Drugs and Substance Misuse Policy

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Regulations and Standards:

The Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015:

- Regulation 10 - The health and well-being standard.
- Regulation 11 - The positive relationships standard.
- Regulation 12 - The protection of children standard.

Introduction:

HND Children's Care Ltd is committed to promoting a healthy and drug-free environment for all children in its care. The use of illicit drugs, and the misuse of other substances (e.g., aerosols) for the purpose of sensory stimulation, is not acceptable and will not be tolerated. Care staff will, within their work with children and through their own example, emphasise the importance of physical, psychological health and wellbeing, and promote an informed and sensible approach to any form of substance misuse and its associated effects.

In the best interest of the child staff should seek advice in a confidential and anonymous manner from outside sources such as NHS direct in order to provide best care practices.

Relevant Policies:

For procedures regarding smoking and alcohol, see 'Smoking and Alcohol Policy'.

'Positive behaviour Support Policy'

'Searching Children / Bedrooms Policy'.

'The Emergency Services Policy'

Contents:

1. Definition:

Drugs and Substances are defined as any substances, whether restricted or prohibited, which may have a harmful effect upon a child/young person, such as:

Alcohol, Cigarettes, Tobacco, Aerosols, Gas, Glue, Magic Mushrooms (Amanita), Petrol, Solvents, and all controlled substances such as Amphetamines, Barbiturates, Cannabis, Cocaine, Hallucinogens, Hashish and 'Legal Highs' (which are substances that mimic the effects of illegal drugs such as ecstasy and amphetamines)

For procedures regarding smoking and alcohol, see '*Smoking and Alcohol Policy*'.

2. Access/Use of Drugs and Substances:

2.1 Purchasing/Obtaining Drugs or Substances – General:

All reasonable measures must be used to reduce or prevent children from obtaining drugs or substances which may harm them.

If it is known or suspected that children are obtaining products, which may harm them, whether off the streets, from dealers or traders of any kind, the manager and social worker must be informed, and a strategy adopted to reduce or prevent it.

This may include engaging or involving the supplier if it is safe to do so.

If the problem persists or is serious, relevant specialists or bodies, including Trading Standards or the Police, should be informed.

2.2 Aerosols, Gas, Glue, and Petrol:

Medical Emergency: See Section 4: Emergency

Managers must ensure that aerosols, gas, glue, petrol, and similar substances are only used

for the purpose they were designed for; and that all reasonable measures are taken to restrict their use to staff and children who are known to pose risk to themselves or others if they have access to them.

In the case of 'Legal highs' the police must be informed with any information of where the substances have been purchased.

The arrangements for the obtaining, storage, and use of these substances in each home must be safe and proportionate.

2.3 Controlled Drugs or Substances:

Under no circumstances may controlled drugs and substances, other than those prescribed by a medical practitioner, be accessible to children. Where it is necessary to keep such drugs / substances in children's homes, suitable arrangements should be made for their safe storage.

3. Prevention and Planning:

If it is known or suspected that a child is at risk of participating in drug or substances misuse activities, such as using and/or trading in, consideration should be given to the following:

- The provision of relevant information, guidance and/or advice to help reduce or prevent risks.
- A strategy for managing the risk.
- Consideration to making a referral to relevant specialists for support, guidance and/or treatment.
- Consulting or involving the Police.

4. Emergencies:

If any person is unconscious, in a fit, convulsing or otherwise seriously ill, emergency first aid should be given, and an ambulance requested. The emergency services should be informed that there are suspicions of drug or solvent misuse.

If it is suspected that a child or others are at risk of serious harm resulting from the misuse of drugs or substances, staff should adopt the measures set out in any previously agreed plan (if applicable).

In the absence of such a plan, or if the plan is unsuitable in the circumstances, staff should take what actions are immediately necessary to protect the child or others at risk; then inform their manager and the child's social worker at the first opportunity.

The actions that may be taken will be dependent on the circumstances and the likelihood and seriousness of any Injury being caused. In some circumstances it may be appropriate to use Physical Intervention or search a child and / or a child's belongings.

See 'Positive Behaviour Support Policy'.

If solvents are involved, allow air to circulate freely and extinguish naked lights.

If there is a risk of Significant Harm, including the risk of a serious criminal offence, the Police should be notified.

The drugs / substances should be removed or confiscated, preferably with the co-operation of the child(ren) and all actions must be recorded, describing what they have obtained and where it has been safely stored.

Legal but potentially harmful substances such as cigarettes, alcohol, aerosols, gas, glue, and petrol should be put in a safe place out of the reach of children or disposed of safely.

Controlled substances and any associated materials or paraphernalia must be placed in a clearly marked box or other strong container, sealed, and given to the manager who must arrange for it to be taken to a competent authority e.g., pharmacist or doctor; and a receipt obtained.

Once the child / others are safe, the social worker, manager or supervisor must be notified, and consideration given to drawing up a plan to prevent or reduce further occurrences.

5. Notifications, Recording and Review:

Notifications:

- Any incidents must be notified immediately to the home's manager and the relevant Social Worker notified within 1 working day.
- Serious incidents e.g., if the Police or other emergency services are called, must be notified to the homes manager / RI, and consideration given to whether the incident is a Notifiable Event, see 'Notifiable Events Policy'.

Recording and Review:
- All incidents must be recorded in the home's Daily Log and relevant child's daily record.
- An Incident Report must also be completed.
- The child's placement plan should be reviewed with a view to incorporating strategies to reduce or prevent future incidents.

End.