



Cheltenham and Gloucester Venturers

Drugs and Alcohol Policy

Introduction

The Woodcraft Folk (WF) has become an important institution for our young members, especially those who have been a part of the organisation for many years. As they grow older, they develop different challenges for the adult leaders responsible for their welfare. For our older members, especially the Venturers, some may, at some point, begin to experiment with alcohol and illegal substances. This is normal behaviour however much we may disapprove, that reflects the world and time in which our young members are growing up.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this policy is:-

- To agree a response by leaders, to related issues as they arise, in a way that is least harmful to the individual and which maintains the cohesion of the group.
- To ensure the clear understanding of, and agreement with, the young members and their parents/carers, about the approach we have adopted.
- To build trust and understanding between young members and adult leaders, rather than impose constraint and sanction.
- To provide guidance on how to respond to issues of alcohol or drug use.

The policy will be dependent upon two distinct strands:-

Firstly, without condoning, promoting or giving permission for the use of drugs or alcohol by the young members, the adult leaders accept that their use is inevitable at some point by some young members.

Secondly, that our young members, who choose to take part in either activity, do so in such a way as to ensure the safety of themselves and others in the group. That they do so in a way that does not contradict the WF ethos of looking after and caring for each other and that the young members understand they are able to come to adult leaders, when in need of assistance, without fear or blame.

Scope of Policy

The policy is aimed at Venturers, 13 to 16 years of age, involved in Woodcraft Folk activities, organised by the Cheltenham and Gloucester Districts.

Policy

1. Venturer Leaders will ensure any response to issues of substance misuse is done from a basis of knowledge, rather than from prejudice and ignorance.
2. Issues around personal responsibility and conduct, especially with regard to the wishes of other young members not wishing to get involved in substance misuse, will be raised with the whole group on a regular basis, prior to any major activity, especially when it involves overnight stays.
3. Venturer Leaders will seek agreement with the young members about group supervision and promote an understanding of the responsibilities of leaders to all members of the group in their care, especially to those younger members of the group, where alcohol and drug use would be more concerning.
4. Any Venturer Leader discovering alcohol or drug use by Venturers will remind the young members of the important elements of this policy:
 - That the use of alcohol or drugs on WF activities is not permitted;
 - That there are legal implications for the young members, and adult leaders, if illegal substances are used on WF activities;
 - That there are good health and social reasons for not using alcohol and drugs;
 - That each individual has a responsibility to look after their own health and welfare, and the health and welfare of other young members of the group;
 - That the users should feel able to come to leaders, if they feel unwell or are in difficulty;
 - That Leaders will ask about the health and welfare of individuals, if they have been using alcohol or drugs;
5. Leaders will not knowingly facilitate the use of alcohol or drugs by Venturers, including supplying or assisting in the supplying of alcohol and drugs.
6. That DF's in attendance with Venturers on WF activities are aware of; in agreement with; and prepared to abide by, the policy.
7. Leaders will seek to keep each other informed about the nature of activities of the young members at all times.
8. Concerns about substance misuse will be discussed as they arise, between adult leaders and, if appropriate, individual young members, or the group.
9. Venturer Leaders will agree a response to substance misuse, taking fully into account the circumstances around each incident, recognising that this response may include taking no further action (including not reporting to the Police or to parents all incidents that may arise). Consideration must be given to the nature of the intervention. If medical attention is required, for instance, then decisions about reporting incidents may change.
10. A written record shall be kept of any serious incident involving alcohol or drug use that results in illness or injury, or results in behaviour that may lead to 'disciplinary action' (for instance the supplying of substances).
11. Parents will be made aware of this policy before agreeing to young member's attendance at WF activities.