

1st Bishopthorpe Scout Group



Group Drugs and Alcohol Policy

Approved by Trustee Board: 19/05/2025

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Version Control

Version	Author/ Editor	Changes	Release Date
1.0	Alex Bishop	Aligned to Dringhouses Policy v4.0	19/05/2025

Alcohol and Scouting

The Scout Association's policy on alcohol is clearly set out in 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. Within minutes of being consumed, alcohol is absorbed into

the bloodstream and reaches the brain where there is an immediate impairment of brain function. It takes an hour for the adult body to process one unit of alcohol. 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 the media, through advertising, etc. Young people are impressionable and will inevitably be influenced by those adults they respect as well as the activities and opinions of their peers. 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.

Alcohol Policy

1st Bishopthorpe Scout Group's policy on the consumption of alcohol is based upon The Scout Association's policy, but goes further in an effort to make the guidance clearer for all to understand. From this point in this document 1st Bishopthorpe Scout Group will be referred to as "The Group".

For the purposes of this document Adults refers to all members of The Group: leaders, members of the executive committee, parents attending Scouting activities, and any other adults who are supporting the group and are over 18 years of age.

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 **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. In other words adults at Scouting events must not be under the influence of alcohol.
3. 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 Leader or Group Volunteer Lead as appropriate. This is in line with the Scout Association's "Young People First" code of practice ([Yellow Card](#)).

In addition:

4. 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.
5. 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. The responsible consumption of alcohol in a social context could be viewed as an important lesson for young people, who will encounter alcohol later in their life. It is important therefore, 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.

Links

If you would like further information on the use of alcohol and its effects, please visit:

- www.ias.org.uk
- www.alcoholconcern.org.uk
- www.talktofrank.com/
- www.drinkaware.co.uk/

Substance Abuse and Misuse

Legal and illegal drugs can cause problems in Scouting and in the 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 Volunteer Lead who will then follow the appropriate safeguarding procedure as detailed in the "Young People First" yellow card.

Illegal Drugs

The [Psychoactive Substances Act 2016](#) restricts the production, sale and supply of psychoactive substances often referred to as "legal highs". The [Misuse of Drugs Act 1971](#) lists controlled drugs and sets out three categories Class A, B and C. The [Medicines Act 1968](#) also sets out controls on the possession and use of certain drugs. Under UK law it is a crime to possess, deal or produce what is termed an illegal drug. 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're caught with drugs, whether they're yours or not. If you're under 18, the police are allowed to tell your parent, guardian or carer that you've 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 Leader and/or Group Volunteer Lead who **MUST** then report this to the police.

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 Leader and/ or Group Volunteer Lead who will then follow the appropriate safeguarding procedure as detailed in the “Young People First” yellow card.

Over the Counter and Prescription Drugs

People often think that prescription and over the counter drugs (OTC) drugs are safer than illegal drugs, but that's only true when they are taken exactly as prescribed and for the purpose intended. When abused, prescription and OTC drugs can be addictive and put abusers at risk of adverse health effects, including organ damage, psychotic conditions and overdose. Many people use OTC and prescription drugs safely and responsibly, but a few may become dependent or addicted to the drugs that were meant to help them.

Except in an emergency, adults in Scouting will not administer any drugs to young people without the consent of their parent or legal guardian.

If a young person needs to take prescription drugs then the details of the prescription and the drugs should 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 over the counter drugs 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 2.3). 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.

The [Health Act 2006](#) makes it illegal to smoke in all enclosed workplaces in England. One of the most effective ways of helping young people to develop is to allow them to learn by doing. Quite often an Adult in Scouting will demonstrate a particular skill and in turn will expect a young person to learn the skill. If a young person sees an adult smoking they may copy in their desire to be 'grown up'.

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 Scout 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.

Links

- <http://www.smokefreeengland.co.uk/what-do-i-do/quick-guide/> A guide to the 2007 smoke free legislation.
- [Smoke-free Scouting | Scouts](#)
- [Talk to Frank](#) – a national drug education service.
- [BBC Two - Drink and Drugs: My Story](#) – clips about young people's experiences of drinking or taking drugs.