

## SGE Drugs Policy

### Introduction

All learners 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 place of education, 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 the latest guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) and the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO), which frames drug misuse in safeguarding terms and stipulates that permanent exclusion should not be the automatic response to incidents. It guides provisions in ensuring that the response to drug misuse is robust, rational, and safe.

SGE has a key role to play in ensuring that young people understand the risks involved and have the confidence, knowledge, and skills to avoid them. We will contribute to reducing and/or preventing drug misuse by:

- Creating protective environments which discourage drug or substance misuse,
- Imparting knowledge and skills and supporting young people to make healthier choices.
- Promoting positive behaviours and reducing risk-taking behaviour.
- Providing direct support and/or signposting children and young people to appropriate services whenever concerns around misuse arise.

Possession or use of drugs and illicit substances should always be viewed as a Safeguarding and welfare issue first and foremost, and provisions should seek to place their safeguarding duties at the heart of any response to such incidents.

Simply Great Education (SGE) recognises the valuable role of education providers in creating places of security and stability for young people. Students who are disconnected from education due to provision exclusion, poor attendance, or another reason are at a greater risk of abuse, criminal exploitation, and county lines. Maintaining vulnerable young people in a positive education environment is paramount in reducing the risk to the individual student and the community.

This policy promotes a consistent approach to managing drug-related incidents within our provision. It ensures a proactive and effective response that safeguards and promotes the well-being of young people and minimises the risk of further incidents.

### **Staff responsible for drugs issues**

The provision lead is responsible for developing, monitoring, and reviewing the drug education policy, supporting and training staff and liaising with external agencies to strengthen the curriculum delivery. The Designated Safeguarding Lead ([provision to specify where different](#)) is responsible for drug issues, including managing drug-related incidents and liaising with police; developing, monitoring, and reviewing the drug policy and liaising with external agencies to provide additional support to learners at risk of drug misuse.

### **Links to other policies**

The policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies: Staff Code of Conduct, Health and Safety, Behaviour, Safeguarding and Child Protection, and Administration of Medicines. ([Align with existing policies as appropriate](#))

### **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
- Misuse of over the counter and prescription medicines
- Illegal drugs (those controlled by the Misuse of Drugs Act, of 1971)
- Including ecstasy, cannabis, crack/cocaine, heroin and LSD, khat
- Other drugs, such as anabolic steroids

The term 'drugs' throughout this policy refers to all the above.

Definition of other keywords:

'Drug use' describes any drug taking. Any drug use can potentially lead to harm, including intoxication, breach of the law or provision rules, or future health problems.

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

### **Aims of the policy**

We take a positive and proactive approach to the issue of drugs, and this policy aims to:

- Give a clear view of the use of drugs in provisions and the responsibilities of the provision and legal requirements.
- Provide information so everyone is clear about the provision's overall approach to drugs and its procedures should an incident occur.
- Give information about drugs education.
- Give guidance to tutors, support staff and visitors about drugs education.

### **Aims of Drug Education**

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

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

Gain knowledge and understanding about drugs' effects, risks, and dangers 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.

## **Training and support for staff**

All staff teaching drug education will have access to national protocols and guidance and will have opportunities to participate in training through various CPD activities. We take advantage of the support, advice and training provided by Devon County Council and Torbay Council.

## **Remit and extent of the Policy**

In this provision, 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.

This provision does not permit 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 provision boundaries
- on or near the premises
- on the journey to and from provision
- within the provision day
- on any provision external visit
- on work experience
- any provision social event

These rules apply equally to staff, students, parents and carers, directors and those working in or visiting the provision.

This is a smoke-free provision, and learners, staff, parents and visitors are prohibited from smoking on our premises. Alcohol is not an authorised drug for any learner. This includes post-16 students who are prohibited from drinking alcohol in any provision activity. Staff accompanying learners on trips are not permitted to drink when responsible for students. There are occasions when alcohol may be authorised, such as for provision functions or staff social events.

## **Management of drugs in provision**

The provision has a separate policy for the safe and secure management of prescription drugs Administration of Medicines policy. ([Add link here](#))

There are circumstances when some legal drugs (prescribed) are authorised for use in provision - any learner requiring access to prescription drugs for medical reasons will be supported as per the Administration of Medicines policy. Parents and learners must inform the provision where this is needed, and learners must not be responsible for the safety of their own medication unless previously agreed; this must be handed into reception to be kept securely until needed in line with the above policy.

## **Provision responses to drug-related incidents**

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

- The provision director and designated safeguarding lead (DSL) will be informed immediately.
- All situations will be carefully considered before deciding on a response.
- A permanent exclusion will not be the automatic response and will only be considered in the most serious cases.
- The health and safety needs of the learner will always come first whilst also taking account of the health and safety needs of the provision as a whole.
- Parents/carers will be involved at an early stage and throughout any investigation (unless this would not be in the learner's best interest)
- Decisions about the sanction will depend on whether the offence is one of a series or a first event, whether previous support has been offered to the learner and whether the learner was in possession or supplying.
- Any extenuating circumstances will also be taken into consideration.
- In consultation with DSL, the provision director will decide whether a disciplinary response should follow.
- Incidents will be reported to the board of directors and treated as a safeguarding concern.

## **Procedures for managing incidents**

### Reporting a drug-related incident

In the first instance, all drug-related incidents are reported to the provision director and DSL.

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 provision will always inform the police immediately about any incident involving the sale of drugs. In the case of EOTAS, the commissioning local authority will be informed immediately. In the case of outreach placement, the commissioning provision will be informed immediately.

### Recording the drug-related incident.

In all drug-related incidents, the provision director and DSL will decide on the responses, including the use of sanctions and/or counselling and support.

### Medical emergencies when a student is unconscious as a result of drug use.

Staff with first aid qualifications should be called immediately, but the learner must not be left alone. The learner will be placed in the recovery position, and an ambulance will be called. Parents/carers will be informed and called to the provision. 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 learner will be removed to a quiet room and not left alone. The first aider and DSL will be called. The learner will be helped to calm down, and medical assistance will be sought. Parents/carers will be informed and called to the provision. The learner will most likely be taken home with the absence C coded as a special circumstance.

### Discovery/observation

This refers to situations when a learner is discovered using, supplying or holding a substance that is not permitted on provision 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 and confiscated in the presence of a second staff member as a 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 provision director and DSL.
- The commissioning local authority or provision will be informed.
- The learner(s) will be supervised within a safe space in the provision, and an investigation will be undertaken, pending advice from the police.
- Details of the incident will be recorded, including the police incident reference number.
- The learner's parents/carers will be asked to come to the provision unless it is not in the child's best interests to inform them.

- The learner(s) involved will be isolated whilst investigations are carried out. If the substance is legal (but unauthorised in provision), it will be disposed of or handed to the parent/carer.

### Searches

Staff are allowed to confiscate learner'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 learner is carrying illegal drugs on them or in their personal property, they will ask the learner 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 provision director to undertake it and, wherever possible, should be the same sex as the learner. (Screening, Searching and Confiscation, DfE, 2018) The search will take place in the provision or where staff have lawful control of learners.

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

### Dealing with drug-taking materials

Provision site staff regularly check the provision grounds and know how to deal with drug-taking materials, including needles, in line with health and safety advice.

Learners are taught what to do if they come across needles on the provision premises, know not to touch needles, and inform a staff member immediately.

### Disclosure

When a learner discloses to a staff member that he/she has been using drugs or is concerned about someone else's drug use.

In these situations, staff will be non-judgemental and caring and show concern for the student's welfare. Learners know tutors 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 learner will only be given to key staff and no one else unless the learner consents. The DSL will coordinate the most appropriate support, including referral to specialist services.

### Suspicion/rumour

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

### Intoxicated parents/carers

Our provision's rules for drugs apply to all people who are on the provision premises, and we expect that parents/carers will adhere to these rules. If a parent/carer comes to the provision and appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol, they will be asked to leave. If they have come to collect their child, we will sensitively offer to phone for someone else to collect. If we are concerned that a learner is in imminent danger, we will contact emergency services on 999. We will also follow our Child Protection procedures if we are concerned about the risk of harm.

### Needs of learners

We are sensitive to the needs of learners whose parents/carers, or family members have drug problems. Where problems are observed or suspected or a learner discloses problems, we will assess the learner's welfare and support needs and offer a Child and Family Early Help assessment. The provision will also involve external support for the child if needed.

### Child Criminal Exploitation/County Lines

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



could indicate the learner is a victim of exploitation and must be shared with the DSL.

The directors of SGE recognise that learners who are not accessing provision due to low levels of attendance or exclusion are at greater risk of all forms of exploitation. Any attendance issues will be addressed per the provision's attendance policy ([add Link to appropriate policy here](#)). Furthermore, any fixed-term exclusion will be for the shortest time necessary and in line with the published behaviour policy. ([add link to appropriate policy here](#)). A permanent exclusion will be the last resort, only in the most serious circumstances where no other option is available.

### Confidentiality

Learners need to be able to talk in confidence to staff without fear of being judged or told off. The welfare of young people will be central to our policy and practice; however, tutors cannot promise total confidentiality, and this is made clear to learners.

### Working with parents/carers

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

Parents/carers will be informed immediately if their child has been involved in a drug-related incident. However, there may be some exceptional situations where involving the parents may put the young person at risk of abuse and, in these exceptional cases, the provision will exercise some caution. The decision will be taken by the provision director in liaison with the DSL with the child's welfare a priority.

### Involving the Police

In most cases a drug-related incident will be a provision/commissioning authority, 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.

### Reviewing the policy

This policy is reviewed every year in line with provision protocols. If an exceptional incident should occur, the policy is reviewed in the light of that incident.

### Disseminating the policy

The policy is on the provision's website and is drawn to the attention of all learners, parents/carers, and staff annually. New learners and their families are familiarised with it as part of their induction.

Copies of the full policy are in the staff handbook and on the provision website.

## **SGE Provision Drugs Policy**

Date of policy: 18<sup>th</sup> July 2023

Approved by directors:

Review date: March 2024