

The Ace Academy

Drugs and Substance Misuse Policy

1. Policy Statement

The Ace Academy is committed to safeguarding the health, safety, and well-being of all students, staff, and the wider community. We recognise that drug and substance misuse can have a significant impact on a young person's physical and mental health, education, relationships, and future opportunities.

This policy outlines our approach to preventing, identifying, and responding to drug and substance misuse across all settings in which we operate.

2. Aims

- To promote a safe, healthy, and drug-free environment.
 - To educate students about the risks and consequences of drug and substance misuse.
 - To provide early intervention and support for students at risk.
 - To ensure a consistent and proportionate response to incidents involving drugs or substances.
 - To work in partnership with families, schools, and external agencies.
-

3. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All students enrolled in The Ace Academy
- All staff, volunteers, and contractors
- All locations where sessions take place, including:
 - Partner schools
 - Community centres
 - Outreach locations (e.g., homes, public spaces)

It covers:

- Illegal drugs
 - Prescription medications used improperly
 - Alcohol
 - Tobacco and vaping products
 - Psychoactive substances (formerly known as “legal highs”)
 - Solvents and other inhalants
-

4. Definitions

- **Substance misuse:** The harmful or hazardous use of psychoactive substances, including alcohol and illicit drugs.
 - **Possession:** Having control over a substance, whether or not it is intended for personal use.
 - **Supply:** Giving, selling, or sharing substances with others.
-

5. Prevention and Education

- Drug education is embedded in our therapeutic and mentoring programmes.

- Sessions focus on:
 - The physical and mental health risks of substance misuse
 - Peer pressure and decision-making
 - Legal consequences
 - Strategies for seeking help and support
 - Staff receive training to identify signs of substance misuse and respond appropriately.
-

6. Roles and Responsibilities

Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

- Ensure the policy is implemented and reviewed.
- Liaise with external agencies (e.g., police, health services).
- Oversee serious incidents and disciplinary actions.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

- Lead on safeguarding concerns related to substance misuse.
- Coordinate referrals to support services.
- Maintain accurate records of incidents and interventions.

Mentors and Outreach Staff

- Build trusting relationships to support open conversations.
 - Identify early signs of substance misuse.
 - Report concerns to the DSL and follow safeguarding procedures.
-

7. Procedures for Managing Incidents

If a student is found in possession of a substance:

1. Ensure the safety of all individuals.
2. Confiscate the substance (if safe to do so) and store securely.
3. Inform the DSL and SLT immediately.
4. Record the incident in detail.
5. Contact the parent/carer and referring agency.
6. Consider referral to external support services.
7. Involve the police if the substance is illegal or if there is a risk to others.

If a student is under the influence:

- Ensure the student is safe and supervised.
 - Seek medical attention if necessary.
 - Inform the DSL.
 - Contact the parent/carer.
 - Contact the commissioning school.
 - Follow up with a risk assessment and support plan.
-

8. Confidentiality and Safeguarding

- Confidentiality will be respected where possible, but safeguarding takes priority.
 - Any disclosure of substance misuse will be shared with the DSL and, where necessary, with external agencies.
 - All concerns are recorded on CPOMS and followed up appropriately.
-

9. Support and Intervention

- Students involved in substance misuse will be offered support, not just sanctions.
- Support may include:

- Therapeutic mentoring
 - Counselling or mental health services
 - Substance misuse education
 - Referral to specialist services (e.g., CAMHS, drug and alcohol teams)
 - A Pastoral Support Plan or Risk Management Plan may be developed.
-

10. Sanctions

Sanctions will be proportionate and consider the student's needs and circumstances. They may include:

- Verbal or written warnings
 - Behaviour contracts
 - Temporary exclusion from sessions
 - Reduced timetable with support
 - Permanent exclusion (in serious or repeated cases)
-

11. Staff Conduct

- Staff must not use, possess, or be under the influence of drugs or alcohol while working.
 - Any breach will be treated as a disciplinary matter and may result in dismissal.
 - Staff must report any concerns about colleagues to the SLT or DSL.
-

12. Monitoring and Review

- All incidents are logged and reviewed by the SLT.
 - Trends are monitored to inform prevention strategies.
 - This policy is reviewed annually or following a serious incident or change in legislation.
-

13. Related Policies

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
 - Behaviour and Wellbeing Policy
 - Health and Safety Policy
 - Medical Emergency Policy
 - Outreach and Lone Working Policy
-