



## 01 Health and safety procedures

### 01.23 Alcohol and Drug Misuse Policy for Early Years Staff

#### 1. Purpose of the Policy

This policy sets out expectations for staff conduct regarding alcohol and drug use to ensure the safety, wellbeing, and safeguarding of all children in the setting. It supports a safe, professional, and legally compliant working environment.

#### 2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All employees (permanent, temporary, agency, apprentices)
- Volunteers, students, and contractors working on the premises
- Anyone representing the setting off-site (e.g., trips, training, meetings)

#### 3. Principles

- The welfare of children is the **paramount consideration**.
- Staff must be **fit for work** at all times.
- The setting has a **zero-tolerance approach** to being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs while responsible for children.
- Staff will be treated fairly, consistently, and with respect if concerns arise.

#### 4. Expectations for Staff

##### Alcohol

- Staff must **not consume alcohol** during working hours, including breaks taken off-site.
- Staff must **not attend work smelling of alcohol** or with alcohol in their system from previous consumption.
- Staff must **not consume alcohol** before attending work, including early morning shifts.
- Alcohol must not be brought onto the premises unless authorised for a specific event (e.g., staff celebration outside operating hours).

##### Illegal Drugs

- Staff must **not possess, use, or be under the influence of illegal drugs** on the premises or while representing the setting.
- Staff must not attend work impaired by illegal drug use from the previous day or night.

##### Prescription and Over-the-Counter Medication

- Staff taking medication that may impair alertness, judgement, or ability to care for children must:
  - Inform the manager confidentially.
  - Follow any risk assessment or adjustments put in place.
- Medication must be stored securely and never left accessible to children.

## 5. Identifying Concerns

Concerns may arise from:

- Smell of alcohol or drugs
- Slurred speech, unsteady movement, or unusual behaviour
- Impaired judgement or reduced ability to supervise children
- Reports from colleagues, parents, or visitors

Any concerns must be reported immediately to the manager or designated safeguarding lead.

## 6. Procedures When Concerns Arise

### Immediate Actions

- The staff member may be **removed from duty** and supervised until safe arrangements are made for them to leave the premises.
- A safeguarding risk assessment will be completed.

### Investigation

- The manager will conduct a confidential investigation.
- The staff member will be given the opportunity to respond to concerns.
- The setting may request the staff member to attend a medical assessment if appropriate.

### Outcomes

Depending on the findings, outcomes may include:

- No further action
- Informal support or monitoring
- Formal disciplinary action
- Referral to external agencies (e.g., LADO, police) if safeguarding or criminal concerns arise
- Termination of employment in serious cases

## 7. Support for Staff

The setting recognises that alcohol or drug misuse can be a health issue. Staff are encouraged to seek help early. Support may include:

- Signposting to GP or specialist services
- Adjustments to duties where appropriate
- A confidential discussion with the manager

However, safeguarding responsibilities may limit the extent of adjustments possible.

## 8. Off-Duty Conduct

Staff must ensure their behaviour outside work does not:

- Bring the setting into disrepute
- Affect their suitability to work with children
- Breach statutory safeguarding requirements

Convictions or cautions related to alcohol or drug misuse must be reported to the manager immediately.

## **9. Training and Awareness**

- All staff will receive training on this policy during induction.
- The policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if legislation or guidance changes.

## **10. Legal and Regulatory Framework**

This policy aligns with:

- The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Misuse of Drugs Act 1971
- Local safeguarding partnership guidance