

Drugs and Alcohol Policy

Effective Date: October 2025

Review Date: October 2026

This policy will be reviewed annually by: Lindsey Townsend,
Operations Director

Introduction

This policy has been written, considering national and local guidance, in particular, guidance from the 'DFE and ACPO drug advice for schools'¹ and the Government's Drug Strategy 2010

The purpose of Network Learning Pathways drug policy is to:

- clarify the legal requirements and responsibilities of Network Learning Pathways
- reinforce and safeguard the health and safety of young people and others who use Network Learning Pathways
- clarify the Network Learning Pathways approach to drugs for all staff, young people, 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 Network Learning Pathway 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 Network Learning Pathways
- provide a basis for evaluating the effectiveness of Network Learning Pathways drug education programme and the management of incidents involving illegal and other unauthorised drugs
- Reinforce the role of Network Learning Pathways in contributing to local and national strategies.

This policy applies to: all staff, young people, parents/carers, volunteers, and partner agencies working in Network Learning Pathways. It includes journeys to and from Network Learning Pathways, and residential trips.

Young people must not bring controlled drugs, or alcohol onto the Network Learning Pathways 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)
- all over-the-counter and prescription medicines.

Network Learning Pathways stance towards drugs, health and the needs of Young People

Network Learning Pathways has a zero-tolerance policy towards the possession, use or supply of illegal And other unauthorized drugs within the Network Learning Pathways boundaries which are outlined in

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/657995f0254aaa000d050bff/Arranging_education_for_children_who_cannot_attend_school_because_of_health_needs.pdf

Responses for managing drug related incidents in the Network Learning Pathways (NLP) base:

Incident	First Occasion	Second Occasion	Third occasion	Fourth Occasion
Possession of Class C Drugs	Short Term of exclusion. Substance confiscated. Contact parents/carers/Commissioners to arrange a meeting. Behaviour assessment: further risk assessment for NLP base (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 Service. Consequences of more offences 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 Social Services and North Somerset Substance Advice Service
Possession of Alcohol	Substance confiscated. Parents/carers 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 NLP base rules/ intervention programme. Incident logged as safeguarding concern.	Incident logged as safeguarding concern. Referral made to Social Services and North Somerset Substance Advice Service
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	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		

	Logged as concern.	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 exclusion whilst substance verified / pastoral intervention negotiated. Risk assessment for young person and NLP base. Substance verified: Incident logged as safeguarding concern.	Referral made to Social Services and North Somerset Substance Advice Service 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 Social Services and North Somerset Substance Advice Service Risk assessment for young people and others in NLP base. 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.

Network Learning Pathways recognises that there are instances where other non-controlled drugs may legitimately be in Network Learning Pathways base:

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.

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 Network Learning Pathways 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 the Network Learning Pathways Health and Safety policy.

Alcohol

Use and consumption of alcohol at Network Learning Pathways 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.

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

Tobacco and e-cigarettes

Network Learning Pathways base/premises are non-smoking. 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 Network Learning Pathway supervision.

Staff with key responsibility for drugs

- Drugs Education Co-ordinator: Head of Service
- Management of drug related issues in Network Learning Pathways: Head of Service, with support from Operations Director.

If any member of staff has concerns about any drug related incident, then they should immediately inform the Head of Service.

Drugs Education within the Network Learning Pathways curriculum

Network Learning Pathways delivers a balanced curriculum which:

- promotes the moral, cultural, mental and physical development of young people at Network Learning Pathways and of society
- prepares young people at Network Learning Pathways 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 Network Learning Pathways 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.*

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. Network Learning Pathways 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 Network Learning Pathways 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 making reference to a 'drug habit', the Head of Service 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

The launch of this policy involved whole staff continued professional development training and 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.

Searches

Personal Searches

When a young person is suspected of concealing illegal or other unauthorised drugs staff will not 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, and Network Learning Pathways wishes to proceed along formal lines, then the police will be called.

Searches of Network Learning Pathways property

Staff may search Network Learning Pathways 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 Network Learning Pathways may proceed with a search. Where consent is refused, Network Learning Pathways 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

Network Learning Pathways will not search personal property without consent. If Network Learning Pathways wishes to search personal property, including young people's property stored within Network Learning Pathways 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 along formal lines calling the police.

After any search involving young people, parents/carers/referrers will normally be contacted by Network Learning Pathways, regardless of whether the result of the search is positive or negative.

The law permits Network Learning Pathways 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 Network Learning Pathways safe
- **without delay** notify the police, who will be asked to collect it and then store or dispose of it. **The law does not require Network Learning Pathways 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 Network Learning Pathways. An appropriate adult should always be present during interviews, preferably a parent/carer/refer, or duty social worker.

Legal Drugs

The police will not always necessarily be involved in incidents involving legal drugs, but Network Learning Pathways 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, Network Learning Pathways will arrange for their safe disposal.

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 Network Learning Pathways premises will be placed in a sturdy, secure container, using gloves. A sharps bin is kept in the main reception for this purpose, out of reach of students. Used needles and syringes will 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

The Head of Service is responsible for referral to agencies.

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

Confidentiality

Network Learning Pathways 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 the Head of Service. The request will be honoured unless this is unavoidable in order for Network Learning Pathways 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 Network Learning Pathways 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, Network Learning Pathways 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 Network Learning Pathways 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 Network Learning Pathways 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 Network Learning Pathways will exercise caution when considering involving parents/carers/referrers. In any situation where a young person may need protection from the possibility of abuse, Network Learning Pathways DSL should be consulted and local child protection procedures followed.

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

If parents or carers are suspected of being under the influence of drugs or alcohol on Network Learning Pathways 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, Network Learning Pathways will discuss with the parent/carer/referrer if alternative arrangements could be made.