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Substantive changes since last review:	Updated reference from 'Government Drug Strategy 2010' to 'From Harm to Hope: A 10-Year Drugs Plan (2021)', Updated reference from ACPO to NPCC

Drugs and Alcohol Policy

Introduction

This policy has been written, taking into account national and local guidance, in particular, guidance from the 'Department for Education and current National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) guidance regarding drugs in educational settings' and 'From Harm to Hope: A 10-Year Drugs Plan (2021).

The purpose of Acorn AP drug policy is to:

- clarify the legal requirements and responsibilities of Acorn AP
- reinforce and safeguard the health and safety of young people and others who use Acorn AP
- clarify Acorn AP approach to drugs for all staff, young people, trustees, parents/carers, external agencies and the wider community
- give guidance on developing, implementing and monitoring the drug education programme
- enable staff to manage drugs on Acorn AP premises, and any incidents that occur, with confidence and consistency, and in the best interests of those involved
- ensure that the response to incidents involving drugs complements the overall approach to drug education and the values and ethos of Acorn AP
- provide a basis for evaluating the effectiveness of the Acorn AP drug education programme and the management of incidents involving illegal and other unauthorised drugs
- reinforce the role of Acorn AP in contributing to local and national strategies.

This policy applies to:

all staff, young people, parents/carers, trustees and partner agencies working in Acorn AP. It includes journeys to and from Acorn centres, and residential trips.

Young people must not bring controlled drugs, or alcohol onto the Acorn site at any time.

The definition of a drug given by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime is:

A substance people take to change the way they feel, think or behave.

The term 'drugs' and 'drug education', unless otherwise stated, is used throughout this document to refer to all drugs:

- all illegal drugs (those controlled by the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971)
- all legal drugs, including alcohol, tobacco, volatile substances (those giving off a gas or vapour which can be inhaled), new psychoactive substances (NPS), ketamine, khat and alkyl nitrites (known as poppers). Including 'legal highs'.
- all over the counter and prescription medicines.

Acorn AP stance towards drugs, health and the needs of Young People

Acorn AP has a zero-tolerance policy towards the possession, use or supply of illegal and other unauthorised drugs within the Acorn AP premises.

Responses for managing drug related incidents in the Acorn AP centres:

Incident	First Occasion	Second Occasion	Third occasion	Fourth Occasion
Possession of Class C Drugs	Short Term Suspension. Substance confiscated. Contact parents/carers/refers to arrange a meeting. Behaviour assessment; further risk assessment for Acorn Centre (e.g. to ensure curriculum/pastoral programmes address issues raised). Incident logged as safeguarding concern. Parents/carers and student understand legal position from Head of Centre. Consequences of more offence made clear.	Reassessment of risk <i>after</i> intervention. Incident logged as safeguarding concern.	Reassessment of risk <i>after</i> intervention. Incident logged as safeguarding concern.	Incident logged as safeguarding concern. Referral made to Children's Social Care and young person's Drug & Alcohol Team
Possession of Alcohol	Substance confiscated. Parents phoned and letter home Incident logged as safeguarding concern.	Substance confiscated. Parents called to collect student; Risk assessment carried out. Possible behaviour/ health intervention. Contractual agreement with Parent / Carer Incident logged as safeguarding concern.	Further risk assessment and behaviour assessment. Continued disregard for Acorn Centre rules/ intervention programme. Incident logged as safeguarding concern.	Incident logged as safeguarding concern. Referral made to Children's Social Care and young person's Drug & Alcohol Team
Possession of cigarettes	Expectation that cigarettes and lighters are handed in at the start of the day. Make it clear that if they are not handed in that staff will assume you are planning to smoke and will be keeping a watch out and may request you stay inside at breaks. Support and information on giving up smoking is provided to the young person via the NHS Trust Logged as concern.	Removal from the rest of the group, contact parents over a break in contract, risk of place being withdrawn if consistent abuse of trust and breaking of centre rules. If the student is a year 11 young person come to an agreement that they leave site at lunch time to facilitate the need and maintain the relationship and placement. Have you had lessons on smoking cessation? Logged as concern.		

Possession of suspected Class A or B Drug, including Cannabis	Substance confiscated. Parents/refers and Police contacted. Short term suspension whilst substance verified / pastoral intervention negotiated. Risk assessment for young person and Acorn Centre. Substance verified: Incident logged as safeguarding concern.	Referral made to Children's Social Care and young person's Drug & Alcohol Team reassessment of risk <i>after</i> intervention Incident logged as safeguarding concern.		
Social Supply Illegal Drug	Substance confiscated. Parents/referrer contacted and Police, if appropriate. Referral made to Children's Social Care and young person's Drug & Alcohol Team Risk assessment for young people and others in Acorn Centre. Investigation into any network of illegal drug use. Possible permanent exclusion after assessment and investigation. Review process: reassessment of risk <i>after</i> intervention. Incident logged as safeguarding concern.			Possible permanent exclusion after assessment and investigation.

Acorn AP recognises that there are instances where other non-controlled drugs may legitimately be in Acorn Centres:

Medicines

Some young people may require medicines that have been prescribed for a medical condition during the day. Staffing, administration, storage and record keeping procedures are all clearly set out in the Medicines Policy. The medicines policy also sets out the circumstances in which a young person may take non-prescribed/over-the-counter medicines, such as those providing relief from period pains or hay fever. Acorn AP staff do not give non-prescribed medication to students unless supplied with written authorisation by parent/carer.

Volatile substances

Some solvents or hazardous chemicals are legitimately used by Acorn AP staff or young people. These substances are stored securely (in line with COSHH regulations) and managed to prevent inappropriate access or use. Arrangements are set out in Acorn AP Health and Safety policy.

Alcohol

Use and consumption of alcohol at Acorn AP is never authorised for any staff member. In keeping with our duty of care, employees are not permitted to consume alcohol during the working day, or at any time when they will be subsequently supervising young people.

Acorn AP recognises that there may be occasions when a member of staff may experience difficulties in relation to alcohol misuse outside Acorn. Staff are encouraged to discuss this with line managers so that support can be put in place. In addition, an Occupation Health Referral can be actioned if appropriate.

Tobacco and e-cigarettes

Acorn Centres are non-smoking areas. Students are required to hand in their cigarettes and e-cigarettes at the beginning of the day and are not permitted to smoke during the day, while under Acorn supervision.

Staff with key responsibility for drugs

- Drugs Education Co-ordinator: Head of Centre
- Management of drug related issues in Acorn AP: Head of Centre, with support from Acorn Senior Leaders.

If any member of staff has concerns about any drug related incident, then they should immediately inform an Acorn senior leader.

Drugs Education within the Acorn AP curriculum

Acorn AP delivers a balanced curriculum which:

- promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of young people at Acorn AP and of society
- prepares young people at Acorn AP for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

Drug education is a major component of drug prevention and is an important aspect of the Acorn AP curriculum. Its aim is to provide opportunities for young people to develop their knowledge, skills, attitudes and understanding about drugs and appreciate the benefits of a healthy lifestyle, relating this to their own and others' actions.

It aims to:

- increase young people's knowledge and understanding and clarify misconceptions about:
- the short- and long-term effects and risks of drugs
- the rules and laws relating to drugs
- the impact of drugs on individuals, families and communities
- the prevalence and acceptability of drug use among peers
- the complex moral, social, emotional and political issues surrounding drugs
- develop young people's personal and social skills to make informed decisions and keep themselves safe and healthy, including:
- assessing, avoiding and managing risk
- communicating effectively
- resisting pressures
- finding information, help and advice
- devising problem-solving and coping strategies
- developing self-awareness and self-esteem
- enable young people to explore their own and other peoples' attitudes towards drugs, drug use and drug users, including challenging stereotypes, and exploring media and social influences.

Acorn AP staff may need to focus more on developing young people's confidence and skills to manage situations, which require making decisions about drugs. This may include developing competence to manage medicines responsibly, staying safe and

understanding and managing feelings. Acorn AP staff should pay particular attention to enabling students to seek help and support when they need it.

Methodology and resources

Drug education is delivered within a safe, secure and supportive learning environment. Ground rules are set out, and Acorn AP staff and young people's right to privacy is respected. Boundaries of discussions are made clear. In the event of a young person deliberately and regularly referring to a 'drug habit', the Head of Centre will speak with the young person, offer support and advice and if necessary, involve the parent or carer.

Group agreements are made to help to foster mutual respect and an environment in which young people feel comfortable and ready to listen to and discuss each other's opinions.

Distancing techniques can be adopted through role play/anonymous question boxes. Staff are advised to sometimes answer difficult questions on an individual basis.

Staff support and training

To support staff to increase their knowledge and understanding in this topic, continued professional development training through the EduCare suite of training courses will be offered. Subsequent new staff will be provided with training as part of the new Staff Induction Programme. Advice is also provided through line managers and in house training takes place as and when needed.

Monitoring and reviewing

The teaching of drug education will be monitored and reviewed via the subjects within which it is taught. This will be completed through Acorn AP monitoring policy.

Searches

Personal Searches

When a young person is suspected of concealing illegal or other unauthorised drugs staff may carry out a personal search; this includes the searching of outer clothing and inside pockets. Every effort will be made to persuade the person to hand over voluntarily any drugs, in the presence of a second adult witness. Where the individual refuses and the drug is believed to be illegal, Heads of Centre and staff authorised by them have a statutory power to search students or their possessions, without consent, where they have reasonable grounds for suspecting that the student may have a prohibited item. This will be undertaken according to the offensive weapons policy.

Searches of Acorn AP property

Staff may search Acorn AP property, for example, young people's lockers, desks or accommodation if they believe drugs to be stored there. Prior consent will be sought; however, individuals will be made aware that if consent is refused Acorn AP may proceed with a search. Where consent is refused, Acorn will balance the likelihood that an offence has been committed against the risk of infringing the individual's privacy without just cause.

Searches of personal property

Acorn AP staff are authorised to search personal property without consent. If Acorn wishes to search personal property, including young people's property stored within Acorn property, for example a bag or pencil case within a locker, they will ask for consent. Where consent is refused, they will consider, in the case of young people, notifying parents/carers/referrers, who may persuade their young people to give consent or if they wish to proceed with a non-consensual search this will follow the same procedure as in the offensive weapons policy. After any search involving young people, parents/carers/referrers will normally be contacted by Acorn AP, regardless of whether the result of the search is positive or negative.

The law permits Acorn AP staff to take temporary possession of a substance suspected of being an illegal drug for the purposes of preventing an offence from being committed or continued in relation to that drug providing that all reasonable steps are taken to destroy the drug or deliver it to a person lawfully entitled to take custody of it.

In taking temporary possession and disposing of suspected illegal drugs staff 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 an Acorn AP safe, locked drawer or cabinet.
- **without delay** notify the police, who will be asked to collect it and then store or dispose of it. **The law does not require Acorn AP to divulge to the police the name of the young person from whom the drugs were taken but in the case of an illegal drug will normally do so. Liaison will take place to ensure the safe disposal of any substances.** Where a young person is identified the police will be required to follow set internal procedures
- record full details of the incident, including notes of any discussions with the young person. These should include date, time, place and people present. The police incident reference number should also be included.

Staff should not attempt to analyse or taste unknown substances. Police may advise on analysis and formal identification.

If formal action is to be taken against a young person, the police will make arrangements for them to attend a local police station accompanied by an appropriate adult for interview. Only in exceptional circumstances should arrest or interviews take place at an Acorn centre. An appropriate adult should always be present during interviews, preferably a parent/carer/referrer, or duty social worker.

Legal Drugs

The police will not always necessarily be involved in incidents involving legal drugs, but Acorn AP will inform trading standards or police about the inappropriate sale or supply of tobacco, alcohol or volatile substances to young people in the local area.

Alcohol

Parents/carers/referrers will be informed and informed that the alcohol has been disposed of. In cases where a disciplinary proceeding is necessary, items will be disposed of, once this has taken place.

Volatile substances

Given the level of danger posed by volatile substances, Acorn AP will arrange for their safe disposal. E.g. Gases, glues, solvents,.

Medicines

Parents/carers/referrers will be informed and will be asked to collect and dispose of unused or date-expired medicines. Further details are outlined in the medicines policy.

Disposal of drug paraphernalia

Needles or syringes found on Acorn premises will be placed in a sturdy, secure container, using gloves or a grabber. They can be disposed of in a sharps bin if there is one on the premises. If not, contact the local health department who will be able to advise on safe disposal. Used needles and syringes must be disposed of appropriately and not put in domestic waste.

Police contact

First point of contact: Local Police non-emergency number.

Referral and external support

Heads of Centre are responsible for referral to agencies.

Young people are made aware of the various internal and external support structures via Acorn AP staff. Local support services and national helplines/websites are advertised on notice boards, on an information board in housing and on the Acorn AP website. Information is available from line managers for individual young people, parents or referrers as and when required.

Confidentiality

Acorn staff cannot and should not promise total confidentiality. The boundaries of confidentiality should be made clear to the young person. If a young person discloses information which is sensitive, not generally known, and which the young person asks not to be passed on, it should be discussed with a Centre DSL or Organisational DSL. The request will be honoured unless this is unavoidable in order for Acorn staff members to fulfil their professional responsibilities in relation to:

- child protection
- co-operating with a police investigation
- Referral to external services.
- Every effort will be made to secure the young person's agreement to the way in which Acorn AP intends to use any sensitive information.

It may be necessary to invoke local child protection procedures if a young person's safety is under threat. It will be only in exceptional circumstances that sensitive information is passed on against a young person's wishes, and even then, Acorn AP will inform the young person first and endeavour to explain why this needs to happen. These exceptions are defined by a moral or professional duty to act:

- where there is a child protection issue
- where a life is in danger.

Involvement of parents/carers/visitors/referrer

In any incident involving illegal and other unauthorised drugs Acorn AP will normally involve the young people's parents/carers/referrer and explain how they intend to respond to the incident and to the young person's needs. Where Acorn suspects that to do this might put the young people's safety at risk or if there is any other cause for concern for the young person's safety at home, then Acorn will exercise caution when considering involving parents/carers/refers. In any situation where a young person may need protection from the possibility of abuse, Acorn AP child protection co-ordinator should be consulted and local child protection procedures followed.

Parents/carers/referrers are encouraged to approach Acorn AP if they are concerned about any issue related to drugs and their young person and Acorn will refer parents/carers/referrers to other sources of help, for example, specialist drug agencies or family support groups, as required.

If parents/carers/referrers are suspected of being under the influence of drugs or alcohol on Acorn AP premises, staff should attempt to maintain a calm atmosphere and call for a second adult, if necessary. On occasion, a staff member may have concerns about discharging a young person into the care of a parent/carer/referrer. In such instances, Acorn AP will discuss with the parent/carer/referrer if alternative arrangements could be made, for example asking another parent/carer/referrers to accompany the child home.