

Is it ethical to expel children carrying drugs or alcohol to school

[Health & Medicine](#), [Drug Abuse](#)



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Last year, over " 1000 schoolchildren were suspended, excluded or expelled from New Zealand schools last year for drugs or alcohol-related offences, with the youngest aged 8" (Stuff, 2013). The Ministry of Education released figures showing that one In ten children who had action taken against them in relation to substances in the year 2012, was under 12 years of age (Stuff, 2013). The Education Amendment Act has come under scrutiny as it prioritises the right to privacy of students.

Effectively It means that schools would lose their authority to search and seize narcotics and conduct random drug tests. This, many educationalists argue, would worsen the problem. The ethical Issue that arises In this case amongst others Is whether schools should continue to retain their search and seizure powers or should the privacy of the students be given priority as per the Education Amendment Bill. Another key issue that is begging resolution is the dilemma of whether or not, children found in possession of drugs and alcohol, should be expelled or excluded.

Is expulsion of a child found In possession of narcotics in the best Interests of society and the child In question? It is important to also mention that since most of the children procured the absences from a knowing or unknowing adult, should the adult be vicariously responsible for the child takeresponsibilityand face the consequences Instead of letting the child take the fall? Is It not the responsibility of the parent to ensure that children stay away from vices until they are old enough to judge for themselves?

Due 1 OFF expulsion and attempt to provide some insight into whether or not it is the best course of action to employ. Thomas Hobbes (1651)

<https://assignbuster.com/is-it-ethical-to-expel-children-carrying-drugs-or-alcohol-to-school/>

proposed the idea that "in order to flourish, we need a peaceful, cooperative social order" (Reaches & Reaches, 2010, p. 0). Hobbes goes on to say that if there were no institutions to enforce order, we would be free to do whatever we wanted. This would eventually lead to a state of perpetual chaos. He has called this state of chaos "the state of nature" and its opposite "civil state" (Reaches & Reaches, 2010).

This means that in order to live harmoniously, we must abide by a set of rules that are accepted by everyone and applies to everyone equally.

Hobbes was of the opinion that the four basic facts about human life were the reason for the existence of this social contract. He theorized firstly, that each of us requires the same basic things in order to survive, secondly, scarcity is omnipresent and we need to work hard to produce the things we need. Third on the list is the equality of human power (united we stand, divided we fall).

Finally, there is limited altruism, which implies that we cannot assume that others will stand down when their interests conflict with ours. Since we do not learn the accepted rules of society on our own, we have schoolteachers and parents who amongst other things teach us how to behave in a socially acceptable manner. School helps us learn to build and maintain relationships. Most importantly attending school empowers us with knowledge to survive in the real world. Take school out of the equation and that leaves just parents.

Now consider the case of a young child who has gotten himself expelled for being curious about his parent's secret drug stash. Unable to attend school, he might not realize the difference between a joke and a crime because he is unaware of right and wrong, socially acceptable and unacceptable. He may develop an insecurity complex as he probably feels helpless and is shunned by his parents. These factors might lead him to become a criminal or worse, a drug addict. It is quite obvious that criminals and drug addicts are anti-social elements that need to be removed from the setting.

It is safe to say that not all criminals are school dropouts however, most addicted to drugs haven't been educated about the consequences of substance abuse and are helplessly addicted. The Social Contract Theory maintains that we need a social order in order to flourish. The only way to eliminate most of anti-social elements is to ensure that kids found in possession of drugs or alcohol remain in school to learn how to behave appropriately, and eventually grow up to become conscientious and responsible adults.

The theory of Utilitarianism as stated by Reaches & Reaches (2010) encompasses three categories. Firstly, actions can be judged to be right or wrong depending on the consequences it brings about. Secondly, in terms of examining consequences, all that matters is the amount of happiness or unhappiness the action in question creates; person is more important than the other. This means that actions should be judged as right or wrong depending on the amount of happiness or unhappiness everyone experiences as a consequence.

Thus a deduction can be made that Utilitarian are essentially consequentialness, as they determine the ethical value based on an answer to the question " what would happen as a result of doing it? " (Reaches & Reaches, 2010, p. 111). Utilitarianism is divided into two categories namely, Act and Rule Utilitarianism. Act Utilitarian believe that an action must be Judged by the consequences it causes (Reaches & Reaches, 2010, p. 22). Rule Utilitarian believe that an action must be Judged on the consequence of the action becoming the norm that everyone lived by (Reaches & Reaches, 2010, p. 18-119). Therefore it can be said that Utilitarianism Judges actions based on whether they yield the best consequences and happiness for everyone or not. Upon application of the Utilitarian approach to the issue of expulsion, the action of excluding children who are found in possession of narcotics or alcohol would produce two possible consequences. Firstly, because the child has been expelled, he ay lose interest in studying altogether. It is a proven fact that schools provide a protectiveenvironmentthat shields people fromdrug abuse(Bell, 2013).

If they are unable to stay in that protected environment before entering the proverbial 'real world' there is a chance that they may be negatively influenced and resort to a life of crime, drug abuse and other anti-social behavior. The second consequence of one child caught in possession of drugs being expelled could serve as an example to the other children. This might cause them to refrain from coming in contact with drugs earning punishment.

Although the second consequence appears to be feasible, as many children would benefit from one child being expelled and being made an example of, it is not guaranteed that other children will not indulge in drugs and alcohol outside school. Also, going by Rule Utilitarianism, if expelling children became the norm, crime, unemployment and illiteracy rates would rise and this in turn would affect the entire nation negatively. Therefore, Act and Rule Utilitarian would agree that expelling children found in possession of narcotics would be very unethical, as it would cause much more unhappiness than happiness.

Also, since Utilitarians believe that everyone's happiness is equal, and that motives and intentions don't matter, causing unhappiness to one child and to the general population in the long run by expelling him from school is something they would advocate against. In conclusion, I have explored the idea of a Social Contract and the Utilitarian approach in terms of the case to determine whether or not expelling children found to be in possession of narcotics or alcohol is ethical. Taking into consideration the

Social Contract, and the possible consequences of Act and Rule based Utilitarianism I have deduced that expulsion or exclusion from school is not the best course of action. In order to suit everyone's interests, it is crucial that the kids remain in school where they have the opportunity to learn about narcotics and socially acceptable behavior in a controlled and protected environment. After all, they are children, unable to distinguish between right and wrong, and in this case, it is imperative that children are

the future of any country and it is our moral duty to ensure that all sections we take have their best interests at heart.