

Alcohol and Substance Misuse Policy

At The Orchard Day Nursery Kingston, the safety, welfare and wellbeing of every child is our highest priority. We are committed to providing a safe, healthy and professional environment where children are cared for by adults who are physically and mentally able to fulfil their responsibilities.

We recognise that alcohol, illegal drugs, prescription medication, over-the-counter medicines and other substances can impair judgement, concentration, reaction times and the ability to supervise children safely. We therefore operate a zero-tolerance approach to anyone caring for children whilst impaired by alcohol or any substance that may affect their ability to provide safe and appropriate care.

This policy should be read alongside our:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Staff Suitability Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Managing Medicines Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Code of Conduct.

Legislative Framework

This policy reflects the requirements of:

- Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Misuse of Drugs Act 1971
- Road Traffic Act 1988
- Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR (where information is recorded).

Our Responsibilities

We will:

- Ensure children are cared for by suitable adults
- Take immediate action where impairment is suspected
- Maintain confidentiality where appropriate
- Support staff experiencing health or substance misuse difficulties whilst prioritising children's safety
- Work with external agencies where safeguarding concerns arise
- Comply with statutory safeguarding responsibilities.

Alcohol

Staff, students, volunteers and agency staff must not:

- Attend work under the influence of alcohol
- Consume alcohol during working hours

- Consume alcohol whilst supervising children on outings or nursery events
- Bring alcohol onto nursery premises unless authorised for a specific adult-only event and securely stored away from children.

Staff should also ensure that alcohol consumed outside working hours does not impair their fitness to work the following day.

Any employee who attends work under the influence of alcohol will be required to leave the premises immediately where it is safe to do so.

The Nursery Manager will undertake an immediate risk assessment to ensure children remain safe.

The matter will be investigated in accordance with the Disciplinary Policy and may be considered gross misconduct.

Illegal Drugs and Other Substances

The nursery operates a zero-tolerance approach to the possession, use, supply or distribution of illegal drugs on nursery premises or whilst undertaking nursery duties.

This includes (but is not limited to):

- Illegal drugs
- Legal highs (new psychoactive substances)
- Nitrous oxide where used unlawfully
- Misuse of prescription medication
- Misuse of over-the-counter medication
- Cannabis used unlawfully.

Anyone found using, possessing or supplying illegal drugs on nursery premises may be reported immediately to the police.

Disciplinary procedures will also be followed where appropriate.

Prescription Medication

We recognise that many prescription medicines can be taken safely whilst working.

However, staff must inform the Nursery Manager immediately if they are prescribed medication that:

- May cause drowsiness
- Affects concentration
- Affects judgement
- Causes dizziness
- Affects coordination
- May otherwise impair their ability to supervise children safely.

A confidential risk assessment will be completed where necessary.

Medical advice may be sought before staff continue working directly with children.

No employee will be disadvantaged simply because they require prescribed medication; however, children's safety will always remain the overriding priority.

Staff medication must also be stored in the Office First Aid cupboard.

Staff Fitness for Work

If there are concerns regarding a member of staff's fitness to work, the Nursery Manager may:

- Speak confidentially with the employee
- Undertake a risk assessment
- Temporarily redeploy duties
- Require the employee to leave work safely
- Seek occupational health or medical advice where appropriate
- Commence disciplinary procedures where necessary.

Support will be offered where concerns relate to health or dependency rather than misconduct.

Parents and Carers

If a parent or authorised collector arrives and appears to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs, staff will carefully assess whether they are able to care for the child safely.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL will be informed immediately.

Where appropriate, staff may:

- Encourage another authorised adult to collect the child
- Contact the emergency contacts
- Delay collection while alternative arrangements are made
- Seek advice from Children's Social Care
- Contact the police if there is an immediate risk to the child or others.

The child's welfare will always be our paramount consideration.

Driving Under the Influence

Where staff believe an individual intends to drive whilst impaired through alcohol or drugs, they will make every reasonable effort to prevent this from happening.

Where there is an immediate risk to children or the public, the police will be contacted.

Where safe to do so, staff will encourage alternative transport arrangements.

Visitors and Contractors

Visitors, contractors, professionals, students and volunteers must not enter nursery premises whilst under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Anyone appearing impaired will be asked to leave immediately.

Where safeguarding concerns arise, appropriate agencies will be contacted.

Medication on Site

All medication held within the nursery will be:

- Securely stored- in the Office First Aid Cupboard
- Clearly labelled
- Administered in accordance with the nursery's Managing Medicines Policy
- Inaccessible to children at all times.

Safeguarding

Where substance misuse raises concerns about a child's safety or welfare, staff will follow the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy without delay.

This may include:

- recording factual observations
- consulting the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- contacting Children's Social Care
- contacting the police where there is immediate danger
- making referrals to other agencies where appropriate.

Staff will always act in the best interests of the child.

Concerns About Colleagues

All staff have a professional duty to report concerns if they believe a colleague may be impaired through alcohol or drugs whilst caring for children.

Concerns should be reported immediately to the Nursery Manager or, where appropriate, directly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Registered Provider.

Concerns will be managed in accordance with the Whistleblowing Policy.

No member of staff will suffer detriment for raising a genuine concern in good faith.

Confidentiality

Information relating to staff health or substance misuse concerns will be handled sensitively and confidentially in accordance with data protection legislation.

Information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis to safeguard children or meet legal obligations.

Monitoring and Review

The Nursery Manager is responsible for implementing and monitoring this policy.

Any incidents involving alcohol or substance misuse will be recorded, reviewed and used to identify any improvements required to nursery practice.

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner following changes to legislation, safeguarding guidance or the EYFS.

This policy was adopted on	Signed on behalf of the nursery	Date for review
05/08/2026	F.Joyce	December 2026