



FIRST STEPS TOGETHER
SKILLS FOR LIFE

SUBSTANCE MISUSE POLICY

Last Update: September 2024
Next Update: September 2027

Purpose

First Steps Together has a whole-setting approach to drugs as part of its commitment to being a healthy organisation. The policy aims to enable children and young people to make informed choices by increasing their knowledge and providing opportunities for them to explore their own and others' attitudes. To protect the safety and well-being of all children, young people and staff, drugs must not be possessed or bought, sold, or otherwise obtained on school premises or during any off site activities. The policy and procedures apply to all adults working at and for the First Steps Together. Individual exceptions will be made for pupils and staff who need to take prescribed medicines.

Policy Principles

First Steps Together has a duty to promote children and young people's wellbeing. We have a clear role to play in preventing substance misuse as part of our responsibilities. First Steps Together condones neither the misuse of drugs and alcohol by members of the establishment, nor the illegal supply of these substances.

First Steps Together acknowledges the importance of its role in safeguarding the welfare of children and young people and, through the general ethos of the group, will be alert to the indicators of substance misuse and take appropriate action in line with three safeguarding partners procedures and thresholds guidance. This will be in particular reference to the Early Help procedures, which in most cases will be the appropriate course of action where there are concerns regarding young people and substance misuse.

First Steps Together believes it has a duty to inform and educate children and young people on the consequences of substance use and misuse. We take a pro-active stance on this matter, recognising the importance of early intervention, believing that health education is a vital part of the personal and social education of every child and young person. Fundamental to our values, principles and practice is the principle of sharing the responsibility for the education of our children and young people with their parents/carers, by keeping them informed and involved at all times, where appropriate. Effective communication and co-operation is essential to the successful implementation of this policy. However, we shall exercise our discretion, in consultation with key external agencies, who are also involved in the education

and welfare of individual children and young people, before deciding whether to inform a parent/carer of any drug-related misdemeanors (for example where informing a parent/carer may have safeguarding implications).

In response to:

- DfE and ACPO Drug Advice for Schools September 2012
- DfE Guidance - Screening, Searching and confiscation (Advice for head teachers, staff and governing bodies) July 2022
- Education & Inspections Act 2006 (Section 91)
- Education Act 1996
- Children's Home Regulations 2015
- Guide to Children's Home Regulations including Quality Standards March 2015

This policy should be read alongside:

- The Children Protection policy
- Positive behaviour support policy
- The code of conduct

Definitions:

Substances that should not be in our settings include substances which, when taken, have the effect of altering the way the body works or the way a person behaves, feels, sees or thinks.

These include:

- alcohol and tobacco (including E-cigs);
- Controlled drugs, such as cannabis, LSD, Ecstasy, amphetamine sulphate, magic mushrooms (processed), legal highs, heroin and cocaine
- Other substances such as amyl/butyl nitrite (poppers) and unprocessed magic mushrooms
- Psychoactive Substances - often referred to “ legal highs” (banned in May 2016)

Staff will also be mindful of the effects that other substances, namely volatile substances such as aerosols can have and also ‘over the counter’ medications that when misused can have a detrimental effect on health, for example pain killers that contain codeine.

First Steps Together:

- Educate children and young people to make healthy, informed choices by increasing knowledge, challenging attitudes and developing and practicing skills;
- Provide accurate information on drugs and alcohol through education and targeted information. This includes local and national helplines (including FRANK for drugs, NHS Smoking services for tobacco and Drinkline for alcohol), youth and community services and substance misuse services;

- encourage an understanding for those experiencing or likely to experience substance misuse;
- widen understanding about related health and social issues, e.g. safe sex, long and short-term health implications, financial, work and crime to seek to minimise the risks that users and potential users face;
- enable children and young people to identify sources of appropriate personal support.

The Individual setting will provide:

- In Schools, formal delivery of topics on substance use and misuse through PSHE, Science and the use of external visitors;
- details on how other agencies such as Police, Young People's Service, Health, Substance Misuse Agencies are involved in the delivery of drugs Education and where relevant, how they assist in dealing with incidents of substance use and misuse;
- for staff, information relating to courses provided by the three safeguarding partners.

Support is available to all young people and staff to offer advice and guidance in relation to the health aspects of drugs, tobacco and alcohol. All children and young people have access to drug, tobacco and alcohol awareness leaflets and establishment information boards have relevant websites and phone numbers for young people to access.

Procedures for where substance misuse is identified or suspected.

- If staff suspects substance misuse or supply on the premises, they must report it immediately to the senior member of staff on duty. For schools, this will be the Head Teacher.
- Any consideration relating to searching must be done in conjunction with the senior member of staff on duty, for schools that has to be head teacher (or person with the responsibility as head teacher).
- Any search of the child/young person should be undertaken by someone of the same gender and have an independent member of staff to witness it. Belongings will also be searched.
- Any drugs that are found will be placed into bags, clearly labelled with a date and time, who secured them and stored under lock and key. The disposal of any drugs found will be in accordance with police advice.
- Following a search, whether or not anything is found, the setting will make a record of the person searched, the reason for the search, the time and the place, who was present and note the outcomes and any follow-up action.

- Decisions regarding informing the police will be taken in schools by the Head Teacher. (see controlled drug section below)
- If a member of staff suspects a child/young person is under the influence from the misuse of either substances or alcohol on arrival at establishment, the head teacher and the DSL will be informed in schools.
- The child/young person will be placed on one-to-one staffing for a time deemed appropriate by senior staff.
- Consideration will be given by the senior staff on duty or head teacher as to whether, the child or young person concerned needs to be removed from association with peers.

- Senior staff need to inform the Head Teacher/Registered Manager, and the establishments Designated Safeguarding Lead at the earliest opportunity.
- If a child/young person admits to using or supplying substances *off* the premises, staff discretion will be involved, but informing the Designated Safeguarding Lead should always take place.
- An Incident report needs to be completed and if the police are involved, the log number recorded. Any complaints about searching should be dealt with through the normal establishment complaints procedure.

Taking possession of controlled drugs

In taking temporary possession and disposing of suspected controlled drugs the setting will:

- ensure that a second adult witness is present throughout.
- seal the sample in a plastic bag and include details of the date and time of the seizure/find and witness present.
- store it in a secure location, such as a safe or other lockable container with access limited to senior members of staff.
- notify the police without delay, who will collect it and then store or dispose of it in line with locally agreed protocols. The law does not require a school to divulge to the police the name of the pupil from whom the drugs were taken but it is advisable to do so.
- record full details of the incident, including the police incident reference number.
- inform parents/carers, unless this is not in the best interests of the child/young person.
- Where a child/young person has an allocated social worker, share the information with them.
- identify any safeguarding concerns and develop a support and disciplinary response.

Non-Controlled Substances

- Where other substances which are not believed to be controlled drugs are found, these can be confiscated where a member of staff believes them to be harmful or detrimental to good order and discipline.
- If establishment staff are unable to identify the legal status of a drug, it should be treated as a controlled drug.
- When a child/young person or child/young person's personal belongings have been searched; a search record is completed by staff which the young person then signs, this is kept in the search records file.
- Where alcohol is suspected then the same search protocol applies, but the police *do not need* to be informed as it is not illegal to possess alcohol, only to buy it. In these cases any alcohol found is to be disposed of appropriately by staff.

The establishment will consider each substance incident individually and recognises that a variety of responses will be necessary to deal with incidents such as these. The establishment will consider very carefully the implications of any action it may take. It seeks to balance the interests of the young person involved, the other children/young people and staff at the establishment and the local community. For schools, exclusion should not be the automatic response to a drug related incident and permanent exclusion is seen as a last resort as it may only transfer the problem, and not be in the best interests of the child/young person.

Useful Organisations

With You (formally Addaction) is one of the UK's largest specialist drug and alcohol treatment charities. As well as adult services, they provide services specifically tailored to the needs of children/young people and their parents/carers. The Skills for Life project supports children and young people with drug misusing parents/carers.

Website: <https://www.wearewithyou.org.uk/>

ADFAM offers information to families of drug and alcohol users, and the website has a database of local family support services.

Tel: 07422137421/0755986887 **Email:** admin@adfam.org.uk

Website: www.adfam.org.uk

Search for local support (via postcode)___

<https://adfam.org.uk/help-for-families/finding-support/search-for-local-support>

Alcohol Change works to reduce the incidence and costs of alcohol-related harm and to increase the range and quality of services available to people with alcohol-related problems.

Tel: 020 3907 8480. **Email:** contact@alcoholchange.org.uk

Website: www.alcoholchange.org.uk

ASH (Action on Smoking and Health) A campaigning public health charity aiming to reduce the health problems caused by tobacco. **Email:** enquiries@ash.org.uk

Website: www.ash.org.uk

Children's Legal Centre operates a free and confidential legal advice and information service covering all aspects of law and policy affecting children and young people.

Email: info@coramclc.org.uk

Website: www.childrenslegalcentre.com

Children's Rights Alliance for England - A charity working to improve the lives and status of all children in England through the fullest implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Tel: 020 3174 2279 or 07984095793 **Email:** info@crae.org.uk

Website: www.crae.org.uk

Drinkaware - An independent charity that promotes responsible drinking through innovative ways to challenge the national drinking culture, helping reduce alcohol misuse and minimize alcohol related harm.

Website: www.drinkaware.co.uk/

Drinkline - A free and confidential helpline for anyone who is concerned about their own or someone else's drinking. **Tel:** 0300 1231110 (lines are open 24 hours a day)

DrugWise is a centre of expertise on illegal drugs, aiming to inform policy development and reduce drug-related risk. The website includes detailed drug information and access to the Information **Website:** <http://www.drugwise.org.uk/>

FRANK is the national drugs awareness campaign aiming to raise awareness amongst children and young people of the risks of illegal drugs, and to provide information and advice. It also provides support to parents/carers, helping to give them the skills and confidence to communicate with their children about drugs.

24 Hour Helpline: 0330 123 6600 **Text** 82111 **Email:** via link on website

Website: www.talktofrank.com

National Children's Bureau promotes the interests and well-being of all children and young people across every aspect of their lives.

Website: www.ncb.org.uk

Family Lives - A charity offering support and information to anyone parenting a child or teenager. It runs a free-phone helpline and courses for parents, and develops innovative projects.

Tel: 0800 800 2222 **Email:** askus@familylives.org.uk

Website: <http://familylives.org.uk/>

Re-Solv (Society for the Prevention of Solvent and Volatile Substance Abuse)

A national charity providing information for teachers, other professionals, parents/carers and young people.

Tel: 01785 810762 **Text or WhatsApp** 07496 959930 **Email:** info@re-solv.org

Website: www.re-solv.org

Smokefree - NHS Smoking Helpline: 0300 123 1044.

Website: <http://smokefree.nhs.uk>

The Children's Society offers support for anyone working with children, young people and families affected by parental drug and alcohol misuse.

Website: <https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/parental-alcohol-misuse?>

Hope UK: Resources and training events for parents, teacher and youth leaders:

Tel: 020 7928 0848 **Email:** enquiries@hopeuk.org

Website: <https://www.hopeuk.org/>