

Alcohol and Substance Misuse Policy



Grass Roots Nursery Group: Alcohol and Substance Misuse Policy

Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this policy is to establish clear guidelines for addressing alcohol and substance misuse at Grass Roots Nursery Group. We are committed to maintaining a safe, healthy, and productive environment for all children, staff, and visitors. This policy applies to all employees, volunteers, students, and parents/carers.

Statutory Requirements (EYFS 2025)

In accordance with the [Early Years Foundation Stage \(EYFS\)](#) framework, the Nursery has a legal duty to ensure that those caring for children are suitable to do so:

- **Staff Fitness:** Staff must not be under the influence of alcohol or any other substance which may affect their ability to care for children.
- **Reporting to LADO:** We must contact the [Local Authority Designated Officer \(LADO\)](#) within 24 hours if a staff member is suspected of being under the influence while on duty, as this constitutes a suitability and safeguarding concern.
- **Notifying Ofsted:** We must notify Ofsted as soon as is reasonably practicable (and within 14 days) of any significant event which affects the suitability of any person who cares for children.
- **Medication:** Staff taking medication that may affect their ability to care for children must seek medical advice and inform the Manager. All medication must be stored securely.

Staff Conduct and Performance

- **Zero Tolerance:** The consumption or possession of alcohol or illegal substances on nursery premises is strictly prohibited.
- **Professional Conduct:** Staff are expected to arrive at work fit for duty. Being under the influence of alcohol or substances while at work is considered **Gross Misconduct** and may lead to summary dismissal.
- **Whistleblowing:** In line with our [Whistleblowing Policy](#), staff have a professional duty to report any concerns regarding a colleague's sobriety or fitness for work to the Manager or DSL immediately.

Treatment and Support for Staff

Grass Roots Nursery Group views substance dependency as a health issue:

- **Supportive Culture:** We encourage staff to seek help proactively. If a staff member discloses a dependency, we will treat it as a medical matter.
- **Absence:** Time off for professional treatment will be treated as standard sickness absence, provided the employee maintains contact and engages with the treatment plan.

- **Confidentiality:** All discussions and records regarding an employee's health will be treated with strict confidentiality in line with GDPR.

Procedures for Parents and Carers

The safety of the child is our primary concern. If a parent or carer arrives to collect a child and appears to be under the influence of alcohol or substances:

- **Assessment:** The DSL or Manager will be called to assess the situation. The child will not be released if the adult is deemed "unsuitable" or a risk to the child's safety.
- **Alternative Collection:** We will request that another authorised adult from the child's emergency contact list collects them.
- **Police/Social Care:** * If the parent becomes aggressive or insists on taking the child, we will contact **Children's Social Care** for emergency advice.
 - If the parent attempts to drive the child while intoxicated, the **Police (999)** will be called immediately with the vehicle details to prevent a road traffic incident and safeguard the child.

Disciplinary and Legal Action

- **Investigations:** Any allegations of substance misuse will be fully investigated under the Nursery's Disciplinary Procedure.
- **DBS Referral:** If a staff member is dismissed (or resigns) due to substance misuse that puts a child at risk, we have a legal obligation to refer the case to the [Disclosure and Barring Service \(DBS\)](#).
- **Mitigation:** Proactively seeking help before an incident occurs may be considered a mitigating factor, provided child safety was never compromised.

7. Review and Updates

This policy is a "living document" and will be reviewed annually or following a significant incident to ensure it remains effective and aligned with Local Safeguarding Partner (LSP) guidance.