as behaviour logs, attendance and attainment data, Pupil Voice and other pupil questionnaires, emotional check-ins and pupil reviews meetings, comments boxes and a dedicated email box for pupils' and a strong pastoral support system so that one member of staff knows every pupil well and can spot problems quickly.

Identifying needs will involve distinguishing between pupils who require general information and education, those who require targeted prevention, and those who require a detailed needs assessment and more intensive support.

Advice, guidance and support should:

- Be offered both within and outside school, and in a range of different formats, depending on pupils' needs and preferences.
- Be high-quality, evidence-based and age-appropriate.
- Involve pastoral staff and school nurses.
- Include signposting and referrals to specialist services, including the [Youth Team at](#)

[Bristol Drugs Project](#). (Signposting and referrals should be followed up to ensure that pupils receive the support they need).

- Follow best practice on child protection, consent and confidentiality. More information can be found here: [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#).

Supporting pupils and others at risk of, or using drugs, alcohol, smoking or vaping

16. Pupils are aware of the support available for drugs, alcohol, smoking and vaping, for themselves and for others, including parents/ carers:

Yes

No

17. Please describe briefly (a). how pupils are made aware of this support, including the fact that it can be accessed confidentially, and (b). how you know that pupils are aware of this support:

Mechanisms for sharing information with pupils, and for them to feedback, could include: PSHE lessons, focus groups, circle time, assemblies, comments boxes, a dedicated email box, Pupil Voice and other pupil questionnaires.

Pupils (and parents/carers and school staff) should have information about a range of support services, including services for young people and adults; for drugs, alcohol, smoking and vaping; and for those worried about another person's substance misuse (young people/ parents/ carers/ other family members). They should be told about where to find reliable information and advice online. Some useful sources are listed below.

Support services:

- [Bristol ROADS](#) – A partnership of drug and alcohol services for adults, including support for family members
- [Bristol Drugs Project Youth Team](#) - Supports young people who use drugs or alcohol themselves, or who are affected by parent/carers drug or alcohol use
- [NHS Quitting smoking for under 18's](#) - Smoking cessation advice and support for under 18's
- [NHS Smokefree](#) - Smoking cessation advice and support for all ages

Online advice and support:

- [Talk to Frank](#): Honest information about drugs
- [Talk to Frank](#): Advice for parents/ carers
- [Alcohol Change UK](#): Advice, information and support
- [The Mix](#): Drink and drugs information and guidance for under 25's
- [Health for Teens](#): E-Cigarettes
- [Mentor UK](#): Pupils with parents affected by substance misuse

18. Staff are aware of the support available for pupils, parents/ carers and themselves in relation to drug, alcohol, smoking and vaping:

- Yes
- No

18. Describe briefly how staff are made aware of this support, including the fact that it can be accessed confidentially:

This could include information on the staff notice board, on the staff intranet and via leaflets and posters in staff room, staff toilets etc.

Sources of advice, guidance and support, including information specifically for teachers, are listed above.

20. We provide advice and guidance to parents about drugs, alcohol, smoking and vaping, including the importance of talking to their children about substances and the support available:

- Yes
- No

This could include events and programmes hosted by the school e.g. parent activity programmes, parenting skills programmes, adult education classes or family learning sessions, as well as posters, leaflets and information included in the school's newsletter and website.

Sources of advice, guidance and support, including information specifically for parents, are listed above.

What are you most proud of?

21. Please tell us about something that you are particularly proud of in relation to your school's approach to Understanding Substances:

Tell us what you think

22. If you answered 'no' or 'incorrect' to any of the questions, please tell us why you are not able to comply with this criteria at present, what the barriers are, what steps you are taking to work towards being able to comply and when you expect this to be possible (if at all). We will consider your response when we review your application. Please state clearly which criteria/ question(s) your answer refers to, including the section heading and question number.

23. Finally, to help us improve, please give us some feedback on this award, e.g. What was your experience of completing it? Was it clear what was required? What did you think of the criteria? Does anything need to change?

Well done!