



# Substance Misuse Policy

February 2023

## 1. Introduction

- This policy provides a framework for staff taking groups of young people in the Hub on trips or residential courses. It is important that a high standard of behaviour is maintained. Parents must be confident that drug and alcohol misuse will not be tolerated. Some of the following courses of action may seem harsh or unacceptable to some staff, especially with respect to alcohol. However, it is important to remember that alcohol is a major factor in many crimes committed by young people and is strongly linked to much serious violence. Statistics show that, within Europe, a relatively high proportion of Welsh young people begin regular drinking at a relatively early age and have relatively high levels of alcohol consumption.
- The policy is written to cover issues around the use or misuse of drugs, by which we mean any substance which is inhaled, swallowed or injected to alter the physical or psychological condition of the user. It includes alcohol, solvents, smoking, vaping, prescribed and over-the-counter medicines, as well as illegal substances.

## 2. Aims of the Policy

- To ensure that all concerned know and understand what is regarded as acceptable use of substances (e.g. medicinal use) and what is not acceptable.
- To ensure that all staff, young people and parents know how incidents of substance misuse will be dealt with.
- To put in place a procedure that all staff can follow with confidence.

## 3. General Principles

- The misuse of any substance by anyone attending the Hub will not be tolerated. All events organised by the Hub should be drug free, and those for people under 18 years should also be alcohol free.
- The event leader should discuss this policy with staff so that it should be clear to staff that it is a disciplinary offence to be under the influence of alcohol or other drugs while exercising responsibility for young people.
- Staff must be clear about the law with regard to alcohol and young people.
- Young people under the age of 18 will not be allowed to buy or consume alcohol.
- Young people who do not follow the rules must be sent or taken home immediately.

#### **4. Guidance on organising a trip**

Before the event:

- Find out as much as possible about the venue in terms of entertainment opportunities, licensing arrangements, geography of accommodation etc.
- Ensure parents and young people are aware of the rules about drug/alcohol use.
- Make sure that a parent or responsible adult signs the consent form agreeing to your arrangements and disclosing any medication being taken by those attending.
- Make sure that parents and young people are aware that young people may be required to empty their bags and pockets with a youth worker present.
- If young people will not be supervised at all times, make sure parents understand this.
- At or before the start of the trip, explain the rules to all participants and give them written guidance.

At the event:

- Provide on-site entertainment for as much of the time as possible, or arrange activities that are supervised by staff or other adults, thus avoiding long periods of time when young people are at a loose end.
- Provide direct supervision from time to time in areas where the general public will mix with the young people, for example, hotel lounges and games rooms.
- Where the group is sharing accommodation with members of the public, the party leader must arrange sufficient supervision to ensure that members of the public are not disturbed or inconvenienced in any way.

#### **5. Dealing with an incident of drug/alcohol misuse involving young people**

Immediate action:

- Administer First Aid and call for emergency services if necessary
- Remove suspicious substances to a secure place.

Subsequent action:

- Ascertain the extent of the incident by talking to young people, staff and bystanders. Keep a written record.
- Separate all those directly involved from group activities, isolate and supervise them.
- Consider informing the police if illegal substances are involved (in Great Britain and Northern Ireland there is no requirement to do this. When abroad, it is essential that you know and keep to the law in the country you are visiting).
- Take account of all circumstances and act in the best interests of the group as a whole, the pupils involved and their families.
- Inform parents of all pupils directly involved unless you have reason to believe that informing parents would put a young person at risk of abuse.
- Make urgent arrangements to send young people involved home immediately.
- Inform the Youth Leader Manager / Trust Administrator as soon as possible.

If leaders receive unconfirmed reports of substance misuse:

- Remind the group of the Hub's policy regarding drugs and alcohol at all events.
- Give the group the opportunity to discuss the issues.
- Give individuals the opportunity to seek help and advice.

## **6. Dealing with an incident of drug/alcohol misuse involving adults/staff**

As noted above, it is a disciplinary offence for staff to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs while responsible for young people.

- Ask the member/s of staff to leave the event completely and not return.
- Inform the Trust Administrator as soon as possible.
- In the case of illegal drug use, consider informing the police

## **7. Responding to press or other enquiries**

- The press are likely to treat any incidence of drug or alcohol misuse involving young people as sensational material. Consideration for the best interests of the young person or organisation is not their priority. It is wise to avoid contact with the press if approached. Do not make any comments; refer them to the Trust Administrator.
- It is often fruitless to try to preserve confidentiality amongst the group as the young people themselves will often share information. It is usually best to give a clear, brief and simple account of what has happened to all members of the group, omitting names, as soon as possible, as this prevents rumours and misunderstandings.
- Always refer to the Press & Media Contact Policy.

## **8. Monitoring and Review**

The Managing Trustees' Committee will be responsible for the monitoring and periodic reviews of this policy. They will ensure that the policy accurately reflects current legislation.

### **LEGAL FRAMEWORK:**

- Data Protection Act 2018 (GDPR)
- Employment Rights Act 1996
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998
- Employment Tribunals (Constitution and Rules of Procedure) (Amendment) Regulations 2010

## **9. Policy Review Due: February 2025**