



Equip Education
& Support Service

Drug and Substance Misuse Policy



Policy Owner: Board of Directors

Approved by: Board of Directors

Date of Approval: October 2025

Last Reviewed: October 2025

Next Review Due: October 2026

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Policy Statement

Equip Education and Support Services Limited is committed to safeguarding the welfare, health and wellbeing of all pupils. This Drug and Substance Misuse Policy sets out the organisation's approach to education, prevention, early identification and response to drug and substance misuse.

The policy applies to **children and young people aged 11–16** educated within Alternative Provision and is underpinned by statutory safeguarding duties and relevant legislation.

Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to:

- All pupils educated by Equip Education and Support Services Limited
 - All staff, volunteers and contractors
 - Parents, carers and visitors while on provision premises or engaged in provision-related activities
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Related Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Health and Safety Policy

1. Introduction

This Drug and Substance Misuse Policy sets out the approach of Equip Education and Support Services Limited to preventing and responding to issues relating to drugs and substance misuse. The policy is designed to safeguard pupils, promote wellbeing and ensure compliance with statutory safeguarding and legal duties.

Equip Education and Support Services Limited provides Alternative Provision for children and young people aged 11–16. Many pupils may be vulnerable due to social, emotional or contextual factors, and substance misuse may present a safeguarding risk to pupils' health, safety and welfare.

The policy applies to all pupils, staff, visitors, parents and carers while on provision premises or engaged in provision-related activities. It should be read alongside the Safeguarding Policy, Behaviour Policy and Curriculum Policy.

The organisation adopts a balanced approach that combines education, prevention, early identification, safeguarding and proportionate response. The primary focus is always the safety and wellbeing of pupils.

2. Definitions and Scope

For the purposes of this policy, a **drug** is defined as any substance which alters the way a person feels, thinks or behaves.

This includes:

- Illegal drugs
- Legal drugs, including alcohol, tobacco, vaping products and volatile substances
- Prescription and over-the-counter medicines

Substance misuse refers to the inappropriate, unlawful or harmful use of any substance, including the misuse of prescribed medication.

This policy applies to:

- All pupils educated by Equip Education and Support Services Limited
- All staff, volunteers, contractors, visitors, parents and carers while on provision premises
- All provision-related activities, including off-site education and visits

The policy applies at all times where drug or substance misuse may present a safeguarding risk to pupils' health, safety or wellbeing.

3. Legal Framework and Responsibilities

Equip Education and Support Services Limited has a legal duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people and to provide a safe learning environment free from the risks associated with drug and substance misuse.

This policy is informed by, and operates in line with, relevant legislation and statutory guidance, including:

- The Misuse of Drugs Act 1971
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)

- The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Relevant Department for Education guidance relating to drugs and safeguarding

All drug- and substance-related concerns are treated as potential safeguarding issues and are managed in accordance with safeguarding procedures.

Responsibilities

The **Board of Directors** holds overall responsibility for ensuring that a clear and effective Drug and Substance Misuse Policy is in place and that it is implemented consistently.

Senior leaders are responsible for overseeing the application of this policy, responding to incidents, liaising with external agencies where appropriate, and ensuring that safeguarding procedures are followed.

Staff have a responsibility to be familiar with this policy, to remain vigilant to signs of drug or substance misuse, and to report concerns promptly in line with safeguarding procedures. Staff must not promise confidentiality where safeguarding concerns are identified.

Pupils are expected to comply with the provision's rules relating to drugs and substances and to engage appropriately with education, support and intervention where required.

Parents and carers are expected to support the provision's approach to drug education and safeguarding and to engage constructively where concerns arise.

4. Drug Education and Prevention

Equip Education and Support Services Limited recognises the importance of education and prevention in reducing the risks associated with drug and substance misuse. Drug education forms part of the wider **PSHE and personal development curriculum** and supports pupils to make informed, safe and responsible choices.

Drug education is delivered in an age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate manner and takes account of pupils' individual needs, experiences and vulnerabilities. Learning focuses on increasing pupils' understanding of the risks and consequences of drug and substance misuse and on developing skills to manage peer pressure, risk-taking behaviour and decision-making.

Education around drugs and substances is embedded within **PSHE, health and wellbeing and personal development learning**. This includes learning about legal and illegal substances, alcohol, tobacco, vaping and misuse of prescription

medication, as well as the impact of substance misuse on physical health, mental wellbeing, relationships and personal safety.

Prevention work is closely linked to safeguarding practice, PSHE learning and positive behaviour approaches. Staff promote clear messages about safety, boundaries and support, and encourage pupils to seek help or advice if they are worried about their own or others' use of drugs or substances.

5. Procedures and Response to Incidents

Discipline and Consequences

Equip Education and Support Services Limited takes all incidents involving drugs or substance misuse seriously. Any incident or concern is managed promptly, proportionately and in line with safeguarding procedures, with the safety and wellbeing of pupils as the primary consideration.

If a pupil arrives at provision **under the influence of drugs or substances**, they will **not be permitted to remain on site**. Immediate steps will be taken to ensure the pupil's safety, and appropriate supervision will be provided until the pupil can be safely collected. Parents or carers and commissioning schools will be informed without delay, in line with safeguarding procedures.

Where there are concerns about a pupil's immediate health or safety, medical advice or emergency services will be sought. The provision will not attempt to manage intoxication on site beyond ensuring safety and appropriate handover.

If drugs or substances are found on provision premises or during provision-related activities, staff will follow agreed procedures for safe handling and disposal and will not conduct searches beyond their authority. External agencies, including the police or children's social care, may be involved where required.

All incidents involving drugs or substance misuse are treated as safeguarding concerns and are formally recorded and reported in line with safeguarding procedures. Each incident is considered on an individual basis, taking account of the pupil's age, vulnerability, circumstances and any previous concerns.

Responses aim to balance clear boundaries with safeguarding and support. Any sanctions or consequences are managed in line with the Behaviour Policy and are accompanied by appropriate safeguarding follow-up.

6. Support, Intervention and External Agencies

Equip Education and Support Services Limited recognises that drug or substance misuse may be an indicator of wider safeguarding, wellbeing or contextual concerns.

Where incidents or concerns arise, appropriate support and intervention are considered in line with the pupil's needs and circumstances.

Support may include discussion with the pupil, engagement with parents or carers, and liaison with commissioning schools to ensure a coordinated response. Where appropriate, pupils may be signposted to external support services through their commissioning school or existing professional networks.

Equip Education and Support Services Limited does not provide specialist substance misuse treatment. Where concerns indicate a higher level of risk or ongoing need, referrals to external agencies, including children's social care, health services or specialist support organisations, will be made in line with safeguarding procedures.

Information is shared with external agencies on a need-to-know basis and in accordance with data protection requirements, safeguarding guidance and statutory responsibilities. All actions taken are recorded appropriately.

7. Staff Conduct and Prohibited Items

Equip Education and Support Services Limited expects all staff, volunteers and visitors to act as positive role models and to support a safe, healthy and drug-free environment for pupils.

The possession, use, supply or being under the influence of illegal drugs or substances while on provision premises or engaged in provision-related activities is strictly prohibited. This includes alcohol and other substances that may impair judgement or ability to work safely.

Staff must not bring illegal drugs, alcohol or unauthorised substances onto provision premises or into contact with pupils. Prescription medication must be stored and used appropriately and in line with organisational procedures.

Any breach of this policy by staff will be treated seriously and may result in disciplinary action in line with the organisation's disciplinary procedures. Where appropriate, external agencies may be informed.

Pupils are not permitted to bring drugs, alcohol, vaping products or unauthorised substances onto provision premises or into provision-related activities. Any prohibited items will be managed in line with safeguarding and behaviour procedures.

8. Monitoring, Review and Policy Evaluation

This Drug and Substance Misuse Policy is monitored by senior leaders to ensure it remains effective, proportionate and aligned with safeguarding requirements and operational practice.

The policy is reviewed at least annually, or sooner where required, in response to changes in legislation, statutory guidance, safeguarding concerns, inspection outcomes or operational experience.

Monitoring includes consideration of recorded incidents, safeguarding concerns, feedback from staff and commissioning schools, and any emerging patterns or risks. This information is used to inform policy review, staff training and practice development.

All staff are expected to be familiar with this policy and to follow it consistently as part of their safeguarding responsibilities.

Staff receive regular safeguarding training as part of the organisation's ongoing professional development programme. This includes guidance on recognising substance-related risks and managing sensitive conversations with pupils.

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