



## **PRESCRIBED MEDICATIONS POLICY**

### **Ritalin & Other Similar Substances**

#### **Ritalin (Methylphenidate)**

This is stimulant medication that is most commonly prescribed to treat children and young persons with ADHD (Attention Deficit Disorder) as well as other Hyperkinetic disorders.

#### **How does it work?**

Ritalin works by stimulating parts of the brain which are responsible for consciousness and control of attention and activity thus increasing concentration ability and decreasing restlessness.

#### **Usual doses**

Those on Ritalin usually need to take their medication during the middle of the day as the effects wear off after 4 -5 hours.

#### **Side Effects**

The main side effects are reduced appetite and staying awake. This can be counteracted by giving the last dose after the lunch meal so that evening meals and sleep are not affected.

This method of dosage means that often students on this drug may have to bring the drug onto college premises.

#### **What risks could this involve?**

Any drug can be misused and when Ritalin is misused it may be taken orally or crushed and sniffed.

In rare cases it may be injected. Some adult stimulant users mix Ritalin with heroine or with both cocaine and heroine for a more potent effect. There has been some reporting of Ritalin being used as a cheap alternative to 'speed' or cocaine, or being used by young women as an appetite suppressant.

There have been some cases when children and young children are being forced to give away their Ritalin or selling it for illegitimate use by others.

#### **What measures can be taken?**

A student who has been prescribed a controlled drug may legally have it in their possession.

However due to its potential for misuse it is advisable for Ritalin to be stored securely so that others are not put at risk. This action may also protect the student concerned to some extent from accusations of inappropriate use/handling – if, as far as possible, they do not have the drug in their possession during the college day.

#### **Storage of the Drug**

Ritalin or indeed any similar controlled drug can be misused which is an offence under the Misuse of Drugs Act.

CTC has a medicines policy for the safe storage of such drugs on college premises.

It is not the policy of the college to administer drugs. However assistance can be given to any individual if needed to take their own prescription drugs i.e. use on an inhaler.

#### **Privacy**

Although we ask students to disclose if they are currently taking controlled drugs, the vast majority of students are of an age where they are entitled to medical confidentiality and therefore be somewhat reluctant to share this information.

Such information about students should be restricted to 'need to know' basis only.

#### ***Additional Reference material***

*Drug and Alcohol Drug Prevention Team- A briefing paper for Drug Education Practitioners July 2005*

*DfES Drugs Guidance for Schools*

*CTC Drugs Policy, CTC Medicines, Storage and Handling Policy*

*Reviewed: August 2019 PMB*

*Next Review Due: August 2020*