

Policy

Tobacco, Alcohol and Other Drugs Policy

NQS2 – Best Practice Quality Area Two

Policy Statement

1. Purpose

This policy provides guidelines to enable Sparkways to:

- provide a safe environment for all staff, young people, families and children which ensures their safety, health and wellbeing
- promotes a cultural of health and wellbeing of all staff, young people, children and families
- improve educational health and wellbeing outcomes for all staff, young people, children and families
- provide access to information on quitting smoking, alcohol and other drug use and promote the health benefits of avoiding these behaviours.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all Sparkways employees, contractors, students, volunteers' parents/guardians, young people and adults involved in the programs delivered for and by Sparkways.

3. Values

Sparkways is committed to:

- ensuring a smoke-free and drug-free environment for children, young people, families, staff, volunteers and visitors.
- (Smoke-free includes the use of e-cigarettes - commonly known as vaping - in all circumstances.)
- promoting responsible alcohol consumption to our service community
- encouraging staff to build on opportunistic learning moments with children
- providing information to staff, young people and families about the health benefits of not smoking or taking drugs, and responsible alcohol consumption.

The effects of drugs and alcohol can impair the capacity of a person to make judgments relating to the care, safety and education of young children. The effects of tobacco smoking on an individual's health are well documented. Second-hand smoke (refer to Definition) and third-hand smoke (refer to Definition) is dangerous, especially for babies, children and young people, as they have **smaller airways** that are still developing.

Children exposed to second-hand smoke are at an **increased risk of early death and disease** from various causes. Second-hand smoke can impair a baby's breathing and heart rate, which can put the baby at a higher risk of sudden unexpected death in infancy (SUDI).

Exposure to second-hand smoke (refer to Definition) and third-hand smoke (refer to Definition) can affect a child's developing brain due to the sensitivities of the brain to very small amounts of toxins.

Document Title	2022 Tobacco Alcohol and Other Drug Policy & Procedure	Document Owners	General Manager People & Culture
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Drinking alcohol or taking other drugs can affect a person’s ability to connect with and care for children. Alcohol and other drug use can become an occupational health and safety issue, as it may impairs one’s ability to exercise judgment, coordination, motor control, concentration, and alertness in the workplace. Employees unfit for work as a result of alcohol or other drug use put themselves, children and other staff members in the workplace at risk of harm

The key to tobacco, alcohol and other drugs in the early years is prevention. The most effective means of prevention is providing an early childhood environment that is supportive and protective of all children. Building resilience and developing social and emotional competencies should start early to enhance the potential for children to resist risky behaviours later on.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the Tobacco, Alcohol and Other Drug Procedure.

Document Title	2022 Tobacco Alcohol and Other Drug Policy & Procedure	Document Owners	General Manager People & Culture
Date Approved	20 January 2022; Reviewed June 2022	Revision Date	June 2023
			Page 2 of 7

Procedure

NQS2 – Best Practice Quality Area Two

Tobacco, Alcohol and Other Drugs Procedure

1. Overview

At Sparkways all staff are responsible for providing a safe and healthy environment for staff, contractors, volunteers, students, young people and families.

To do this we will ensure that staff, volunteers, contractors, children and young people;

- are provided with an environment that is free from the use of tobacco, illicit drugs and alcohol (Regulation 82 (1)). Tobacco includes the use of e-cigarettes - commonly known as vaping - in all circumstances.
- are not affected by alcohol or drugs, including prescription medication (refer to Definition) so as to impair the person’s capacity to supervise or provide education and care to children at any of the services or programs we provide. (Regulation 83 (1))
- are aware of procedures that include steps to remove an affected staff member so they do not further endanger other staff and children.
- are aware of and able to contribute to relevant Policies and Procedures taking into consideration diversity and cultural practices when implementing all policies and procedures.
- are aware of this Policy and Procedure as part of their induction/orientation.
- are aware of the smoke free zone (refer to Definition) within four metres of the entrance to the premises, and within 10 metres of children’s outdoor play areas
- adhere to legislation and policies related to smoke-free areas and are asked not to smoke in sight of children.
- refraining from smoking in the car with children and young people during work related travel or within work vehicles

Sparkways Management including Nominated Supervisors and person in day-to-day charge is responsible for:

- preventing and managing risks associated with the use of alcohol and other drugs
- monitoring the health and safety of early childhood teachers, educators, staff, contractors, volunteers, students on placement, young people, parents/guardians and children
- providing professional development and resources to educators and staff to help them guide age-appropriate, sensitive discussions about health issues related to tobacco, e-cigarettes, alcohol and other drug use as opportunities arise.
- support educators and staff to guide age-appropriate, sensitive discussions about health issues related to tobacco, e-cigarettes, alcohol and other drug use as opportunities arise (e.g. if a child is pretending to smoke).
- Ensuring each Sparkways site has visible smoke-free signage that can be easily seen and understood by the whole community

Document Title	2022 Tobacco Alcohol and Other Drug Policy & Procedure	Document Owners	General Manager People & Culture
Date Approved	20 January 2022; Reviewed June 2022	Revision Date	June 2023

- providing staff who identify as having an alcohol and/or other drugs problem referrals to professional assistance, or the Employee Assistance Program (if applicable)
- ensuring that all service events, on and off site, are smoke-free and drug-free
- ensuring if there is alcohol at a staff or family event, ensuring all legal requirements related to the sale and supply of alcohol are met and that responsible consumption of alcohol is promoted
- ensuring if external organisations use the premises, a formal agreement ensuring that the service premises are smoke-free, drug-free and responsible alcohol consumption is promoted
- encouraging the nominated supervisor, early childhood teachers, educators and staff who smoke to take appropriate hygiene measures after smoking so that children are not exposed to second-hand (see Definition) and third-hand smoke (see Definition) (refer to Hygiene Policy)
- ensuring the consumption of alcohol as a part of events, celebrations, awards, gifts and fundraising is done so responsibly
- supporting the nominated supervisor, early childhood teachers, educators, staff and families who want to quit smoking, drinking or using other drugs to access appropriate agencies
- providing resources about the health risks related to smoking, excessive drinking and taking drugs to educators and staff.
- providing information about health risks related to smoking, excessive drinking and using other drugs to families and community members, including information about accessing support services.
- ensuring that partnerships are established with relevant organisations and health professionals to support smoke-free, drug-free and responsible consumption of alcohol initiatives where appropriate.
- ensuring that there are no partnerships with organisations that market or supply alcohol or tobacco.

Sparkways students, contractors, volunteers, families and visitors while at the service, are responsible for

- following and complying with this policy
- not consuming or being under the influence of alcohol or affected by drugs when attending any Sparkways Services or events.
- refraining from smoking in the car with children under the age of 18
- participating in the Tobacco, Alcohol and other Drugs Policy development and/or review.

2. Evaluation

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of this policy and procedure have been achieved, Sparkways will:

- seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness

Document Title	2022 Tobacco Alcohol and Other Drug Policy & Procedure	Document Owners	General Manager People & Culture
Date Approved	20 January 2022; Reviewed June 2022	Revision Date	June 2023

- monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
- assess whether a satisfactory resolution has been achieved in relation to issues arising from this policy
- keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
- revise the policy and procedures as part of the service’s policy review cycle, or as required
- notifying all stakeholders affected by this policy before making any significant changes to this policy or its procedures.

Related Policies

- Child Safe Environment Policy
- Code of Conduct Policy
- Complaints and Grievances Policy
- Delivery and Collection of Children Policy
- Interactions with Children Policy
- Occupational Health and Safety Policy
- Staffing Policy

Definitions

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For regularly used terms e.g.

Approved Provider (Sparkways) Nominated Supervisor, Notifiable Complaints, Serious Incidents, Duty of Care, etc. refer to the Definitions file of the Policy Works catalogue.

Alcohol: A depressant drug that slows down activity in the central nervous system.

Drug: Refers to any substance taken to change the way the body and/or mind functions.

Notifiable complaint: A complaint that alleges a breach of the Education and Care Services National Act or Regulation, or alleges that the health, safety or wellbeing of a child at the service may have been compromised. Any complaint of this nature must be reported by Sparkways compliance team who will then report to the secretary of DET within 24 hours of the complaint being made (Section 174(2) (b), Regulation 176(2) (b)). Written reports to DET must include:

- details of the event or incident
- the name of the person who initially made the complaint
- if appropriate, the name of the child concerned and the condition of the child, including a medical or incident report (where relevant)
- contact details of a nominated member of the Grievances Subcommittee/investigator
- Any other relevant information.

Written notification of complaints must be submitted via the National Quality Agenda IT system (NOAITS): <http://www.acecqa.gov.au/national-quality-agenda-it-system>. If you are unsure whether the matter is a notifiable complaint, it is good practice to contact DET for confirmation.

Document Title	2022 Tobacco Alcohol and Other Drug Policy & Procedure	Document Owners	General Manager People & Culture
Date Approved	20 January 2022; Reviewed June 2022	Revision Date	June 2023
			Page 5 of 7

Prescription medication: medicine that can only be made available to a patient on the written instruction of an authorised health professional. Examples of prescription medicines include blood pressure tablets, cancer medicine and strong painkillers.

Reportable incidences: Under the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (OHS Act), employers and self-employed persons must notify TRY/Sparkways Compliance team who will contact WorkSafe immediately after becoming aware an incident has occurred.

Reporting incidents resulting in:

- death
- a person needing medical treatment within 48 hours of being exposed to a substance
- a person needing immediate treatment as an in-patient at a hospital
- a person needing immediate medical treatment for one of the following injuries: amputation, serious head injury or serious eye injury, removal of skin (example: de-gloving/ scalping) electric shock, spinal injury, loss of a bodily function, serious lacerations (example: requiring stitching or other medical treatment).

Reporting incidents involving:

- registered or licensed plant collapsing, overturning, falling or malfunctioning
- collapse or failure of an excavation, or shoring supporting an excavation
- collapse of a building structure (or partial collapse)
- implosion, explosion, or fire
- escape, spillage or leakage of any substance
- plant or objects falling from high places

Second-hand smoke: refers to the ambient smoke that is a by-product of active smoking. It consists mainly of exhaled mainstream smoke and side stream smoke mixed with air. Breathing in second-hand smoke is also called passive smoking or involuntary smoking.

Smoke Free Zone: smoking that is prohibited in all enclosed workplaces and certain public spaces where members of the public gather and may be exposed to second-hand tobacco smoke. (Smoke-free includes the use of e-cigarettes - commonly known as vaping - in all circumstances.)

Third-hand smoke: refers to residual tobacco smoke constituents that remain on clothes, surfaces and in dust after tobacco has been smoked. These substances are then re-emitted as gases or react with other compounds in the environment to create other substances.

Tobacco, alcohol and other drugs: For the purposes of this policy and for the Healthy Early Childhood Services Achievement Program, the 'Tobacco, Alcohol and Other Drugs' health priority area focuses on creating smoke-, vape- and drug-free environments and low-risk alcohol consumption. Smoke- and vape-free refers to both traditional and electronic cigarettes (i.e. e-cigarettes).

Document Title	2022 Tobacco Alcohol and Other Drug Policy & Procedure	Document Owners	General Manager People & Culture
Date Approved	20 January 2022; Reviewed June 2022	Revision Date	June 2023
Page 6 of 7			

Tobacco product: Any device or product that contains organic matter that is heated or burned to create aerosol or smoke that is inhaled by the user.

E-cigarette product: Any electronic device that is intended to be used to create an aerosol for inhalation and any liquid, or product containing liquid, intended to be used in or with an electronic device to create an aerosol for inhalation.

Sources

- Alcohol and Drug Foundation: <https://adf.org.au>
- Cancer Council Victoria: <https://www.cancervic.org.au>
- Quit Victoria: <https://www.quit.org.au>
- Raising Children Network: <https://raisingchildren.net.au>
- Tobacco in Australia: <https://www.tobaccoinaustralia.org.au>
- Health.Vic: www2.health.vic.gov.au
- Work Safe Victoria: Guide for developing a workplace alcohol and other drugspolicy (2017)

Document Title	2022 Tobacco Alcohol and Other Drug Policy & Procedure	Document Owners	General Manager People & Culture
Date Approved	20 January 2022; Reviewed June 2022	Revision Date	June 2023
			Page 7 of 7