



## Group Drugs and Alcohol Policy

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### Version Control

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## Alcohol and Scouting

The Scout Association's policy on alcohol is clearly set out in the Policy Organisation and Rules (POR) section regarding Event Safety and Planning. It states: "Adults must not consume alcohol when they are directly responsible for young people on a Scouting activity and must not permit young people (aged under 18 years) to consume alcohol on Scouting activities."

The Scout Association has also produced a quick reference card to aid adults in Scouting with understanding the policy. This is known as the [Green Card](#).

Drinking any amount of alcohol has effects on the physical coordination of the body and can seriously slow down judgement and reaction time. Drinking alcohol can have associated hazards, such as visual and spatial impairment, delayed reaction times. The level of risk depends on who is drinking, how much and in what situation.

Young people find out about alcohol by trying it themselves, observing others and through information from parents, at school and via media. Drinking alcohol may not mean adults set a bad example to young people. However, in certain circumstances doing so has the potential to place adults in a compromising position with regard to their responsibilities for child protection and their duty of care.

Adults in Scouting are role models for young people as such it is important that all adults set a good example to young people and also aid young people's understanding of the effects and potential issues associated with the consumption of alcohol. This topic will be part of the programme in the Scout and Explorer sections.

## Alcohol Policy

Dringhouses (PC) Scout Group's policy on the consumption of alcohol is based upon The Scout Association's policy but goes further to make the guidance clearer for all to understand. From this point in this document Dringhouses (PC) Scout Group will be referred to as "Dringhouses Scouts" or "The Group".

For the purposes of this document Adults refers to everyone over the age of 18 attending Scouting activities including leaders, trustees, members of the Group Support Team and parents.

**At regular meetings, Group, District, County or any other Scouting events and camps** where young people are present (whether or not the Adults present are responsible for the young people) the following rules will be observed:

1. Under 18's must not consume alcohol under any circumstances.
2. Adults supervising young people **MUST NOT** consume alcohol under any circumstances. This includes for a period of time prior to participating in a Scouting activity where the adult will be in the presence of young people. Adults supervising young people at Scouting events must not be under the influence of alcohol.

3. The Group recognises that social drinking of alcohol may be appropriate at some major Scouting events, such as those that run over many days. These events will be considered individually and, at the discretion of the Group Lead Volunteer, Adults will be issued with an event code of conduct for permitted drinking of alcohol (“exempt events”). For example, at a large-scale event Adults may take turns to have an evening away from the young people and socialise with Adults from other Scout groups. Any drinking of alcohol at these events will be in accordance with the Green Card.
4. If there is a suspicion that an Adult or young person is under the influence of alcohol or is seen to be consuming alcohol at Scouting events this should be immediately reported to the Section Team Leader or Group Lead Volunteer as appropriate, unless the Adult is at an exempt event as above. This is in line with the Scout Association's “Young People First” code of practice ([Yellow Card](#)).

In addition:

1. Young people and Adults should be helped to understand the issues associated with alcohol and how to access information and advice to make informed choices.
2. When preparing risk assessments for camps and events the consumption of drinks which have the same appearance as their alcoholic equivalents might need to be considered.

**At social events**, the consumption of alcohol by Adults may be acceptable, as the Adults may not be in charge of young people. It is important that in a social context the behaviour of adults be an example to young people, many of whom may see these adults as role models. Guidance on the consumption of alcohol at social events where young people under the age of 18 are present is as follows:

1. Under 18’s must not consume or serve alcohol under any circumstances.
2. All Adults present at the event, be they members of the Group, invited guests or parents of members must drink responsibly and not to excess.
3. Where young people are present at the social event unaccompanied (i.e. without a parent or guardian):
  - a. Adult supervision must be provided in line with the Scout Association’s recommended ratios of Adults to young people and those supervising must not consume alcohol before and during the event.
  - b. The parent or guardian **MUST** be informed before the event that the consumption of alcohol will be permitted at the event and that the above conditions will apply.
  - c. In addition, the normal In Touch process will apply and will be communicated to parents in advance of the event.

## Substance Abuse and Misuse

Legal and illegal drugs can cause problems in Scouting and in society as a whole. They raise a number of issues for both young people and adults.

If there is a concern that a young person or Adult's behaviour is being affected by substance abuse this should be reported to the Group Lead Volunteer who will then follow the appropriate safeguarding procedure as detailed in the Yellow Card.

## Illegal Drugs

The Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 and the Medicines Act 1968 set out controls on the possession and use of certain drugs. Under UK law it is a crime to possess, deal or produce certain drugs. The penalties depend on which drug and the quantities involved, and whether you are also involved in dealing or producing the drug. The most severe penalty can be an unlimited fine and life in prison. You may be charged with possessing an illegal substance if you are caught with drugs, whether they are yours or not. If you are under 18, the police are allowed to tell your parent, guardian or carer that you have been caught with drugs.

If there is a suspicion that a young person or Adult is in possession of illegal drugs then this MUST be IMMEDIATELY reported to the Section Team Leader and/or Group Lead Volunteer who MUST then report this to the police and the Scout UK HQ Safeguarding Team.

## Legal Highs

Just because a drug is classed as legal does not mean it is safe. So-called "legal highs" can produce the same harmful effects as illegal drugs; they are termed "legal" simply because they are not yet covered by legislation such as the Misuse of Drugs Act.

Legal highs can have similar negative behavioural effects and health risks as illegal drugs.

The use of these so-called legal highs is not permitted at any Scouting activity or event. Anyone in possession of such drugs or found using them MUST be reported to the Section Team Leader and/ or Group Lead Volunteer who will then follow the appropriate safeguarding procedure as detailed in the Yellow Card.

## Medication

Except in an emergency, Adults in Scouting will not administer any medication, including over-the-counter (OTC) medication, to young people without the consent of their parent or legal guardian.

If a young person needs to take medication then the details of any prescription and the medication MUST be passed to the leader in charge or the leader responsible for medication so that the storage and issue of the medication can be controlled and applied safely as prescribed.

Adults taking medication themselves or looking after the medication to be given to young people MUST ensure that all prescription and OTC medication will be safely stored out of reach of young people. Where temperature control is required leaders should be informed in advance as special measures may need to be taken to ensure their safe storage at certain events.

## Smoking

The Scout Association has a key policy which requires Scouting to be provided in a safe manner without risk to health, so far as is reasonably practicable (Policy, Organisation and Rules, Section 2.6). The Group recognises that adults have the right to smoke. The Group also recognises that non-smokers have the right to not be subjected to passive smoking.

For the purposes of this policy the term smoking includes the use of cigarettes, pipes and e-cigarettes. Taking into account the law and the duty of care to young people and Adults involved in Scouting, the following policy on smoking will be enforced by the Group:

- Smoking is prohibited on all Scout Group property
- Smoking is prohibited in all buildings in use for Scouting activities and events
- Smoking in tents is prohibited at all times
- Smoking is prohibited in all Scout Group vehicles and all vehicles hired for use by the Group, including private vehicles in use during Scouting activities
- Smoking is prohibited for anyone under the age of 18
- At events where Adults are present for a prolonged period (e.g. more than two hours) a smoking area will be defined, smoking areas will always be outdoors. No Adult should smoke in front of young people and matches, lighters, pipes, cigarettes and e-cigarettes should be safely stored out of reach of all young people.

The effects of smoking and vaping will be discussed with Scouts and Explorer as part of their programme with a view to enabling young people to make informed decisions.