



**First Thought
Independent School**

FIRST THOUGHT CARE SERVICES

Drugs, Alcohol and Smoking Policy

2026-2027

Table of Contents

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE	3
2. RATIONALE.....	3
3. DEFINITION OF SUBSTANCES	3
4. AIMS OF THE POLICY	3
5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES.....	3
7. MEDICATION AND AUTHORISED SUBSTANCES	4
8. PROHIBITED SUBSTANCES AND CONDUCT.....	4
9. RESPONDING TO INCIDENTS.....	4
10. PARENTS OR VISITORS UNDER THE INFLUENCE	4
11. POLICE INVOLVEMENT	5
12. SUPPORT, REFERRAL AND EARLY INTERVENTION.....	5
13. CONFIDENTIALITY AND INFORMATION SHARING	5
14. TRAINING AND AWARENESS	5
15. COMMUNICATION AND DISSEMINATION	5
16. MONITORING AND REVIEW	5
LINKED POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS	5

1. Purpose and Scope

This policy sets out how First Thought Independent School promotes a safe, healthy and substance-free learning environment. It outlines the school's expectations for pupils, staff, parents, contractors and visitors, and provides guidance on drug, alcohol and tobacco education, prevention and incident management.

The policy applies to all pupils, staff, visitors, volunteers and contractors while on the school site; during any school activity, visit, or transport arranged by the school; and to staff acting in loco parentis at any off-site or residential event.

The school recognises its statutory responsibilities under the Independent School Standards (Part 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils) and its duty to promote pupils' welfare under the Education and Skills Act 2008.

2. Rationale

Although the pupils at First Thought Independent School are primary-aged and are too young to legally access such substances, and unlikely to bring alcohol or drugs to school, the school has a duty to ensure that no person brings, uses or is under the influence of drugs, alcohol or tobacco on the premises. A clear stance protects children, reassures families, and upholds staff professionalism.

Some pupils may not understand the risks associated with substances, or may imitate adult behaviour without awareness of harm. This policy therefore emphasises education, supervision and safeguarding, rather than disciplinary sanctions, as the most appropriate response in a special-school context.

3. Definition of Substances

The term 'drug' is used broadly to include alcohol; tobacco and vaping products; controlled drugs covered by the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971; volatile substances such as aerosols, glue and solvents; over-the-counter and prescription medicines used inappropriately or without authorisation; new psychoactive substances ("legal highs"); and any unauthorised or hazardous substance brought onto site.

4. Aims of the Policy

- To safeguard pupils' health, welfare and dignity.
- To provide clear expectations for staff and visitors.
- To prevent the possession or use of unauthorised substances in school.
- To teach pupils, at an appropriate developmental level, about personal safety and healthy choices.
- To provide staff with procedures for managing incidents safely and lawfully.
- To work in partnership with parents, health professionals and the police where required.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Proprietor and Governors: Approve and review the policy every two years; monitor its implementation and ensure compliance with welfare standards.

Head of School: Holds overall responsibility for the policy and its implementation; acts as the primary contact for liaison with the police, parents and safeguarding partners; ensures staff receive appropriate induction and training.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Coordinates safeguarding responses arising from any incident; ensures accurate record-keeping and appropriate referrals.

All Staff: Must be familiar with this policy and follow the stated procedures; must not bring or use alcohol, tobacco, vaping products or drugs on school premises or during school activities; must report any concerns immediately to the Head of School or DSL.

Parents and Carers: Are expected to support the school's substance-free expectations; must not smoke, vape or consume alcohol or drugs on site; must ensure any medication for their child is provided and managed in accordance with the school's procedures.

6. Education and Prevention

The school's approach focuses on protective education within PSHE and Science, tailored to pupils' cognitive and communication levels. Teaching includes recognising safe and unsafe substances; understanding that medicines help us when given by trusted adults; knowing that smoking, drinking alcohol and taking unknown substances can make people ill; and identifying trusted adults who help keep us safe.

Learning is supported through visual resources, social stories, sensory experiences and repetition appropriate for pupils with autism and SLD. External visitors (e.g., school nurse, community police officer) may assist in delivery under staff supervision.

Drug, alcohol and smoking education forms part of the school's wider commitment to health, wellbeing and safeguarding.

7. Medication and Authorised Substances

Only medicines authorised under the Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy may be brought onto the premises. All medication must be handed to staff on arrival, clearly labelled, and stored in a locked cabinet or refrigerator as required. Controlled medication will be recorded in the medication log and administered by trained staff. Staff must never give a pupil non-prescribed medicine unless written parental consent and Head of School approval have been obtained. Staff must not share or use pupils' medication.

8. Prohibited Substances and Conduct

The possession, use, or supply of illegal or unauthorised substances, alcohol, tobacco or vaping products is strictly forbidden on school premises or during school activities. Staff and visitors must not be under the influence of alcohol or drugs when working with pupils. Smoking and vaping are prohibited anywhere on the site, including car parks and vehicles. Alcohol may only be consumed by staff or visitors during exceptional out-of-hours events with the prior written consent of the Head of School and Proprietor.

9. Responding to Incidents

Immediate actions: ensure safety first. If a pupil or adult appears unwell, treat as a medical emergency, contact a qualified first aider, and call emergency services if required. Secure any substance or related item. Do not taste or attempt to identify it. Inform the Head of School or senior member of staff immediately.

Recording and reporting: details of the incident, time, witnesses and actions taken must be recorded using the school's Incident Record Form. The Head of School will determine whether parents, the police or other agencies should be informed.

Possession or discovery: any suspected illegal substance will be placed in a sealed, labelled bag with date, time and witness signatures, stored securely, and handed to the police for disposal. If the item is a legal but unauthorised substance (e.g. vape, alcohol), it will be confiscated and safely disposed of or returned to parents at the Head of School's discretion.

Searches: staff may search school property such as trays or cupboards. Personal searches of pupils will not be carried out; if refusal or concern persists, parents and police may be contacted.

Pupil under the influence: keep the pupil under constant supervision; move to a quiet, safe space; seek medical advice. Inform parents/carers and DSL. Consider safeguarding referral if risk or neglect is suspected.

10. Parents or Visitors Under the Influence

If a parent or visitor appears under the influence of drugs or alcohol on school premises, staff should remain calm and prioritise the child's safety. The Head of School or DSL should be informed immediately. Where appropriate, alternative collection arrangements will be made. If a child may be at risk of significant harm, the safeguarding procedures will be followed and the police may be contacted. Repeated incidents will be referred to safeguarding partners.

11. Police Involvement

There is no automatic requirement to contact the police for every incident, but the Head of School will liaise with the local police to agree when involvement is appropriate, particularly if controlled drugs are found, there is evidence of supply, or a serious safeguarding risk exists. The school will cooperate fully with any lawful investigation.

12. Support, Referral and Early Intervention

When substance misuse by a pupil, parent or family member is suspected, the school will take a supportive and non-judgemental approach. Early help may include discussion with parents/carers; pastoral or wellbeing support in school; referral to external agencies such as the local children's health team, school nurse, or community drug and alcohol service; and multi-agency meetings where appropriate. All interventions will be recorded and reviewed by the Head of School and DSL.

13. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Staff cannot promise absolute confidentiality. Any disclosure indicating a child may be at risk of harm must be shared with the DSL. Information will be shared on a need-to-know basis only, following the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and statutory guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025).

14. Training and Awareness

All staff receive annual safeguarding and health & safety training, including awareness of the school's expectations around drugs, alcohol and smoking. Induction for new staff includes reference to this policy. The Head of School will ensure refresher training occurs as necessary.

15. Communication and Dissemination

This policy is available on the school website and in the staff handbook. A summary is shared with parents through admission information. Contractors and visitors are reminded that the site is smoke-, vape- and alcohol-free.

16. Monitoring and Review

The Head of School monitors implementation through behaviour logs and incident reports, staff feedback and supervision discussions, and annual health and safety reviews. The policy will be reviewed biennially, or sooner if new legislation, local guidance or incidents indicate a need for revision.

Linked Policies and Documents

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- PSHE and RSE Curriculum Plan

