

Cannabis re-classified

Since the Flower 125 Health Programme resource pack was published in June 2008 cannabis has been reclassified.

As cannabis is probably the drug that most young people will come in contact with (apart from caffeine, tobacco and alcohol) it is recommended that you familiarise yourself with what will happen to a young person if they are caught with cannabis by the police. Young people should be informed of this so that they do not consider cannabis to be a recreational drug that has no consequences.

Cannabis was reclassified from a Class C to a Class B drug on the 26 January 2009, putting it in the same category as drugs like speed.

The maximum penalty for possession has gone up from two years in prison to five years and an unlimited fine. The maximum penalty for supply, which includes giving or selling to friends, is 14 years in prison and an unlimited fine.

When young people between 10 and 17 are caught with even a small amount of cannabis the police will always take action through arrest or referral to a Youth Offending Team. As well as confiscating the cannabis the police are likely to:

- if it is the first time the person has been caught with cannabis give a reprimand - it's likely that their parents will be informed as well
- if it is the second time the person been caught give a final warning and make a referral to a Youth Offending Team
- if it's the third time make an arrest, which could lead to a conviction and a criminal record

For those aged 18 or over and caught with cannabis, the police will always consider arrest. They will confiscate the drug and are likely to:

- if it's the first time give a cannabis warning
- for a second offence give a Penalty Notice for Disorder - involving an on-the-spot fine of £80
- if it is the third or more time-make an arrest

