

YAA Substance Abuse Policy

ACADEMIC YEAR 2025-26

1.0 STATEMENT OF POLICY

At Yas American Academy our community is committed to;

- the health and welfare of its students and will take action to promote and safeguard their wellbeing
- educating student's about the effects of drugs and alcohol and about the threats posed by them to present and future health and happiness
- encouraging student's in need of support to come forward and to educate others into acting and speaking in the best interests of those who might need help

2.0 POLICY AIMS

The school aims to deter the abuse of all drug substances by means of a balanced and informative educational programme, rooted in the schools values, and which places emphasis on the need and responsibility of young people to make informed decisions for themselves. This will be achieved through:

- Education – PSHE in homerooms
- Anti-smoking week
- Pastoral support for individuals or for family through the academic and pastoral elements of the curriculum the welfare and support staff and outside speakers promote understanding foster and encourage skills and strategies designed to resist drug and substance abuse
- Help young people to identify sources of appropriate personal support
- Ensure that the disciplinary rules of the school reflect the seriousness with which the school and the local community approaches potential problems in this area.

3.0 HOW THESE AIMS MAY BE FULFILLED

- YAA fulfils these aims through the development of its mission. This includes care, concern, teaching and leadership of its staff, through the provision of information via the wellbeing and pastoral curriculum/assembly/PSHE program and through a clear and effective behaviour and refocus codes.
- It is essential that each individual student has access to an awareness of the importance of individual values. Students will be given an opportunity to debate/discuss the issues concerning the use and abuse of drugs and substances and thereby increase their awareness of the hazards of drug and substance abuse.
- The school believes that it is a priority to promote and consolidate the self-esteem of every individual student.
- The student attaches great importance to effective communication with parents. Parents will be kept up to date by invitation to talks, and offered opportunities to consider the drugs and substances policy.
- The program will be implemented and reviewed on an annual basis.
- YAA policies will emphasise the firm commitment of the college to the promotion and maintenance of an environment free from abuse of drugs and other harmful substances.

4.0 PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS

- The vast majority of teenage/adolescent involvement with drugs and other substances occurs out of school, both in time and place, when children are the responsibility solely of their parents. Therefore, effective partnership between the school and parents is essential.
- Parents must feel that they are fully informed and involved in the school's practice with regard to drugs and substance abuse.

- It is important that parents are able and willing to support the school's policy.
- To promote this partnership, the school will ensure that parents receive full information about programs for Personal, Social and Health Education (PHSE) via letter/ePraise communication and in parental coffee mornings.

5.0 WORKING WITH OUTSIDE AGENCIES

- The school is obliged to inform the Abu Dhabi Police of any breach of the law which comes to its attention.
- The school will notify the Abu Dhabi Police if students are found to be in possession of illegal drugs / smoking paraphernalia whilst in school.
- The school is obliged to involve Abu Dhabi Police and ADEK if a student(s) are required to leave or are excluded for a fixed term on account of known use of drugs/smoking or other illegal substances.
- The school will support and promote local health initiatives where they are soundly based and do not contravene the school's ethos or moral teachings.

6.0 CLARIFICATION OF SCHOOL RULES RELATING TO SUBSTANCE ABUSE

- The school regards the possession, sharing, bringing into school, distributing, sale, "pushing" or use of illegal drugs, smoking paraphernalia, solvents, on or off the school premises, as major disciplinary matters. Abu Dhabi Police will be informed.
- Any student found or suspected of being in the possession of, sharing, bringing into school, distribution, sale, "pushing" or use of illegal drugs or illicit drugs or solvents, on or off the school premises, should expect to be asked to leave the school and may be excluded permanently.
- ADEK and the YAA behavior committee will be involved in a permanent exclusion.
- Any other involvement in drugs, in or out of school, will bring into question the continued membership of the school by the student and may lead to a permanent exclusion.

6.1 ALCOHOL

- The bringing of alcohol into school, the selling of alcohol to other students, the consumption of alcohol within school and/or being under the influence of alcohol during the school day is forbidden.
- Any student suspected and/or proven to have breached this rule should expect to be asked to leave the school and may be excluded permanently.

6.2 PRESCRIPTION MEDICATION

- The School Nurse must be aware of any prescription medication brought on to the school premises.
- Wherever possible the school nurse should store and administer the medication.
- Any student suspected of abusing prescription medication will be excluded for a fixed term period.
- A repeat offence will lead to a permanent exclusion.

6.3 TOBACCO

- The bringing of vaping devices, tobacco or tobacco-related products into school, the selling of such products to other student's, and/or the smoking of tobacco or tobacco-related products by student's is forbidden.
- Any student suspected of smoking or frequenting with a smoker on school property or while being identifiable as a member of the YAA school community may be excluded for a fixed term period.
- Persistent smoking or vaping instances will lead to permanent exclusion.
- The only circumstance likely to cause the school to consider mitigation/greater flexibility in areas of "zero tolerance" would be when the information concerning the offence derived primarily from information volunteered by the student involved or by his/her parents.

7.0 PROCEDURE

- The procedures followed will be in line with the school's procedures for dealing with major disciplinary incidents.
- These procedures respect the 'duty of care' for the individual as well as the wider community.
- Details of any drugs or substances abuse will be passed on to the police and the student and family appraised of this fact.
- Where a decision is taken not to permanently exclude a student, a condition or conditions of reinstatement following a period of exclusion may be required on the part of the student and his/her parents.
- These might include:
 - a period of counselling in relationship to the student's problem
 - undertakings by parents to monitor and restrict the social activities of the student
 - The student will monitor the situation and provide support where possible.

8.0 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

To ensure clarity and consistency, the following definitions are used throughout this policy:

8.1 Illegal Substances

Any substance that is prohibited by UAE federal law. This includes, but is not limited to:

Narcotics

Cannabis

Cocaine

Heroin

MDMA (ecstasy)

Amphetamines

Synthetic drugs (e.g. Spice)

Note: Possession or use of these substances is a criminal offense in the UAE.

8.2 Illicit Drugs

Substances that are:

Used in a manner not intended or prescribed

Acquired illegally or without appropriate authorization

Examples include:

Prescription medication used recreationally or without a prescription

Over-the-counter medications used to alter mood or consciousness

8.3 Prescription Medication

Medication legally prescribed by a licensed medical professional. At YAA:

Students must inform the school nurse before bringing any prescription medication to school.

Abuse of such medication (e.g. sharing, selling, or taking in excess) is prohibited and subject to disciplinary action.

8.4 Over-the-Counter (OTC) Medication

Drugs that can be legally purchased without a prescription (e.g. paracetamol, cough syrup). These may still be subject to misuse and are covered by this policy when used inappropriately.

8.5 Smoking Paraphernalia

Any product or item used for smoking, including:

Cigarettes

Cigars

Tobacco

Rolling papers

Lighters and matches

Pipes or bongs

8.6 Vaping and E-Cigarettes

Electronic devices that heat liquid (often containing nicotine, THC, or other chemicals) to produce inhalable vapor.

This includes:

Vapes and vape pens

JUUL devices or similar products

Disposable e-cigarettes

Possession or use of these items is prohibited on or off school premises while a student is under school jurisdiction.

8.7 Paraphernalia

Any equipment, product, or material used for the purpose of consuming, concealing, or distributing drugs or substances, including:

Rolling papers

Pipes

Baggies

Scales

Hidden compartments

Vape devices

8.8 Under the Influence

A student is considered to be under the influence when their behavior, physical condition, or performance is impaired by alcohol, drugs, or any other substance, regardless of whether it occurred on or off school premises.

8.9 School Premises

This includes:

All buildings and outdoor areas within the school campus

School transportation (buses, vans, etc.)

Off-site locations during school-sponsored trips, events, activities, or sports fixtures

Any setting where a student is identifiable as a member of the YAA community (e.g. in school uniform, during online meetings)

8.10 Possession

Being found with drugs, substances, or paraphernalia either:

On one's person (in pockets, bags, etc.)

In areas under a student's control (e.g. locker, desk)

Stored electronically (e.g. photos or online purchases of substances)

9.0 Prevention and Education Strategy

Yas American Academy takes a proactive approach to preventing substance abuse through a structured and age-appropriate education program. Drug awareness is integrated into the school's PSHE curriculum, wellbeing lessons, science units, and assemblies. The school provides students with accurate information about the risks of drugs, alcohol, and tobacco, and promotes informed decision-making and refusal skills. Awareness campaigns, guest speakers, and student-led initiatives reinforce the message of healthy lifestyle choices. This preventive strategy is reviewed annually and tailored to current trends, ensuring it remains relevant and responsive to students' needs within the context of UAE law and local culture.

10.0 Staff Responsibilities and Training

All staff at YAA share responsibility in identifying, reporting, and responding to signs of substance abuse. Staff are trained annually to recognize warning signs, understand reporting protocols, and follow ADEK safeguarding procedures. Teachers and support staff are expected to report concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or school social worker immediately. Staff must maintain student confidentiality while ensuring that safeguarding protocols are followed. The school ensures that all employees, including administrative and operational staff, receive appropriate guidance to effectively support students and uphold the school's zero-tolerance policy toward substance misuse, while remaining compassionate and professional in their response.

11.0 Early Identification and Intervention

Early identification is key to preventing long-term harm. YAA is committed to recognising early signs of substance misuse—such as changes in behaviour, academic performance, or peer groups—and intervening through supportive pastoral measures. Any concerns raised by staff, students, or parents are referred to the social worker or safeguarding team for further assessment. Where appropriate, intervention may include counselling, monitoring plans, or parent meetings. The goal is to support the student before disciplinary action becomes necessary. This preventative layer reinforces the school's focus on student wellbeing and ensures timely help for

those at risk of engaging in harmful behaviors.

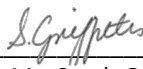
12.0 Student Support and Reintegration

YAA believes in supporting students' long-term development and wellbeing. If a student returns to school following a fixed-term exclusion, a reintegration meeting is held with the student, their parents, and the Head of Grade or senior leader. A written behaviour contract may be established, outlining clear expectations, support measures, and consequences for further incidents. Reintegration may include access to school counselling, regular check-ins, and academic support. The aim is to rebuild trust and restore the student's place in the school community. In appropriate cases, external health services may also be involved to provide ongoing support for recovery and behaviour change.

This policy will be reviewed annually in consultation with ADEK regulations, school stakeholders, and internal data analysis. All updates will reflect the current best practice and UAE law.

Approved by: Principal | Date: August 2025

Next Review Date: August 2026

Signed: 
Principal – Ms. Sarah Griffiths