



ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROVISION

ANTI-VAPING & SMOKING POLICY

Last updated: October 2025

Introduction

Blend Youth Project offers alternative education to young people (aged 11-18) who are experiencing significant barriers to learning. These barriers are many and varied in nature, but include diagnosed additional needs such as dyslexia, ADHD & ASD, difficult home or personal circumstances, anxiety and exclusion.

Some of our students have been permanently excluded from mainstream settings, some are still on roll with a school, but unable to access on-site lessons, some have a mixed timetable of school and alternative education, with a smaller number awaiting managed moves or placement appeals.

There is a high incidence of poor school attendance amongst our students and addressing this is one of our priorities when young people are referred to us. As well as offering individualised timetables and study paths to improve engagement and motivation, we try to identify and counter the cause/s of the student's reluctance to attend an education setting.

We experience challenging behaviour at various levels, but pride ourselves on positive behaviour management via relationship-building, anticipating need, careful group composition and comprehensive pastoral care.

Purpose & Scope

We believe in promoting good health with the young people we work with, and this extends to the use of nicotine products, such as tobacco and 'vapes'. At the same time, we recognise that for many of our students, the issue of smoking and/or vaping has been detrimental to their ability to manage attendance and behaviour in education.



A significant number of our students have experienced difficulty accessing mainstream education because of their addiction to nicotine. There have been numerous young people on our roll who smoked for several years prior to attending our provisions, with a significant minority having already smoked for 4 and 5 years + and become dependent.

We are committed to supporting young people to engage with education and to make healthy lifestyle choices. To these ends, our approach to young people smoking whilst in our care must be clear and consistent.

This policy sets out our practice in managing this difficult issue.

Non-discriminatory approach & risk management

- To be entirely inflexible on the issue of smoking and/or vaping discriminates against those students with nicotine dependency and maintains a significant barrier to learning, encouraging continued poor attendance and limiting achievement & potential.
- If a student is excluded for smoking or vaping, it denies staff the opportunity to address the issue in a direct way and work with that student to encourage cessation.
- Students who are addicted to nicotine but denied external breaks are more likely to try and abscond and/or attempt to smoke or vape in hazardous circumstances, away from adult supervision, creating significant H&S and safeguarding risks.
- Smoking is not permitted in the buildings, out-buildings or in close proximity to them, at any Blend site.

Positive Action

- There are significant and hard-hitting anti-smoking IAG materials at every site, including external areas where students might try to smoke or vape.
- Anti-smoking SMSC sessions are delivered at least termly (more often where students are known to smoke or vape) and from multiple perspectives, including health, financial, social and employment prospects. (Please see Appendix 1 for SOW)
- Supervising staff may wear a mask, both for visual impact around the negative health implications of smoking and as a form of PPE, if supervising students who are smoking or vaping.
- Supervising staff will speak to students about the negative effects of what they are doing, every time a student attempts to vape or smoke.



- Tutors are encouraged to incorporate some form of exercise into their day plan and where students are known to smoke, more aerobic forms of exercise, like football and basketball, will help to demonstrate the impact of smoking on lung health.
- Young people will be encouraged to access local smoking cessation services, and where possible, supported to attend.

Reporting Procedures

- If students attempt to smoke or vape during timetabled breaks, it will be recorded in the daily behaviour monitoring (sent weekly to the referring school).
- Any student attempting to take additional breaks in order to smoke or vape, will be reported directly to parents and the referring school.
- The supply of cigarettes, tobacco or vapes by one student to another will be reported directly to parents and the referring school.
- Any student found to be regularly attempting to supply cigarettes or vapes to other students will have their placement offer withdrawn.

Summary of staff code of conduct expectations on smoking

- Employees of Blend Youth Project are expected to be positive role models for both alternative education students and young people accessing youth services.
- Staff will *at no time* smoke or vape in the presence of students or other young people and should they smoke or vape in private, they must make every effort to avoid their habit becoming common knowledge.
- Staff will not smoke or vape in or around buildings and off-site breaks are not permitted for alternative education staff during education hours, or youth workers during youth sessions.

Conclusion

Students are not allowed to smoke or vape whilst attending Blend Youth Project sites. They will be reported for doing so and will be heavily discouraged from engaging in either habit, but they will not be excluded from education as a result of nicotine dependency.

Appendix 1

ANTI-SMOKING – SMSC - SCHEME OF WORK

COURSE & GROUP DETAILS: all groups, all sites

Session No.	Topic	Learning outcome	Tutor notes	Resources
Term 1	Students to create anti-smoking & vaping posters (the more shocking the better).	Research skills, the negative effects of smoking from multiple perspectives, working as part of a team.	Students to create a suite of posters, choosing different aspects to cover.	Computers, printers, paper (posters may be hand-drawn, but must be clear and legible).
Term 2	The cost of smoking and/or vaping, beginning per week and multiplying over a year. How else could this money be spent?	Financial impact of smoking and vaping, budgeting skills, spending priorities.	Ask any students who smoke or vape if they are likely to use (and therefore spend) more over the festive period and at other times.	Knowledge of the cost of cigarettes, tobacco, lighters, vapes (but ideally ask students to research & supply info), whiteboard, pens.
Term 3	The negative impact of smoking and vaping on health, including the health risks of sharing cigarettes & vapes & risk to family.	The multiple health risks of smoking & vaping, to the smoker and those around them.	Ask students for answers, but be fully prepared. Try spider diagrams of different health issues and who your smoking might affect.	Information on ALL negative health risks of smoking & vaping, sharing cigarettes and vapes, impact on family, computer, paper, pens.
Term 4	The social impact of smoking – who else it affects, how others may regard a smoker, social restrictions.	The wider impact of smoking & vaping on others, social views on smoking, personal responsibilities, social restrictions of a smoking habit.	Include personal hygiene – smelly clothes, bad breath, damaged teeth etc. The potential impact on younger siblings.	Computers, paper, pens, whiteboard. Info on smoking/vaping restrictions at venues, airports, hotels etc.
Term 5	Smoking & vaping in employment, inc.	How smoking & vaping might restrict employment	There are some interesting studies on how much time	Information on various jobs and their smoking/vaping

	potential image, break restrictions, company policies.	opportunities, the impact of smoking/vaping on colleagues and personal reputation.	a smoker's extra breaks add up to and how their colleagues feel about that!	restrictions, computers, paper pens.
Term 6	Anti-smoking recap – revisit all previous sessions, testing and reinforcing student knowledge of negative consequences of smoking.	All previous learning outcomes.	Ask students to feed back all retained knowledge. Revisit key areas such as health in depth.	All prior resources and student folders.

ADDITIONAL NOTES

- Deliver these sessions fortnightly, or even weekly, with groups that include students known to smoke or vape.
- Include referral information on sources of help to quit smoking in all sessions.
- Encourage students to choose one (or all) of these topics for their English 'speaking and listening' presentation.
- Speak to your line manager or DSL if you think that a health or social care referral, or a more in-depth session, may be required.
- Speak to your line manager or DSL if these sessions bring to light concerning information around a student's smoking habits, sources of tobacco/cigarettes/vapes or any potential vulnerability due to their smoking habit.