

QA4 – TOBACCO, ALCOHOL AND DRUGS PROCEDURE

INFORMATION

The safety and wellbeing of children in our care is of the highest importance, and therefore it is vital that the adults who are offering education and care, and the environments within which the children are learning, are free from tobacco, vaping, illicit or harmful drugs, and alcohol.

RESPONSIBILITIES

All team members, visitors, students and volunteers must comply with this procedure.

PROCEDURE

ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

- Prescription medication for children and team members must be stored in a locked medication box, and in accordance with the medication procedure. Illegal substances or drugs that are not being used for a medical necessity (e.g. antihistamine for hayfever) cannot be brought onto the premises at anytime.
- If a staff member, student or volunteer has been prescribed, or recommended, medication that may impact their ability to care for children (eg: side effects can include dizziness, lethargy, etc) they need to discuss this issue with their medical professional and the Centre Manager and work out a suitable plan, addressing and planning for any risks identified. If staff members, students or volunteers do experience impaired abilities whilst taking prescription medication, they will not be permitted to work with children.
- Random drug and alcohol testing occurs annually, at a minimum. See separate Substance-Free Workplace Procedure for further information.
- Instant dismissal may occur if a team member is found to be under the influence of illegal drugs, drugs that have been taken without a medical necessity, or alcohol while caring for children.
- If alcohol is being sold on the premises as part of social or fundraising events, licenses may be required. Function organisers must ensure all appropriate licenses are obtained.
- Any alcohol stored at the centre for social or fundraising events must be stored appropriately and out of reach and visibility of children.

SMOKING/VAPING/E-CIGARETTES

- Smoking in any form including vaping/e-cigarettes etc is not permitted at any time in any centre or on any centre-owned premises.
- Staff are not permitted to smoke/vape in their uniforms.
- Staff are not permitted to smoke/vape on their paid breaks.
- If staff choose to smoke/vape during their unpaid breaks they are required to:

- Change out of their uniform into another shirt
- Wear a hat that covers their hair
- Wash their hands thoroughly.

The evidence is strong regarding the negative impacts second hand smoke/vapour can and does have, and there is emerging evidence of the harm that can be caused through third hand smoke, which is the smoke that is absorbed into hair, clothing and skin (Campbell, Ford and Winstanley, 2017). Considering that early childhood educators spend a considerable amount of time closely engaged with children, especially when caring for infants, we do our best to protect children from exposure to second and third hand smoke.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS, REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

ACECQA (2018). Guide to the National Quality Framework. Retrieved 25 June, 2019 from <http://files.acecqa.gov.au/files/NQF/Guide-to-the-NQF.pdf>

Campbell MA, Ford C & Winstanley MH. Ch 4. The health effects of secondhand smoke. 4.3 Thirdhand smoke. In Scollo, MM and Winstanley, MH [editors]. Tobacco in Australia: Facts and issues. Melbourne: Cancer Council Victoria; 2017. Available from <http://www.tobaccoinaustralia.org.au/chapter-4-secondhand/4-3-thirdhand-smoke> Legalwise. (2019).

Do employees have a right to take smoke breaks? Retrieved 16 July, 2019 from <https://legalwiseseminars.com.au/do-employees-have-a-right-to-take-smoke-breaks/>

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Date Reviewed	Modifications
Nov 2019	Reviewed and created new policy document
August 2025	Adjusted to explicitly include vaping and e-cigarettes as excluded activities