



Substance Misuse and Education Policy

Document control table**Document title:** Substance Misuse and Education Policy**Version number:** VI**Date approved:** March 2026**Approved by:** Executive Team**Date of review:** March 2029**Document History**

Version	Date	Author	Note of revisions
VI	March 26		Updated from the Alcohol, Drugs and Tobacco Policy

1. Policy Purpose and Rationale	4
2. Substance Education	4
2.1. Underlying principles	4
2.2. Staff and academy council training	4
2.3. Aims and outcomes of substance misuse	4
2.4. Delivery - When and Where Substance Education is Taught	5
2.5. Methodology and Resources	5
2.6. Reviewing, evaluating and monitoring	5
3. Confidentiality and Safeguarding	5
4. External Speakers	6
5. Managing Substance Related Incidents	6
6. Confiscation and Disposal of Substances	6
7. Searching	6
8. Prohibitions and Site Rules	7
9. Support and Sanctions	7

1. Policy Purpose and Rationale

Outwood Grange Academies Trust (OGAT) recognises that 'drugs' encompasses all substances that change the way a person feels, functions, or behaves. This includes alcohol, tobacco, vaping/nicotine products, legal and illegal drugs, medicines, and volatile substances (solvents).

OGAT takes a proactive approach through education, clear behavioral expectations, and support for those affected by substance-related issues. This policy is informed by the Tobacco and Vapes Act, reflecting the generational ban on tobacco and the 2025 restrictions on disposable vaping products, ensuring the Academy remains a smoke-free and vape-free environment by law.

2. Substance Education

2.1. Underlying principles

Our academies believe, in line with government guidance, that all students have the right to accurate, factual education about substances, both legal and illegal. This education should be proactive and evidence-informed. Research from organisations such as Public Health England, the PSHE Association, and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime demonstrates that fear-based approaches, including “just say no” or shock tactics, are largely ineffective in preventing substance misuse and may reduce student engagement or trust in education.

Therefore, information is delivered in a clear, balanced, and factual manner, ensuring students understand risks, consequences, and where to access further information or support. As part of this strategy, the aim is to minimise harm associated with risk-taking behaviours.

2.2. Staff and academy council training

We aim to ensure that all staff employed on site have access to appropriate, evidence-informed training on substance education and the management of alcohol, tobacco, drugs, and vaping-related incidents. This includes understanding the curriculum, recognising signs of misuse, responding to disclosures, and following safeguarding procedures. Academy Council members are also expected to be familiar with this policy and have access to relevant training to support oversight of substance education and related safeguarding matters.

2.3. Aims and outcomes of substance misuse

The aim of substance education at our academies is to encourage students to make healthy choices and adopt safe, responsible behaviours. This is achieved by:

1. Providing accurate, unbiased knowledge about substances, including:
 - Effects on physical and mental health and overall wellbeing
 - Related social and community issues
 - Legal implications of possession, use, and supply
2. Supporting students to make informed decisions about their behaviour, through:
 - Exploring attitudes and perceptions towards substances
 - Developing personal and interpersonal skills, responsibility, resilience, and self-esteem

3. Ensuring awareness of support networks, so that students, parents/carers, and staff know where to access advice, guidance, and assistance if they are affected directly or indirectly by substance use.

These outcomes align with the Academy's wider aims and underpin the delivery of high-quality Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education. The Personal Development and Growth curriculum plays a foundational role in this education, alongside other curriculum areas such as Science, Drama and Food Technology. Beyond this the Academy's Health Education initiatives and Healthy Schools programme, play a key role in reinforcing these aims.

2.4. Delivery - When and Where Substance Education is Taught

The majority of learning about substances such as alcohol, tobacco, drugs, and vaping takes place within the Personal Development and Growth curriculum, delivered by students' Personal Development and Growth Mentor.

- At Key Stage 3, students explore topics including:
 - The impact of substances on physical and mental wellbeing
 - Legal considerations relating to alcohol, tobacco, drugs, and vaping
 - Safe use of prescription and over-the-counter medication
 - Facts and health considerations around vaping
- At Key Stage 4, knowledge is further developed, with links made between substance education and relationship and sex education to reinforce understanding of broader health, wellbeing, and risk-awareness issues.

2.5. Methodology and Resources

Teaching methods will vary depending on the teacher, subject area, and student group. Outwood Grange Academies Trust expects an active, evidence-informed approach to substance education, in line with current Department for Education statutory Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education guidance (2025), supported by best practice identified by the PSHE Association and Office for Health Improvement and Disparities, and informed by DfE advice on drugs in schools.

Resources for Personal Development and Growth sessions are created by subject experts, undergo a rigorous quality assurance process, and are evaluated and updated annually to ensure they remain current and evidence-informed. Individual schools may supplement this education with additional resources, including Pol-Ed, NHS resources, and input from external speakers, as appropriate.

2.6. Reviewing, evaluating and monitoring

The Personal Development and Growth curriculum is reviewed annually to evaluate resources and ensure that all content is accurate, current, and evidence-informed. Where emerging developments or trends in substance use arise, guidance will be communicated to schools and implemented at an appropriate point to maintain relevance and effectiveness.

3. Confidentiality and Safeguarding

Any information disclosed that may indicate risk of harm or danger to a student must be passed immediately to the Academy's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in line with safeguarding procedures.

Staff should also be aware that the police or other statutory agencies have the right to request information disclosed by students, in accordance with the law.

4. External Speakers

External speakers can enhance substance education provision by providing additional expertise or perspectives. All visiting speakers are briefed and vetted in advance to ensure they are aware of safeguarding procedures. A member of the academy will be present at all times in the session.

5. Managing Substance Related Incidents

Any incident involving the discovery of a student under the influence or the finding of unauthorised substances must be reported immediately to the Principal and the Designated Safeguarding Lead. The primary priority in all substance-related matters is the safety and well-being of the student and the academy community. If a student is incapacitated, first aid must be administered immediately by a trained professional while parents are contacted. Once the immediate safety of the student is secured, staff should proceed to the investigative and searching protocols outlined in Section 7.

6. Confiscation and Disposal of Substances

Any seized substances or paraphernalia must be handled in the presence of a witness and recorded for senior staff. Controlled drugs must be delivered to the police as soon as possible unless there is a good reason to dispose of them safely such as when police attendance is not practicable for very small quantities.

Alcohol and tobacco along with vapes and fireworks will be disposed of by the academy and will not be returned to the student. Stolen items found during a search will be delivered to the police or returned to the owner if practicable. If a needle or sharp is found on academy grounds a staff member must secure the area and premises staff or senior leaders will remove the item using protective gloves and a sharps box for secure storage. In the event of a needle stick injury the casualty must be taken to the hospital immediately and parents must be notified.

7. Searching

Any incident involving the discovery of a student under the influence or the finding of unauthorised substances must be reported immediately to the Principal and the Designated Safeguarding Lead. The primary priority in all substance-related matters is the safety and well-being of the student and the academy community.

Staff may request to search a student's possessions, and senior leaders have the authority to search for suspected drugs or alcohol. The staff member conducting the search must be of the same sex as the student, and another staff member must be present as a witness. The only exception to this rule is if there is a risk of serious harm to a person if the search is not carried out urgently, and it is not reasonably practicable to summon a same-sex staff member or witness in the time available.

7.1. Mandatory Recording (OCloud)

From 15 March 2026, all pupil searches must be recorded using the "log event" function in OCloud. This system replaces all logging that takes place outside of the digital platform to ensure statutory duties are met. Every search for a prohibited item must be recorded in OCloud, regardless of whether or not an item was found.

The digital log must include the following details as required by the system interface:

- Date and Time: When the search was conducted.
- Location: The specific area where the search took place (e.g. SLT Office).
- Personnel: The name of the staff member who conducted the search and the staff member who approved it.
- Witnesses: The names of all witnesses present during the search.
- Reason for search: A description of the reasonable grounds for conducting the search.
- Items searched for: The specific prohibited items suspected.

Furthermore, parents should always be informed of any search for a prohibited item that has taken place, along with the outcome of the search and any resulting sanctions, as soon as is practicable.

8. Prohibitions and Site Rules

The entire academy site is a strictly no smoking and no vaping zone for all students and staff and visitors. This prohibition includes the use of electronic cigarettes and all nicotine products. The consumption of alcohol is prohibited on site and during school trips. Staff are prohibited from consuming alcohol or using illegal substances while supervising students during any residential trip or academy event.

9. Support and Sanctions

The academy offers counselling and support through learning managers or external agencies such as FRANK or local drug and alcohol teams. Sanctions will be applied in accordance with the OGAT Positive Discipline policies and the specific context of the incident will be considered.

Possession or use of drugs or alcohol may lead to suspension. Students found to be supplying illegal drugs, or in possession of a quantity or variety of an illegal drug that suggests an intent to supply (including sharing, selling, or digital evidence of intent to distribute), will face permanent exclusion. Sanctions will be applied in accordance with OGAT Positive Discipline policies, and the specific context, including potential exploitation or 'County Lines' involvement will be considered by the Principal.