

Venture Learning

Drugs & Substance Misuse Policy

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Introduction
This policy is concerned with the use of illegal drugs and the misuse of legal drugs and applies during the contracted educational session and also extends to cover travel to and from Venture Learning, any off-site visit (residential or day) and any situation where the Venture Learning's reputation or the welfare of any students is compromised.

A drug is any substance, taken into the body, which alters the way in which the body functions either physically, emotionally or mentally, including:

- legally available drugs such as alcohol, tobacco, caffeine and solvents;
- over-the-counter and prescribed medicines; and,
- illegal substances.

Research shows that continuing programmes of life-skills based drug education, starting at an appropriate but early age, can have an impact on first use of drugs by young people. The most successful education programmes emphasise information and social skills approaches, such as peer resistance, as well as improvement in self-esteem and self-awareness.

This policy sets out guidance to ensure that drugs education is included as part of Venture Learning's provision that:

- provides students with the necessary knowledge and understanding;
- creates a climate where a young person feels comfortable to discuss drugs issues;
- develops the students' skills, attitudes and values; and,
- enables the students to make lifelong, informed and responsible choices for a healthier and safer lifestyle.

Venture Learning acknowledges that drug related incidents may occur. Our first priority is always to safeguard the young people in our care, so this policy should be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

The purpose of this policy is to proactively reduce the likelihood of drug related incidents and to ensure that they are dealt with effectively and appropriately when they do occur.

Key Staff and Contacts

Provision Based Contacts

Name	Role
Rhys Griffiths	**Head of Provision**
Holly Crann	**Deputy Head of Provision**
Contact details:	**Venture Learning** **19A Forester Street** **Netherfield** **Nottingham** **NG4 2LJ**
	www.venturelearning.co.uk
	0115 987 6621 / 07587 408 996
	Rhys.griffiths@venturelearning.co.uk
	Holly.crann@venturelearning.co.uk

Section 1: Roles and Responbsibilities

1.1 Head of Provision

Is responsible for ensuring that:

- all staff are aware of this policy and it is implemented effectively;
- drug and substance misuse is delivered as part of the PSHE curriculum;
- Venture Learning acts in accordance with all relevant laws relating to the curriculum and to drugs on school premises;
- responses to drug related incidents are initiated and coordinated effectively;
- appropriate liaison with the commissioning school occurs following a drug related incident; and,
- appropriate links with external agencies are formed and maintained as appropriate.

1.2 Teaching Staff

All staff that teach or work with young people at Venture Learning should:

- ensure that the delivery of drugs and substance misuse education is consistent with the aims and principles laid out in this policy;
- liaise with the Head of Provision on any matters regarding drugs, as well as informing the designated safeguarding officer where this constitutes a safeguarding concern;
- be vigilant in the supervision and monitoring of students on site.

1.3 All Staff

Any member of staff at Venture Learning, including voluntary and temporary staff must be aware of this policy, the Medical Policy and the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and refer to these for guidance if they have any concerns about drug and substance misuse. Concerns should always be relayed to a senior member of staff or the Head of Provision.

Section 2: Operation of this Policy

2.1 Drugs & Substance Misuse Education

Students will be taught about drugs and substance misuse as part of the PSHE curriculum at Venture Learning. Teaching staff may also facilitate discussions about drugs and substance misuse as part of direct work or the wider curriculum where it is necessary and appropriate.

This will be supplemented by the statutory National Curriculum requirements for Science in KS3.

If teaching staff feel they do not have sufficient knowledge and understanding to deliver accurate information and teach high quality lessons supporting the aims of this policy, they should seek support from the Head of Provision before discussing drugs and substance misuse with students.

Teaching staff need to be sure that they are aware of issues that may arise when teaching students about drugs and substance misuse. The following guidance should be applied to lessons and the facilitation of discussions:

- ground rules for respectful communication should be established with the group at the outset of a drugs and substance abuse programme and reiterated at the start of each subsequent lesson;
- no student or member of staff should be made to feel pressured to answer a personal question or contribute to the discussion;
- teaching staff should not pass judgement where students share personal opinions or experiences;
- staff may choose not to answer students' questions if they are unsure how to answer appropriately (they may refer the question to an appropriate senior member of staff who may be able to answer or refer to an external service for advice); and,
- staff must record as a safeguarding concern anything a student discloses that indicates they may have been harmed or are at risk of harm through association or engagement with drugs and substance misuse. This should be reported to the designated safeguarding officer immediately.

2.2 Responding to Drug Related Incidents

Venture Learning is committed to protecting the health, safety and well-being of all members of our community. We will not tolerate any misuse of drugs (including alcohol) by students, nor the illegal possession or supply of these substances. Any instances of unauthorised possession, misuse or supply of illegal drugs, alcohol, tobacco or other substances on site will be regarded with the utmost seriousness and appropriately sanctioned.

There are many factors to consider which may be of equal or greater importance when making a decision on the course of action to be taken in response to a drug related incident including but not limited to; evidence, level of intoxication, reason/purpose of ingestion, immediate danger, level of risk, type of drug, quantity, possession or supply. Drug related incidents will be assessed on an individual basis with the final decision on Venture Learning's response falling to the Head of Provision.

In instances of drug possession, misuse or supply parents/carers and the commissioning school will be notified. Venture Learning is committed to working with parents/carers to support the young person involved. The decision may also be taken to contact the police.

Any one or a combination of these possible responses may be used:

- **Support** - wherever possible Venture Learning will offer support to students and parents. Provision to support students with drug related issues may be preventative or responsive, and may be provided by Venture Learning or referred to an appropriate external agency;
- **Sanction** – Venture Learning will issue sanctions in line with the behaviour policy for students who put themselves or others at risk through drug and substance misuse; and/or,
- **Education** – Venture Learning will continually review and adapt the drugs and substance misuse education programme to best meet the needs of the cohort. In response to drug related incidents lessons will be targeted and extra sessions may be introduced for a time-limited period.

The following guidance should be adhered to:

- if a decision is taken that drugs should be handed over to the police, they should be bagged, labelled, dated and held securely;
- any transfer should be witnessed by another adult;
- if the drug is given to the police, Venture Learning is not obliged in law to give the name or other identifying characteristics of the young person involved.