

DRUGS POLICY

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POLICY FOR DRUGS

Mission

We believe in investing in people. As professionals in the teaching and training professions, we strive to provide a better future for the children, young people and home settings we work with. Success for us means unleashing the potential of each individual so they can grow, develop and reach the potential of which they are capable. Our values are grounded in our determination to be the change we want to see in the world, through passion, commitment and integrity. We strive to plant a seed of kindness and compassion in a generation that will produce resilience and hope and enable them to aspire and achieve productive and fulfilled lives. Our success is measured in the lives we changed.

At the Omnia Foundation, we create a secure and safe environment that encourages communication, self-belief, mutual respect and success. We provide a rich and balanced curriculum that develops every child, allowing them to achieve their true potential.

Aims of the policy

This policy aims to

- set out the foundation's approach to its students' use of drugs
- ensure a proactive and effective response that safeguards and promotes the wellbeing of young people, as well as minimising the risk of further incidents.
- create a protective environment which discourages drug or substance misuse
- explain how the foundation will impart knowledge and skills in supporting its young people to make healthier choices
- promote positive, pro-social actions and reduce risk-taking anti-social actions
- set out how the foundation will provide direct support and/or signpost its young people to appropriate services whenever concerns around misuse arise

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Child Protection Policy, Me, Myself & I Policy, Rights & Responsibilities Policy, Use of Physical Intervention Policy, Impact & Consequences Policy, Critical Incident Policy and Screen and Search Policy.

This policy is based on a model policy provided by Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Partnership.

Why do we need a drugs policy?

The Omnia Foundation recognises that all young people are likely to be exposed to the effects and influences of drugs in the wider community and be increasingly exposed to opportunities to try both legal and illegal drugs. Every educational establishment therefore has a responsibility to consider its response to drugs. This responsibility was made statutory within the Children's Act 2004 and Education and Inspections Act 2006. It is underpinned by guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) and the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) which frames drugs misuse in safeguarding terms and stipulates that permanent exclusion should not be the automatic response to incidents. It guides schools in ensuring that the response to drugs misuse is robust, rational and safe.

No school or home setting can afford to be complacent or think that children and young people are not at risk. Schools have a key role to play in ensuring that young people understand the risks involved and have the confidence, knowledge and skills to avoid them.

Definition of drugs

The definition of drugs used in this policy is the definition given by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime: “A substance people take to change the way they feel, think or behave.”

This refers to all drugs:

- Illegal Psychoactive Substances/new psychoactive substances (Psychoactive Substances Act, 2016)
- Legal drugs, alcohol, tobacco, e-cigarettes, volatile substances (solvents) poppers, aerosols, nitrous oxide
- Misuse of over the counter and prescription medicines
- Illegal drugs (those controlled by the Misuse of Drugs Act, 1971) including ecstasy, cannabis, crack/cocaine, heroin and LSD, khat in all their forms
- Other drugs such as anabolic steroids

Throughout this policy, the term ‘drugs’ is used to refer to all of the above.

Definition of other key words

‘Drug use’ describes any drug taking. Any drug use can potentially lead to harm, including through intoxication, breach of the law or foundation core values, or future health problems.

‘Drug misuse’ is drug taking which leads to social, psychological, physical or legal problems through intoxication, regular excessive consumptions and/or dependence.

Whole community approach to tackling drugs

We take a whole school approach to drugs through:

- A planned drugs education programme through PSHE
- Carefully considered responses to drug-related incidents informed and supported by the views of the whole foundation community
- Clear consequences related to drugs understood by the whole foundation community and in line with its core values
- Access to specialist support and advice when required
- Training and support for staff
- Engaging external services as soon as we, the young person or their family, have a worry regarding drug-related issues

Drugs Education

Schools alone cannot solve the problem of drug misuse in society, but the implementation of an effective programme of drug education in all schools is an essential step in keeping our young people safe. Furthermore, regular school attendance and engagement with learning is a key protective factor for young people. Establishing strong positive relationships with family members, teachers or other socially responsible adults provides a sense of connectedness.

At the Omnia Foundation, we have an integrated and consistent approach to the overall education and well-being of the foundation community. Knowledge alone will not change our young people’s decisions but, taken in context, effective personal development can shape attitudes, values and aspirations that bring about resilience in young people.

Through our Me, Myself & I programme, which embraces all aspects of personal development, including physical, emotional and mental wellness, we deliver a robust programme of education around drugs, the benefits and disadvantages, the need for control of substances that are harmful to health and the effect, both short and long term, of exposure to legal (e.g. painkillers, alcohol and cigarettes) and illegal drugs.

We aim to give young people accurate information about drugs and help them develop the skills and attitudes to make their own healthy, safe and responsible decisions about drug use. We also aim to reduce the number of young people misusing drugs, minimise the risk of criminalisation, and to help those concerned about drugs to get help and advice.

To achieve this, our drugs education programme will help students to:

- Gain knowledge and understanding about the effects and risks and dangers of drugs and correct myths and misconceptions
- Develop skills to make informed decisions, including communication, self-awareness, negotiation, finding information, help and advice
- Develop skills to manage situations involving drugs, including assessing and avoiding risks, assertiveness and refusal skills and helping others
- Explore their own and other people's attitudes to drugs, drug use and drug users, including challenging stereotypes and dispelling myths and exploring media and social influences

The foundation views possession or use of drugs and illicit substances as a safeguarding and welfare issue first and foremost and we seek to place our safeguarding duties at the heart of any response to such incidents.

We recognise that we have a valuable role to play in creating a place of security and stability for our young people. Students who are disconnected from education due to school exclusion, poor attendance, or another reason are at a greater risk of abuse, criminal exploitation, and county lines. Since all of our young people are subject to an Education, Health and Care Plan, this is the experience of the majority of our student body. Maintaining vulnerable young people in a positive education environment is therefore paramount in reducing the risk to the individual student and ultimately the community as a whole.

What do we mean by “drug-related incident?”

At the Omnia Foundation, a drug related incident refers to any possession, usage or supply of an unauthorised drug, as defined within this policy. Incidents can include emergencies, observations and discovery, disclosure, suspicion and rumour.

The foundation does not permit nor endorse the possession, use of or supply of any illegal or legal drug (unless authorised legal drug) and will investigate and respond in line with this policy to any incident which:

- takes place within the foundation boundaries
- Anywhere near the foundation premises
- whilst wearing Omnia branded clothing
- on the journey to and from the foundation
- on any trip or enrichment activity
- residential trips
- work experience
- any foundation social event

These rules apply equally to staff, students, members of home settings, board members and those working in or visiting the school.

As per our Smoke Free Policy, this is a smoke-free environment and students, staff, members of home settings and visitors are prohibited from smoking on foundation premises. Alcohol is not an authorised drug for any student. Staff accompanying students on trips are prohibited from drinking when responsible for students and doing so may result in dismissal. There may be occasions when alcohol is authorised, such as for foundation functions or staff social events.

Management of drugs in school

There are circumstances when some legal drugs (prescribed) are authorised to be administered during the day and the foundation has a separate policy for the safe and secure management of prescription drugs: Administration of Medicines Policy. Any student requiring access to prescription drugs for medical reasons will be supported as per this policy with the full consent of adults from the home setting, who must inform the foundation where this is needed. Students must not be responsible for the safety of their own medication, unless previously agreed and this must be handed in to the Student Support Officer to be kept securely until needed in line with the above policy.

Foundation responses to drug-related incidents

In all drug-related incidents the following principles will apply:

The Head of Foundation and/or the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) will be informed immediately

- All situations will be carefully considered in line with the Rights & Responsibilities, Critical Incidents and Impact & Consequences Policies before deciding a response
- An assessment tool, such as the one found in Appendix I to this policy, will be used by the Head of Foundation to establish facts
- The health and safety needs of the student will always come first, whilst also taking account of the health and safety needs of the foundation as a whole
- Home settings will be involved at an early stage and throughout any investigation (unless this would not be in the student's best interest)
- The foundation will work with students, their home settings and relevant external agencies to ensure that all parties are supported in tackling drug-related issues
- Decisions about the consequence will take into account whether the incident is one of a series or a first event, previous support has been offered to the student and whether the student was in possession or supplying. Any extenuating circumstances will also be taken into consideration
- The Head of Foundation in consultation with senior leaders will decide on the consequence
- Incidents will be reported to the Chief Operating Officer who will report to the Executive Board

Possible responses might be:

(i) Support

Support is provided for students who have concerns about their own or their family's drug use. We assess the welfare and support needs of the student and identify the most appropriate support for them. This might involve the counselling services, Family Group Conferencing or other services providing specialist help. Support is also provided for those who have been involved in a drug-related incident which is inconsistent with the foundation's core values. Students who have been involved in the incident may be required to participate in a specific drug education programme and may be referred for specialist support if needed.

(ii) Consequences

Where an incident occurs which conflicts with the foundation's core values, the Head of Foundation, in consultation with senior leaders, will decide on an appropriate consequence in line with the Rights & Responsibilities and Impact & Consequences Policies. The nature of this will depend on the nature and degree of the incident. The foundation uses a range of strategies, including outreach education and withdrawal of permission to participate in selected enrichment activities where suspected drug use may impact on safety, e.g. go-karting.

Termination of a placement will only be considered in extreme circumstances and after all other approaches have been applied and/or considered.

Procedures for managing incidents

Reporting a drug-related incident

All drug-related incidents are reported, in the first instance, to the Head of Foundation and/or the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy DSLs.

Although there is no legal obligation to report an incident involving drugs to the police, every incident will be assessed individually and appropriate steps will be taken. The foundation will always inform police immediately about any incident involving the sale of drugs.

Recording the drug-related incident

In all drug-related incidents, the Head of Foundation will decide on the appropriate responses, including consequences and/or counselling and support. In line with all other incidents of safeguarding, the foundation has a "drop everything" approach and the Head of Foundation or, in their absence, the Chief Operating Officer or a member of the senior leadership team, will investigate the incident thoroughly, inform home settings and log the details on CPOMS as for all safeguarding concerns.

Medical emergencies when a student is unconscious as a result of drugs use

Staff with first aid qualifications should be called immediately but the student must not be left alone. The student will be placed in the recovery position and an ambulance called. Home settings will be informed and arrangements made for them to join their child. An assessment of the incident is started, including finding out whether a substance has been taken, and evidence gathered.

Intoxication, when a student is under the influence of a drug

The student will be removed to a quiet room and not left alone. The first aider and Head of Foundation and/or DSL will be called. The student will be helped to calm down and medical assistance sought. Home settings will be informed and arrangements made for them to join their child and in most cases, the student will then be taken home with the absence C coded as a special circumstance.

Discovery/observation

This refers to situations when a student is discovered using, supplying or holding a substance that is prohibited on foundation premises and which is described in this policy (suspected or confirmed).

If the substance is suspected to be illegal, staff can take temporary possession of it in line with the Screen & Search Policy:

- it will be confiscated, in the presence of a second member of staff as witness
- the sample will be sealed in a plastic bag with details of the date and time of the seizure/find and witness present and stored in a secure location (e.g. a safe or lockable container) with access limited to the Head of Foundation and Senior Leadership Team
- the student(s) will be supervised within a safe space on-site and an investigation undertaken, pending advice from the police where appropriate
- details of the incident will be recorded, including the police incident reference number
- the student's home setting will be informed, unless it is not in the best interests of the child to inform them
- the student(s) involved will be isolated whilst investigations are carried out.

If the substance is legal (but unauthorised on-site) it will be disposed of and the actions taken reported to the home setting. Where appropriate, the substance will be returned to the home setting by a member of staff.

Searches

The Omnia Foundation has a separate policy for screening and searching students. Staff are allowed to confiscate student's property where reasonable to do so, including substances, whether controlled or not.

If a member of staff has reasonable grounds for suspecting that a student is carrying illegal drugs on them or in their personal property, they will ask the student to voluntarily produce the substance, in the presence of two members of staff. When a search is required, any staff involved must be authorised by the Head of Foundation to undertake it and, wherever possible, should be the same sex as the student. (Screening, Searching and Confiscation, DfE, 2018) The search will take place on-site or where staff have lawful control of students.

We will keep a record of the search and inform home settings if a substance is found, although there is no legal requirement to do this or to inform home settings before or after a search.

Dealing with drug-taking materials

Foundation facilities staff make daily checks of the grounds and know how to deal with drug-taking materials, including needles, in line with health and safety advice in the unlikely event that they come across any.

Students are taught what to do if they come across needles on site and know not to touch needles and to inform a member of staff immediately.

Disclosure

When a student discloses to a member of staff that they have been using drugs, or is concerned about someone else's drug use, staff will be non-judgemental and caring and will show concern for the student's welfare. Students know that staff cannot promise total confidentiality if safeguarding concerns are raised and/or if further support is to be considered such as referral to a drug service or counselling service. Information about the student will only be given to key staff and no-one else unless the student gives their consent. The Head of Foundation or member of SLT will coordinate the most appropriate support including referral to specialist services.

Suspicion/rumour

Staff should not assume use of drugs on the basis of rumours or responses and reactions alone. However, if there is a suspicion, evidence will be collected over a period of time before a decision is made to question the student(s) involved.

Intoxicated members of home settings

The foundation's policy for drugs apply to all people who are on-site and we expect that everyone will adhere to the policy. If we become aware that the responsible adult from the home setting appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol and if we are concerned that a student is in imminent danger, we will contact emergency services on 999. We will also follow our Child Protection procedures if we are concerned about risk of harm.

Needs of students

The foundation is sensitive to the needs of students whose responsible adult or family members have problems with drugs. Where problems are observed or suspected or a student discloses problems, we will assess the student's welfare and support needs and offer support, with or without the involvement of an external agency.

Child Criminal Exploitation/County Lines

When speaking with students and responding to any incidents involving drugs, staff will be vigilant to the student's vulnerability to criminal exploitation and particularly County Lines. Any concerns about a young person such as erratic attendance and/or changes in their attitude and engagement with learning; unexplained or disproportionate access to money/expensive items; student being reported as missing; or where staff become aware that a student has several mobile phones could indicate the student is a victim of exploitation and must be shared with the Head of Foundation.

The Executive Board of the Omnia Foundation recognises that students who are not accessing on-site learning due to low levels of attendance or outreach provision are at greater risk of all forms of exploitation. Any attendance issues will be addressed in line with the foundation's attendance policy. Furthermore any period of outreach provision will be for the shortest time necessary and in line with the Rights & Responsibilities Policy.

Confidentiality

Students need to be able to talk in confidence to staff without fear of being judged or reprimanded. The welfare of young people is central to our policy and practice, in line with our Me, Myself & I Policy. However, staff cannot promise total confidentiality and this is made clear to students through the PSHE programme.

If a student discloses to a member of staff they are taking drugs or is concerned about drugs, they will inform the Head of Foundation who will liaise with the Head of Therapeutic Provision and plan appropriate support, including referral to a specialist agency where necessary and appropriate.

If staff are concerned that a child's safety is at risk they will follow the foundation's child protection procedures.

Since all the students come from a range of localities across three separate authorities, information about local drug and alcohol services that offer confidential information, advice and treatment are shared with students on an individual basis. The general principles of where to get help and advice from nationwide agencies are displayed on-site and shared with students as part of the PSHE programme of study.

Working with Home Settings

The Omnia Foundation believes that home settings have an important role in supporting their child's drug education. We involve home settings through a range of activities, such as:

- Giving information about what is taught
- Involving them in reviewing the drugs policy
- Giving information about drugs and local sources of help
- Providing outreach support about drug education and talking to their child about drugs

A copy of this policy is on the foundation website with hard copies available on request.

Home settings will be informed immediately if their child has been involved in a drug-related incident. However there may be some exceptional situations where involving home settings may put the young person at risk of abuse and, in these exceptional cases, the foundation will exercise some caution. The decision will be taken by the Head of Foundation in liaison with the Senior Leadership Team with the child's welfare a priority.

Involving the Police

In most cases a drug-related incident will be a foundation, rather than a police matter. However we work closely with community police and will contact them immediately if an illegal (or suspected illegal) drug has been found or illegal drug dealing is taking place. We will only call 999 in an emergency.

Monitoring & Review

This policy will be monitored regularly and reviewed annually by the Chief Operating Officer on behalf of the Executive Board

Appendix I – review of an incident involving Drugs

To assist the foundation in assessing the appropriate, proportionate response to any incident involving drugs, the following assessment tool will be used to review the situation. Where it is not evidenced that allowing the student to remain in school would seriously harm the education and welfare of others, the foundation will offer advice, support and guidance to students and their home settings to enable them to successfully re-engage with learning.

Discrimination and Protected Characteristics

Since all our students are subject to Education, Health and Care Plans, the foundation recognises that all our young people are protected under the Equalities Act 2010 and all decisions made are made with this at the forefront of our priorities.

ASSESSMENT TOOL - POSSESSION OF DRUGS/USE OF DRUGS

Tick all that apply

- 1 Do you have reasonable grounds to believe that the item was in the student's possession?
- 2 The student was under the influence of an illicit substance/drugs
- 3 The student had drugs paraphernalia with them
- 4 The student made a premeditated decision to bring the Drugs on-site
- 5 The student has previously had drugs in their possession/or been under the influence of Drugs on-site
- 6 The student has a CIN/TAC/CP and substance misuse is identified as a concern within the plan
- 7 It was a large amount or a combination of substances
- 8 It was small amount for personal consumption
- 9 The pupil was carrying the drugs for the purpose of sharing with others
- 10 The drugs were seen by /shown to/offered to other students
- 11 The student had been subject to bullying /threats from others to source the drugs
- 12 The student bought from/was given the drugs by another student in school
- 13 The student sold drugs to other members of the foundation community
- 14 The student has confirmed their intention to take the drugs
- 15 The student received advice/guidance in lessons about the risk of Drugs, either as part of PHSE or more direct work
- 16 The young person is a victim of or vulnerable to Child Criminal Exploitation (County Lines)
- 17 The student attempted to conceal or hide the drugs from staff
- 18 The student was un-cooperative with the foundation investigation
- 19 The student has been warned about similar behaviour previously
- 20 The student understands that possession of drugs is inconsistent with the foundation's core values
- 21 The student has not shown remorse /distress/regret about their actions or the or the incident
- 22 The student does not agree to a referral to an external agency

The above assessment is intended as a means of evaluation of a situation and to enable a rational proportional response to any incident involving illicit substances. Wherever possible young people will be supported to remain with us at the foundation and provided with help, advice and guidance from adults they know and trust. The continuity of an educational placement is a significant safeguarding feature and a key factor in reducing the risk of future drug taking or Criminal exploitation.
