

POLICY TITLE		DATE OF APPROVAL	
Misuse of Alcohol, Drugs, and Weapons Policy		June 2025	
APPROVED BY	VERSION NO.	VALID UNTIL	
Executive Board	2	June 2028	

OWNER	Executive Director of Quality		
GROUP EXECUTIVE LEAD	Executive Director of Quality		
DOCUMENT TYPE	Policy ⊠ G	Group Procedure □	Local Procedure
PURPOSE	The purpose of this policy is to detail non-negotiables and issues associated with learners in possession of and/or intending to supply alcohol, drugs and weapons. It is complementary policy to both the NCG Safeguarding Policy and NCG Positive Student Behaviour Policy (which contains the student code of conduct). For the purposes of clarity, this policy will also be extended to staff and visitors if there are suspicions of substance abuse, or the carrying of weapons.		
APPLICABLE TO	All NCG learners, and apprentices (whether young people or adults)		
EQUALITY ANALYSIS COMPLETED [POLICIES	Yes ⊠	No 🗆	N/A □
ONLY]	(If EA is not applicable, please explain)		
KEY THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT THIS POLICY			
EXPECTED OUTCOME	To ensure NCG's premises are a safe place to learn, train, work and attend.		

MISCELLANEOUS		
LINKED DOCUMENTS	Safeguarding Policy & Procedure	
	Health & Safety Policy	
	Student Positive Behaviour Policy	
	Alcohol and Substance Misuse Policy (staff)	
	Education Visits Policy	
	Staff Code of Conduct	
DEFINITIONS	NCG is a term used to mean the Group – i.e. a noun phrase to refer to all premises and people.	

- **Professional Services** is a division within NCG to provide specialist services such as finance, IT, estates, and compliance to the colleges within the Group.
- The term learner is used in its widest sense and includes all learners, whether young people aged 14-18, learners with specific high needs, apprentices, adult learners, or higher education students.
- The term teacher is used to describe all teachers and educators, including teachers, lecturers, instructors, skills trainers, learning support practitioners, coaches / mentors, work experience coaches (or similar), and teachers in management positions.
- Senior Leadership Team (SLT) relates to the principal and senior leaders in each college.
- Drugs: Illegal Class A, B and C drugs, alcohol, psychoactive substances, solvents (including aerosols, glue, cleaning and lighter fluid) and prescription medication that is not being used for the nature it was prescribed.
- **ADW** occasionally refers to alcohol, drugs, weapons used for convenience in this policy.
- **Drug paraphernalia**: Button bags, grinders, bongs, stash jars/ containers, needles or similar items that could be linked to the use of drugs (possession/ supply).
- DSL designated safeguarding lead trained staff in each college to deal with safeguarding concerns. The college safeguarding team is led by the DSL, and may involve one or more additionally trained staff (safeguarding officers)
- External/Community Venues: Any venue not owned by the Group, where learning is delivered by staff.
- **Legal Highs** psychoactive substances that are perceived, often incorrectly that are legal to purchase and consume
- Vaping the process of inhaling and exhaling vapor containing nicotine, and flavoured chemicals. Illegal vapes may contain banned substances such as THC/Spice bringing additional health concerns, in addition to those already present.
- Weapons: artefacts that are likely to be used to cause harm and are likely to be concealed (as opposed to in clear, supervised use for curriculum reasons) – including knifes, pistols, screwdrivers, blades, martial arts equipment etc. For the purposes of this policy we will also regard fireworks as weapons. fireworks
- Visitors temporary visitors to any NCG campus, including young people and adults (e.g. school link pupils, parents, guest speakers, other)

Equality Impact Assessment

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT			
	Yes	No	Explanatory Note if required
EIA 1 - Does the proposed policy/procedure align with the intention of the NCG Mission and EDIB Intent Statement in Section 2?			
EIA 2 - Does the proposed policy/procedure in any way impact unfairly on any protected characteristics below?			
Age		\boxtimes	
Disability / Difficulty		\boxtimes	
Gender Reassignment		\boxtimes	
Marriage and Civil Partnership		\boxtimes	
Race		\boxtimes	
Religion or Belief		\boxtimes	
Sex		\boxtimes	
Sexual Orientation		\boxtimes	
EIA3 - Does the proposed policy/processes contain any language/terms/references/ phrasing that could cause offence to any specific groups of people or individuals?			
EIA4 - Does the policy/process discriminate or victimise any groups or individuals?		\boxtimes	
EIA 5 - Does this policy/process positively discriminate against any group of people, or individuals?			
EIA 5 - Does this policy/process include any positive action to support underrepresented groups of people, or individuals?	\boxtimes		The policy cites risk to those groups more vulnerable b alcohol, drugs, and weapons misuse.
EIA 6 - How do you know that the above is correct?	Consultatio	n v	

1. GENERAL POLICY STATEMENT

The purpose of this policy is to ensure NCG is committed to providing a safe, supportive, healthy, and secure environment for learners and staff. This policy is intended to explain the approaches for dealing with incidents associated with alcohol, drugs, and weapons. It also makes links to national guidance for the screening, searching, and confiscating powers a school/college has, ensuring that leaders have the confidence to use these powers where required.

NCG believes that:

- the misuse of alcohol and drugs is detrimental to the health and wellbeing of individuals, and misuse can often cause concern and distress for the college community, including learners and staff.
- Smoking and vaping are proven to have adverse health effects for the individual and others in the immediate area; there should be no smoking or vaping in areas other than those designated.
- the concealment of weapons, whether as perceived protection from others, or with the intention to do harm is categorically unlawful and will not be tolerated under any circumstances.

All learners, staff and visitors must note that the possession, consumption or misuse of alcohol, drugs, drug paraphernalia or the illegal supply of these substances, and/or weapons/concealment of weapons in any NCG premises is not permitted. The only exceptions to this rule are:

- The limited and controlled supply of alcohol through organised college functions such as graduations/award ceremonies, provided to age-appropriate guests, staff, and age-appropriate learners, thereby following licensing and consumption laws. This would only be permitted with prior approval from a member of the CEO, principal, or nominated deputy.
- Consumption of alcohol in College restaurants and bistros by paying customers, in line with licensing rules, and the consumption laws*.

*In addition, even age-appropriate learners should not be served alcohol if they are dining at the college restaurants/ bistros during their day of study (for example during a lunchtime break). Whilst the consumption may be lawful this policy is intended to ensure that learners do not consume alcohol and then mix with young learners in class, arrive at classes having consumed alcohol, or operate technical equipment or machinery putting themselves, and others at considerable risk.

This policy is written with consideration to:

- Health and Safety at Work Act (1974).
- Misuse of Drugs Act (1971).
- Psychoactive Substances Act (2016).
- The Education Act 1996

- DfE Guidance: Searching, screening and confiscation for schools.
- DfE Guidance: Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation Advice for schools

2. SCOPE

This policy and procedure apply to all learners, staff and visitors on NCG's campus, including:

- those on subcontracted programmes.
- those within the learning environment of an external/community venue.
- those travelling to and from the college, in college organised trips or visits.
- those on college-organised trips, residentials, placements, or event/function.

3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the responsibility of the College Leadership Team to:

- Implement this policy and ensure that appropriate personnel and training are in place to support its successful implementation.
- Take responsibility for handling incidents related to drugs, alcohol, and weapons.
- Consult with the police and any relevant external agencies in the event of learners being found in possession of drugs and/or weapons.
- Provide adequate training to the wider staff body on general drug and alcohol awareness, including the links to mental health/ addiction/ financialaspects/ links to crime/ County Lines and the specialist support available locally, and nationally.
- Follow procedures for dealing with learners involved in line with the NCG Positive Behaviour Policy
- Follow HR processes for any breaches of the staff code of conduct

It is the responsibility of **Estates Managers** to:

- Ensure security and safety arrangements are in place to deter the use and supply
 of alcohol, weapons, and drugs. This will extent to the provision of trained security
 staff.
- Ensure the security personnel/ duty managers are trained, deployed appropriately, and are visible to college learners, staff, and visitors.
- Support colleagues in the event that a learner is found in possession of, and/or dealing of drugs including gathering evidence and talking to witnessing staff and/ or learners.
- Ensure arrangements are in place to accurately record all instances of drug related

incidents and concerns.

It is the responsibility of **Director/Head of Department to:**

- Consult with course and pastoral tutors to ensure that issues related to alcohol / drug use / knife crime are covered through the tutorial programme (full-time learners) or embedded within taught delivery. In addition, this content should specifically cover smoking and vaping, and the prohibition of fireworks on all NCG sites.
- Provide support for learners who disclose that they (or a friend/ family member) are using drugs and refer to internal/ external agencies where appropriate.
- Follow appropriate safeguarding procedures if there is an immediate risk of harm to a learner (or a friend/ family member) relating to drug misuse.

It is the responsibility of All College Staff (including subcontractor staff) to:

- Read and understand this policy and the related procedures.
- Act, and report concerns if they observe, or are informed about drug misuse/ possession/ dealing/ concealed weapons.
- Refer learners who disclose they (or a friend/ family member) are misusing drugs, to college safeguarding teams/officers via MyConcern.

4. THE PROACTIVE USE OF DETERRENTS INCLUDING SCREENING

Ensuring college staff and learners feel safe and secure is vital to establishing calm and supportive environments conducive to learning. Using searching, screening and confiscation powers appropriately is an important way to ensure learner and staff welfare is protected and helps establish a college community where everyone is safe. In addition to clear and well publicised policies, College SLTs will occasionally authorise the screening and subsequent search of leaners in line with recognised DfE guidance: Searching, Screening and Confiscation

This approach will apply to all activity on main site and off site; the approach must be well-planned and the responsibility of the principal, or designated deputy, to administer compliantly.

Screening activity may include:

- Learners, staff, and visitors being asked to empty pockets and/or being screened via a security arch or handheld security wands.
- Voluntary, or mandatory bag search with cause.
- Partnership work with local police.
- Search/Sniffer Dogs on site.

Associated staff (e.g. security personnel) will be fully trained and briefed.

Any learners who refuse to engage in screening may be refused entry to the college – the decision right will sit with the Principal and/or nominated senior deputy.

Learners who refuse to be searched may again be refused entry to the college; and a note will be submitted on MyConcern. The refusal to be searched does not necessarily imply guilt, there could be other reasons, however college leaders are required to take a risk averse approach. The incident should be dealt with in line with the NCG Student Positive Behaviour Policy.

Leaders should note that before screening or conducting a search of a learner, it is vital that they consider their obligations under the European Convention on Human Rights. Under Article 8, learners have a right to respect for their private life. In the context of these rights and obligations, this means that learners have the right to expect a reasonable level of personal privacy. To undertake the search staff must consider this basic right and in doing so ensure that the search is justified and proportionate.

5. 14-16 SCHOOL AGED PUPILS

- Any incidences or concerns involving school link pupils should be reported by the teacher responsible for them in College, to the link staff member in the relevant partner school. Any immediate action should be taken in consultation with the school and the DfE Guidance above.
- Disciplinary/safeguarding action will be taken in liaison with school protocol wherever possible.

6. APPEALS PROCEDURE

Appeals against any disciplinary action for ADW incidents or activity fall in line with the appeals procedure in the Student Positive Behaviour Policy.

7. DISSEMINATION

- 1. **Dissemination to staff:** This policy will be referred to during safeguarding mandatory staff training every 2 years and a record of staff who have read the document is maintained by HR; the policy can be found on the NCG policy intranet and website, and the training can be accessed via the NCG People Portal.
- 2. **Dissemination to learners:** This policy will be highlighted to learners via induction, with timely reminders delivered through tutorial/ course briefings. The expectations are also clear in the NCG Student Positive Behaviour Policy.

8. STATEMENT ON IMPLEMENTATION

Upon approval, this policy will be uploaded to the NCG website, and the notification of update will be contained with the NCG Communications update.

9. STATEMENT ON EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

NCG is committed to providing equality of opportunity. Further details of our aims and objectives are outlined in the NCG Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Policy. This policy has been assessed to identify any potential for adverse or positive impact on specific groups of people protected by the Equality Act 2010 and does not discriminate either directly or indirectly. In applying this policy, we have considered eliminating unlawful discrimination, promoting equality of opportunity and promoting good relations between people from diverse groups.

10. STATEMENT ON FREEDOM OF SPEECH

NCG is committed to upholding the principles of freedom of speech as enshrined in UK law. This policy is designed to ensure that all members of our college community, including learners, staff, and visitors, can express their views and ideas freely and without fear of censorship or reprisal, provided that such expressions are within the law.

We affirm that this policy does not, in any way, diminish or undermine the rights of individuals under existing Freedom of Speech legislation.

11. STATEMENT ON CONSULTATION

This policy has been reviewed in consultation with all seven colleges as part of the Attendance Management Policy working group.

VERSION	VERSION CONTROL			
Version No.	Documentation Section/Page No.	Description of Change and Rationale	Author/Reviewer	Date Revised
1	All	New Policy	Executive Director Quality	March 2022
2	All	Refresh with minor updates to text, title amended to reflect extended scope beyond learners and to include visitors.		April 2025

Appendix A – General Guidance

Incidents may fall into one of the following categories (although the list is not exhaustive):

- Suspicion of being under the influence of drugs/ alcohol.
- Suspicion of the possession of drugs/alcohol.
- Suspicion of dealing drugs.
- Learner disclosure that they or a family member/friend are misusing drug/alcohol.
- Discovery and confiscation of drugs/drug paraphernalia.
- Suspicion of carrying a concealed weapon, including fireworks.
- Suspicion that the learner is carrying stolen goods.
- Misidentification of the above, for example prescribed medicine, or toy weapons

1.1. Suspicion of being under the influence of drugs, or alcohol

- This may involve witnessing or observing drug/alcohol use by learners/staff/visitors,or evidence/ information from other learners or staff.
- There may be the smell of cannabis or alcohol on breath or clothing.
- The staff member should determine if there are physical signs and behaviours e.g. dilated pupils, inflamed or reddened eyes, slurred speech, confusion, giggling,vomiting, unable to stand upright or hyperactivity (if the learner is not well known to the staff member, it is useful to notify and take advice from a member of staff who teaches or supports them as the signs/ behaviours could be an indicator of existing conditions). Signs also include the learner not being aware of their surroundings, able to answer simple questions or take care of themselves.

Staff will need to make a judgement based on the balance of probabilities as symptoms may not necessarily involve drugs or alcohol. Staff are asked to be vigilant and risk averse, rather than dismissive.

Actions

- Establish the learner(s) identification and student number if not already known.
- Refer to the head of department/ security/ college safeguarding teams/officers via MyConcern immediately who will help evaluate the situation and take appropriate action. This could extent to a temporary suspension, following consultation with the principal or designated senior deputy.
- If the learner capacity/ state is serious enough to warrant concern (e.g. very inebriated, 'high' or unconscious), a first aider should be called for advice. Actions may extend to the involvement of emergency services.
- The learner's parents/ carers/ family should be contacted and informed, and transport arranged with them to leave for the day (temporary suspension).
- No learner should be sent away from College if there is a risk to their safety.
- Record the incident on MyConcern, or eTrackr. Initially it may be prudent to log the incident on eTrackr (in line with Positive Behaviour Policy), however subsequent investigation may reveal underpinning safeguarding matters, which would be reported confidentially in MyConcern. If in doubt, consult with the DSL.

- Follow up with the learner as appropriate on their return to College, in partnership with safeguarding leads – the latter is to ensure that we do not miss any signs of abuse or criminality.
- Ensure that the learner is very clear of this policy and follow the appropriate steps in the NCG Positive Behaviour Policy.
- Consider any other factors such as how to best reassure other learners who have observed the inappropriate incident (who may need support), or any reputational impact. Staff involved may wish to discuss specifics with college safeguarding teams/officers who can advise.

1.2. Suspicion of the possession of drugs, including intent to supply

- This may involve witnessing or observing drugs/alcohol use by learners, or evidence/information from other learners or staff.
- Useful information should be noted e.g. description of people involved (learners and non-learners), dates, times, car registrations, observations, by all witnessing staff and/or learners.
- CCTV should be checked where possible to verify the information provided.

Actions

- Notify the security team leader/head of department and inform them of the suspicions.
- Security will ask the individual to hand over the drugs.
- If the learner does not hand over anything, where the evidence is considered to be sufficient, a member of staff authorised to search may do so following DfE guidance (linked earlier in this policy).
- If alcohol, drugs or drug paraphernalia are found or handed over, the confiscation sections of the DfE guidance should be followed, including the involvement of the police.
- Record the incident on MyConcern and log it on eTrackr in line with Positive Behaviour Policy. If in doubt, consult with the DSL.
- Follow up with the learner as appropriate on any subsequent return to College ensuring that they are very clear on NCG policy (this policy) and ensure appropriate support is offered.
- Consider any other factors such as how to best reassure other learners who have observed the inappropriate incident (who may need support), or any reputational impact. Staff involved may wish to discuss specifics with safeguarding leads/officers who can advise.

1.3. Learner disclosure that they or a family member/friend are misusing drugs.

- If a learner discloses to a member of staff that they or a family member/friend are
 misusing drugs and require help and support, the staff member should report this to the
 college safeguarding teams/officers via MyConcern. Help and advice will be put in
 place, extending to referral to external services, personal support, and counselling
 where needed.
- Such disclosures may remain confidential, unless it becomes apparent that there may
 be an immediate and significant risk of harm to the learner or family member/friends,
 particularly if they are under 18 years old. Appropriate safeguarding procedures will be

followed by the college safeguarding lead/officers.

1.4. Discovery and Confiscation of Drugs/Drug Paraphernalia and Weapons

- Staff should report the incident promptly to Security who will remove the item
- If drugs have not been discovered through learner possession, Security will investigate, using CCTV where necessary, speaking to any staff/learners in the vicinity.
- 'Legal highs', solvents, drugs paraphernalia and alcohol (along with containers) will be disposed of. This extends to unlicensed vapes that contain illegal substances.
- Legal vapes or alcohol used inside of NCG campuses will be confiscated and disposed
 of.
- Any weapons will be disposed of and/or reported to the police. Sharp or potentially contaminated items should not be handled without the appropriate equipment or personal protective clothing.
- Illegal drugs/substances will be stored safely and securely by a designated senior manager and handed over to the police as soon as possible. The designated senior leader will often be the designated Deputy/Vice/Assistant Principal, Head of Learner Services, Head of Estates, or the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Appendix B – Guidance for External Sites, Placement, and trips

Teachers and staff who teach at external or community venues should consider the safety of themselves and other learners when addressing issues of concern regardingdrugs.

The teacher/staff member responsible for the supervision of learners should raise any issues of concern regarding drugs with the learner, as they arise. If there is cause to believe a learner has drugs in their possession and/or is showing signs of being under the influence of drugs, the member of staff can ask the learner to leave the learning environment. A follow up discussion will be carried out by the teacher/ staff member responsible so that the learner is aware of the consequences of their actions.

If the learner refuses to leave, the teacher/staff member responsible may take the decision to contact the police. If the safety of the teacher/staff, other learners or anyonein the immediate vicinity is at risk, the teacher/staff member should contact their emergency contact, college safeguarding team, or a duty senior manager for advice. It may be that the safest course of action is to end the session until appropriate action has been actioned.

As per the standard procedures for main site please also:

- Record the incident on MyConcern. Initially it may be prudent to log the incident on eTrackr (in line with Positive Behaviour Policy), however subsequent investigation may reveal underpinning safeguarding matters, which would be reported confidentially in MyConcern. If in doubt, consult with the DSL.
- Follow up with the learner as appropriate on their return to College, in partnership with college safeguarding teams/officers – the latter is to ensure that we do not is signs of abuse or criminal in root cause.
- Ensure that the learner is aware and clear as to the existence of this policy and follow the appropriate step in the NCG Positive Behaviour Policy.

College organised trips/external events

- Learners should not consume or have in their possession any alcohol, drugs, or weapons on college- organised trip or residential.
- If there are reasonable grounds to suspect that a learner may have alcohol, drugs, or weapons in their possession, the trip leader may ask a learner to turn out their pockets or ask if the staff member can look in the learner's bag or possessions.
- A minimum of two staff members must be present. One member of staff should be of the same (biological) sex as the learner. However, the search should not include the removal of any clothing.
- If the learner does not consent to a search, the trip leaders may take the decision to contact the police if the items are reasonably suspected to be banned substances or weapons.
- If items are found, these should be confiscated and the confiscation procedure in the DfE guidance followed as soon as is practicable.

- If there are reasonable grounds to suspect that a learner is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, the learner must be supervised by a member of staff for the remainder of the trip. If the learner is still under the influence on return to College, they should be collected by a parent/carer, next of kin or responsible adult.
- If the trip is a residential, a member of staff must supervise the learner until they have the capacity to care for themselves (e.g. not vomiting, able to stand upright without support, not at risk of injury, fully conscious, able to answer simple questions and aware of surroundings)
- Every effort should be made, and as soon as is reasonably practicable, to contact the
 parents/carers of learners aged 16-17 years to inform them of the situation and that they
 are being cared for by College staff.

As per the standard procedures for main site please also:

- Record the incident on MyConcern, or eTrackr. Initially it may be prudent to log the
 incident on eTrackr (in line with Positive Behaviour Policy), however subsequent
 investigation may reveal underpinning safeguarding matters, which would be reported
 confidentially in MyConcern. If in doubt, consult with the DSL.
- Follow up with the learner as appropriate on their return to College, in partnership with college safeguarding teams/officers – the latter is to ensure that we do not is signs of abuse or criminal in root cause.
- Ensure that the learner is aware and clear as to the existence of this policy and follow the appropriate step in the NCG Positive Behaviour Policy.

Apprentices/work placement learners

- Learners must not have alcohol, drugs, and weapons in their possession, or consume whilst on any work placement, regardless of whether it is a paid or unpaid placement and regardless of the age of the learner.
- Depending on the organisation/employer, alcohol may be served e.g. service enterprises such as restaurants, hotels, hair/beauty salons. The responsibilities of the employer and expectations of the learner will be covered during induction. Learners under the age of 18 will not be permitted to serve alcohol on work placement. Learners/apprentices must not consume alcohol whilst working or training should an exception be required for example use of small amounts of alcohol in cooking/ tasting a risk assessment will need to be in place.
- If the employer has reasonable grounds to suspect that a learner has drugs in their possession, they may ask the learner to leave the premises or contact the police, considering the suspected drugs and legality of possession. They should contact the College link immediately.
- If the employer has a drug and alcohol policy (including testing protocols), stop and search policy or similar, this must be covered in the placement induction and/or included in the contract of employment.

- Any concerns during placement by the employer should be referred back to therelevant programme or course leaders and follow the NCG Positive Behaviour Policy. The programme/course leader should seek advice from senior leaders, or the college safeguarding teams/officers should they be unsure as to next steps.
- Apprentices will have regular progress reviews in the workplace, and most will attend College for day, or block release should they have any concerns they must discuss it with the relevant and/ or tutor.

Appendix C - Screening, Searching and Confiscation of Weapons

There is clear guidance issued to schools by the DfE, and in the absence of national College for the post-16 sector, NCG will adopt this guidance. The content is not repeated here, and staff should defer to this guidance, using the link below, should an incident arise.

General principles:

- DfE Guidance must be followed.
- Learners can be searched if the principal authorises a designated member of staff to do so, provided they have reasonable grounds.
- Authorised staff must be trained and deemed competent.
- Staff engaging in the search and confiscation must be aware of the potential for harm to the learner, other learners, themselves, and others in the vicinity of the search.
- If in doubt, and/or the threat is significant, the police should be called.

Authorised Staff Roles at NCG's Colleges

College	Authorised Staff Roles
Carlisle College	Security Team / Estates
Kidderminster College	Security Team / Estates
Lewisham College	Security Team / Estates
Newcastle College	Security Team / Estates
Newcastle Sixth Form College	Security Team / Estates
Southwark College	Security Team / Estates
West Lancashire College	Security Team / Estates