



# Rainbow Horses

Learning Centre CIC

## DRUGS AND SUBSTANCE MISUSE POLICY

### Introduction

#### *Drugs- A Definition*

*'A substance people take to change the way they feel, think or behave'  
(United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime)*

*This definition includes all illegal and legal drugs including alcohol, tobacco and medicines*

**The majority of young people of school age have never used an illegal drug. Of those who do experiment with illegal drugs very few will go on to become problem drug users. However, most will at some stage be occasional users of drugs for medicinal purposes and many will try tobacco and alcohol. Every school therefore has a responsibility to consider its response to drugs and all schools are expected to have a policy which sets out the school's role in relation to all drug matters. (Drugs: Guidance for Schools DFES 2004)**

### Purpose

The purpose of the drug policy is to:

- Clarify the legal requirements and responsibilities of Rainbow Horses
- Reinforce and safeguard the health & safety of learners and others who use Rainbow Horses
- Clarify our approach to drugs for staff, learners, directors, parents/carers and the wider community
- Give guidance on developing, implementing and monitoring the drug education programme
- Enable staff to manage drugs on school 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 values and ethos of Rainbow Horses

All drugs have the potential to harm; but some drugs are more harmful than others. For a small number of people, substance misuse can lead to serious and far reaching consequences, not only for themselves, but their families, their communities and society in general. For children and young people in particular, substance misuse can impact on their education, their relationships with family and friends and prevent them from reaching their full potential.

All children and young people need to be able to make safe, healthy and responsible decisions about drugs, both legal and illegal. Schools and other education providers play a central role in helping them

make such decisions by providing education about the risks and effects of drugs; by developing their confidence and skills to manage situations involving substance misuse; by creating a safe and supportive learning environment; and ensuring those for whom the misuse of substances is a concern, receive appropriate support.

This policy should be read in conjunction with

- Safeguarding
- Confidentiality
- Health and Safety
- Code of Conduct
- Behaviour policy
- Management of medication
- First Aid

In the context of this policy, use of the word 'substances' refers to all drugs, including medicines, volatile substances (glue, aerosols etc), alcohol, tobacco and illegal drugs. Paraphernalia are items associated with substance misuse that aid their use such as needles, rizzla papers, 'bongs', pipes, small bags/wraps etc

At Rainbow Horses we are committed to positively and constructively address the issue of substance use and misuse. We believe that by providing effective education and having a process in place by which we respond to substance-related incidents we are demonstrating responsibility for the young people in our care. We appreciate that the use of substances is not confined to one particular setting and we are not immune to the effects. We recognise that some young people will experiment and use substances.

Our approach is to minimise harm to young people as part of our duty to safeguard them. 'Harm minimisation' is an approach in which an attempt is made to reduce or minimise the harm towards an individual and/or others through changing high-risk behaviour to safer behaviour. Learner attitude, knowledge and behaviour will inform the programme to ensure its relevance. Parents' views will also be sought.

Prescribed medication is kept safe while on the premises (see Management of Medication policy)

Staff have a particular responsibility in relation to the use of substances. The use of controlled substances will be viewed as a criminal offence; staff considered to be under the influence may be asked to leave pending investigation.

## **Education**

An effective education programme, should increase young people's knowledge about substances and also enable them to

- make informed choices and decisions
- develop personal initiative and responsibility
- develop assertiveness
- develop the motivation to succeed

as part of a wider personal, social and health education programme.

## **Drugs and the Law**

The Misuse of Drugs Act 1971

This is the main law covering drugs that are considered 'dangerous or otherwise harmful'. It categorises these drugs as Class A, B or C controlled drugs and places restrictions on their possession, supply and production. Under this Act it is against the law to:

- Possess a controlled drug unlawfully
  - Possess a controlled drug with intent to supply it
  - Supply a controlled drug (even where no financial charge is made for the drug) ●
- Knowingly allow premises you occupy or manage to be used for supply or production of a controlled drug

### Medicines Act 1968

This regulates drugs that are used as medicine. There are three main categories: ● 'Prescription-only' drugs - pharmacists can dispense these, but only if the drugs have been prescribed by a qualified medical professional

- 'Pharmacy medicines' – a qualified pharmacist can sell these in a chemist's shop without a doctor's prescription
- 'General' – these everyday medicines may be sold in any shop or outlet

The majority of controlled drugs have a legitimate medical use and are therefore also available on prescription. It is therefore possible for a qualified medical professional to prescribe them to patients but possession without a prescription is illegal

### Drugs Act 2005

This requires courts to take into account aggravating factors – such as dealing near a school – when sentencing offenders

## **LAWS ON ALCOHOL**

It is against the law:

- To give a child under five alcohol (except in a medical emergency)
- For someone under 18 to buy alcohol, attempt to buy alcohol or to be sold alcohol in any circumstances or in any place at all
- For someone under 18 to consume alcohol in any part of licensed premises, with one exception: 16 and 17 year olds accompanied by an adult may consume, but not buy, beer, wine and cider with a table meal in licensed premises
- For an adult to purchase alcohol for a person under 18 for consumption on licensed premises, except where beer, wine or cider is bought for 16 and 17 year olds who are accompanied by an adult, for consumption with a table meal in licensed premises
- For an adult to buy or attempt to buy alcohol on behalf of someone under 18 ● For children under 16 to be on a premises which is used primarily or exclusively for the sale of alcohol for consumption on the premises, unless they are accompanied by an adult ● For children under 16 to be on any licensed premises selling alcohol for consumption between the hours of midnight and 5 am, unless they are accompanied by an adult
- To sell liqueur confectionery to anyone under 16
- To be drunk in a public place
- To drive with more than 80mg of alcohol in 100ml of blood

## DEALING WITH SUBSTANCE RELATED INCIDENTS

All staff have a responsibility for the safety and well-being of learners at Rainbow Horses. The following guidelines are to assist staff to deal with immediate issues and thereafter other responsibilities arising from suspected substance abuse by any learner at Rainbow Horses

### Health Issues

- the learner's health and well-being must be assessed and closely monitored ● staff should endeavour to gather as much information regarding the incident including what drug(s) was used, when it was used and how much
- if there are any concerns about a young person's health they should be taken by staff to Accident and Emergency at a local hospital
- parents should be informed when medical attention/treatment is sought

### Other Areas of Responsibility

- All substance related incidents need to be reported to a senior member of staff
- All substance related incidents should be recorded
- Police will usually be informed of controlled substance related incidents
- The law allows staff to take temporary possession of a confiscated suspicious substance ● Confiscated substances will be handed to the police or destroyed if asked to do so by the police ● Any suspicious substance that the police ask to be destroyed will be undertaken in the presence of a witness and records kept
- While awaiting collection of a substance by the police it should be kept in a locked/secure place
- Legal substances such as glue or solvents can be destroyed or disposed of on the premises
- The disposal of needles and syringes should be done safely using a sharps box ● Young people are required to hand over any suspected illegal and unauthorised drug/substance and paraphernalia with a second member of staff present where possible. Staff may request a young person to turn out the contents of bags and pockets; if they refuse then police can be called
- Learners may wish to disclose information in confidence. Staff should explain that they cannot guarantee confidentiality
- Parents/carers will usually be informed of any substance related incidents involving their child

If a controlled substance is seized it must be put in an envelope, sealed, signed, dated and the time recorded across the seal of the envelope. The controlled substance must be kept locked away until handed over to the police. The incident number and names of the officers dealing with the case must be recorded and an incident record completed including

- names of learners involved
- grounds of suspicion
- who was present
- outcomes and follow-up
- parents informed

### Sanctions

Any sanctions imposed should be justified in terms of:

- Appropriateness of response
- Be proportionate to the gravity of the situation
- Address the needs of all concerned

- Be consistent with existing rules and any previous action taken in response to incidents of this nature

Strategies to deal with substance related incidents will include:

- Written warning, where letters will be sent to parents
- Specific areas of intense drug education
- Police caution
- Police prosecution
- Exclusion-fixed period

A permanent exclusion may be considered in cases of repeated possession or of dealing substances after the use of a wide range of other strategies without success.

### Parents/Carers

Working with parents and carers is of central importance to Rainbow Horses. Effective support, communication and cooperation are vital to the relationship between Rainbow Horses and parents/carers in order to safeguard and promote young people's welfare. Parents/carers are encouraged to contact us to discuss any concerns rising from this policy or in terms of their child's education with regard to substance use/misuse.

We will seek to involve parents/carers at an early stage in the management of any incident and keep them informed of progress thereafter.

Last Reviewed September 2023

To be reviewed September 2024