



Smoke-Free Policy

September 2025- September 2026

Introduction

This policy reflects actions necessary due to the increasing evidence of serious health risks associated with breathing other people's tobacco smoke and the Government's White Paper 'Choosing Health'. It is the intention of The Acorn Childcare Centre (the Centre) to protect employees and others from the known hazards. This policy will operate on all the Centre premises, buildings and vehicles.

The objective of this policy is to create a smoke and vaping free environment for all who work in, or use, any of the Centre's facilities.

Staff and visitors are not permitted to smoke within the Centre buildings or on the Centre grounds. This includes the use of e- cigarettes. Staff members are not permitted to smoke in or on any part of the Centre site.

General Policy Principle

This policy seeks to guarantee non-smokers the right to work in air free from tobacco smoke and ensure compliance with the Health and Safety at Work Act, which places a duty of care on employers to protect the health of employees and non-employees. This policy applies, equally to elected members, contractors, employees, students and visitors to the Centre premises. The Centre also has a duty to protect employees who visit people in their own homes.

It is recognised that nicotine is a chemical addiction and how hard it is to stop smoking. As a good employer the Centre will try to help employees to stop smoking.

All Centre premises including offices, function rooms and all areas of the buildings and grounds are designated smoke-free environments. Important note: smoking will not be allowed at entrances and exits to the Centre buildings or grounds. This includes the use of e-cigarettes.

Private Properties

The Centre has a duty to protect employees whilst they are visiting people in their own homes (for instance, parents/carers of children). However, the Centre recognises that due to the special and sometimes urgent nature of the work, staff members may at times be unavoidably exposed to the secondhand smoke of persons being visited. Action should always be taken to minimise the risks of this, prior to visits being made. Persons in this situation who are pregnant or have a medical condition affected by smoking should inform the Centre Manager. The employee should ask the homeowner not to smoke whilst they are in the premises. Employees will be supported with a refusal to visit homes where the homeowner is unwilling to follow the employee's request.

Vehicles

The Centre currently owns no vehicles. If in the future it bought and owned any vehicle(s), those vehicles would be designated as smoke-free environments at all times. This includes the use of e- cigarettes.

Smoking is not permitted in vehicles being used on Centre business where car mileage allowance is being claimed, at times when students are being carried. This applies to the use of e-cigarettes.

Smoking Breaks

There is no facility in the Centre for staff to request a smoking break. Breaks taken do not form part of the working day and need to be authorised by the Centre Manager. Time spent away from the workplace will need to be accounted for. Evidence shows that additional smoking breaks can account for up to half a day's work per week and therefore cannot be tolerated.

Help for those who Smoke and Want to Stop

This policy aims to improve the health of both smokers and non-smokers. The Centre will therefore support staff members who wish to stop smoking and the introduction of the policy is an ideal opportunity for those who are considering stopping smoking to do so. An employee can request a referral to Occupational Health via the Centre Manager if he/she would like support to stop smoking.

Enforcement

This policy applies whether or not no smoking signs are displayed.

All employees are responsible for ensuring that the policy is complied with and for bringing it to the attention of new staff and visitors.

When a manager becomes aware that a member of staff is ignoring this policy, the manager should meet with the staff member and discuss the policy and offer support in complying with the policy through counselling, smoking cessation support or Occupational Health. Under no circumstances should a confrontational attitude be adopted or allowed to develop. If all informal channels have been exhausted, employees failing to comply with this policy will be subject to normal disciplinary procedures. Staff members who assist with the enforcement of this policy will receive the full support of the Centre Manager and Directors.