



RESPECT
BELIEVE
ACHIEVE

Cardinal Heenan Catholic High School

Honey's Green Lane, West Derby Address
Liverpool, L12 9HZ

0151 235 1430 Tel

www.cardinal-heenan.org.uk Web

admin@cardinal-heenan.org.uk Email

Ms K. Smyth Headteacher

April 2026

Dear Parent/Carer,

Information from Public Health Liverpool

We are writing to inform you about growing concerns related to **ketamine use among young people across Liverpool**, and to share information that will help support the safety and wellbeing of our students.

Ketamine is a substance originally developed for medical use as an anaesthetic. When misused, particularly by young people, it can cause **serious physical, mental, and emotional harm**. Unfortunately, ketamine-related harms have been increasing locally, including among secondary-aged young people.

This letter is accompanied by a **detailed information sheet** provided by **Public Health Liverpool**, which provides further guidance about ketamine, the associated risks, warning signs to be aware of, and sources of support. We strongly encourage you to read this alongside your child where appropriate.

Key risks associated with ketamine use include:

- **Severe bladder and kidney damage**, sometimes requiring long-term medical treatment
- **Memory, concentration, and learning difficulties**, which can impact education
- **Anxiety, low mood, and other mental health concerns**
- **Dependence**, where a young person feels unable to cope without the substance
- **Increased risk of accidents and injury**, particularly when mixed with alcohol or other substances

Ketamine is sometimes described to young people as a “low-risk” or “social” drug. It is important to stress that **no illegal drug use is safe**, and the harms associated with ketamine can develop quickly.

How you can help:

- Talk openly and calmly with your child about drugs and risk-taking behaviours
- Encourage them to ask questions and share concerns without fear of judgement
- Be alert to changes in mood, behaviour, attendance, friendships, or physical health
- Reinforce that it is okay to say no and to seek help if they feel pressured

Our school works closely with local partners to provide education, early intervention, and support for young people. **If you have any concerns, or if something in the information provided raises questions or worries, we encourage you to contact the school directly.** We are here to listen, offer guidance, and signpost support where needed.

Thank you for your continued support in helping us keep our students safe, informed, and healthy.

Yours sincerely,

Jo Leech
Deputy Headteacher / Designated Safeguarding Lead

