

Herts for Learning



Model Alcohol, Drugs & Gambling at Work Policy for Schools

Department:	Schools' HR Advisory Team
Date of issue:	November 2017
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This policy has been negotiated with the relevant professional associations and trade unions and is recommended for adoption



1. Objectives and Scope

The Governing Body is committed to providing a safe and productive work environment and to promoting the health, safety and wellbeing of its employees. The Alcohol and Drugs at Work Policy is designed to ensure that employees are aware of the risks associated with alcohol /drug misuse and the consequences of their actions.

Alcohol and drug misuse has a detrimental effect on health, influences work performance, employee relationships, reduces efficiency, increases sickness absence and increases health and safety risks not only for the individual concerned but also for others, for example colleagues, pupils, parents and contractors. Furthermore, the effects of alcohol or drug misuse are likely to be detrimental to the schools' reputation.

The policy applies to all employees of the school. This policy does not form part of any employees' contract of employment.

This policy is supported by and should be read in conjunction with other school policies, particularly; Health & Attendance, Leave of Absence, Disciplinary and Code of Conduct.

2. Purpose

This policy covers the use and misuse of intoxicating substances, which include alcohol, solvents, legal and illegal drugs, prescription and over the counter medicines and other substances that could adversely affect work performance and/or health and safety.

It is school policy to:

- Promote a responsible attitude to the consumption of alcohol
- Prohibit the taking of illegal drugs or alcohol during working hours
- Offer help and support to those with an alcohol, drug related or gambling problem
- Treat addiction to alcohol and or drugs as a health problem and arrange for employees to seek professional advice

3. Definition

Drug misuse refers to the use of illegal drugs and the misuse, of prescribed drugs and substances such as solvents. Drug misuse can harm the misuser both physically and mentally and through the misuser's actions, other people's environments.

Alcohol misuse is defined as a level of consumption which affects an employee's ability to carry out their duties. The simultaneous use of alcohol and drugs is particularly dangerous.

4. Employee Responsibilities

All employees are expected to ensure that their personal consumption of alcohol or use of prescribed drugs does not interfere with their ability to perform their duties safely and competently. Being under the influence of drink and or drugs while at work could lead to suspension from employment while a disciplinary investigation takes place.

Any employee suffering from drug and or alcohol addiction should declare such dependency. Failure to accept support or continue with treatment could lead to disciplinary procedures.

Employees are responsible for allowing sufficient time for intoxicating substances to leave their system before reporting for work, this can apply to the next day.

Employees are forbidden from consuming alcohol or taking illegal drugs at any time during the working day (including breaks). Any breach of this condition is likely to be investigated under the schools disciplinary procedure.

Exceptions apply to prescribed drugs for the individual or over the counter medicines used for their intended purpose (in accordance with the instructions given by the prescriber, pharmacist or manufacturer) and where the safety of the individual or others with whom they come into contact is not compromised. Employees must notify their Headteacher if the medication is likely to cause side effects prior to its use.

The Headteacher must be informed in all cases where Class A drugs have been prescribed for medical use.

5. Possession or Dealing in Drugs

Possession or dealing in drugs should be reported to the Police and the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) immediately. You should inform your HR Adviser. Do not alert the employee of your intention to call the police and do not send them home.

6. Driving Bans related to Drugs and or Alcohol

Where employees are required to drive as part of their conditions of employment are disqualified from driving as a result of an alcohol or drugs related offence the Head teacher may consider redeployment, if appropriate within school. If redeployment within school is not an option then the employee's continuing employment may be at risk.

7. Consumption of Alcohol on School Trips, Social events etc.

Whilst this policy stresses that the consumption of alcohol during the working day, including breaks is forbidden, there may be circumstances where the consumption of alcohol may be permitted at the discretion of the Governing Body. It is the responsibility of the Governing Body to clearly define the occasions when the sensible consumption of alcohol will be permitted e.g. school trips, social events. Clear guidelines must be put in place so that all employees are fully aware of what the expectations are for the consumption of alcohol at such events and the consequences of a breach of such guidelines e.g. investigation under the schools disciplinary procedures.

8. Gambling

Gambling can also be an addiction, Headteachers and Line Managers should offer support to any employees they suspect has a problem resulting from regular gambling which affects their performance. Examples of organisations able to support employees can be found in appendix 3.

Employees who use school property for online gambling will be subjected to disciplinary action, which may lead to dismissal.

Appendix 1 - Procedure

1. An employee who appears to be under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol while at work.

The Health and Safety Executive guidance states that if an employer knowingly allows an employee under the influence of excess alcohol or drugs to continue working and thereby placing the employee or others at risk, the employer could be prosecuted. Therefore, where suspected consumption of alcohol or drugs is judged to affect work performance or conduct, the Headteacher or designated person will need to take immediate action.

- 1.1** Send the employee home so that they and others are removed from potential risks. Consideration should be given to their ability to return home safely, e.g. for them not to drive themselves home.
- 1.2** Consider whether it is appropriate to initiate a disciplinary investigation in accordance with the school's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

2. An employee who appears to have a drug and/or alcohol problem

Employees who are identified as possibly experiencing alcohol/drug related problems, whether by observation, poor performance, conduct or by their own voluntary admission, must be given the following assistance:

- 2.1** If the Headteacher has concerns that an employee may have a drug or alcohol problem, he/she must first arrange an informal meeting to discuss his/her concerns with that employee. The employee may be accompanied by a Union or Professional Association representative or a work colleague and no one else.
- 2.2** During the initial meeting, the Headteacher should suggest to the employee that support is provided by way of a referral to the Occupational Health Unit. The employee should be made aware that his/her co-operation is required during the referral process in order for the Occupational Health Unit to be able to provide full support and advice. See Health and Attendance Policy and Procedure for Schools for further guidance on the occupational health referral process.
- 2.3** If the school buys into an Employee Assistance Programme advise the employee to take up their services.
- 2.4** The Headteacher should make it clear to the employee that any necessary time off will be granted for treatment / support in accordance with the leave of absence policy.

The employee should return, as far as possible, to their normal duties during and after treatment, following a risk assessment. This will depend on their ability to perform those duties or on the consequent risk of relapse due to a return to those duties. If a return to normal duties is not considered to be appropriate, redeployment or other suitable options may be considered by the governing body.

3. When to Apply the Disciplinary Procedure

The school will, where appropriate to do so, adopt a constructive and supportive approach when dealing with employees who may be experiencing drug or alcohol dependency/addiction. This means that employees seeking assistance for a substance misuse problem will not have their employment terminated simply because of their dependence/addiction.

Notwithstanding the above, there will be circumstances where breaches of the policy, whether dependency-related or not, will be treated as a disciplinary matter and may result in the summary dismissal of the employee. Examples of issues that will be subject to disciplinary action, including the possibility of dismissal, are:

- working under the influence of alcohol or drugs;

- incapacity through alcohol or being under the influence of illegal drugs;
- being convicted of any criminal offence connected with alcohol or drugs, regardless of whether the offence took place inside or outside the workplace;
- reasonable suspicion of activities, such as possession, consumption, dealing/trafficking, selling, storage of controlled drugs, either on work premises or engaging in such activities outside of work.

This list is not exclusive or exhaustive. Disciplinary action will in all cases be proportionate to the circumstances of the breach of this policy.

Appendix 2 – Signs of Alcohol and Drug Abuse

Listed below are examples of the kind of symptoms which someone with an alcohol or drugs related problem may present. **Not all these symptoms will appear in every instance and it is possible that some of these symptoms may not be connected with alcohol or drugs** in which case signs which give cause for concern should be addressed appropriately.

Absenteeism/Irregular attendance

- Multiple instances of unauthorised leave
- Frequent Monday or Friday absences
- Unusually high absenteeism (e.g. for colds, flu, gastritis and general malaise)

Reporting for work

- Excessive lateness, for example on a Monday morning or returning from lunch
- Smelling of alcohol
- Unkempt appearance/lack of hygiene

Absenteeism whilst at work

- Repeated absences from the post, more often than necessary during working hours
- Frequent trips to the toilet
- Overlong tea/coffee breaks
- Leaving work early

Lack of concentration and confusion

- Work requires greater effort
- Jobs take an unreasonable time to complete
- Difficulty in recalling instructions and details
- Increasing difficulty in handling complex assignments
- Difficulty in recalling errors

Spasmodic work patterns and deteriorating performance

- Alternate periods of high and low productivity
- Increasing general unreliability and unpredictability
- Missed deadlines
- Mistakes due to inattentiveness or poor judgement
- Complaints from colleagues about behaviour
- Attempts to borrow money from colleagues
- Avoidance of manager or colleagues

Date adopted by:	
Version:	
Date Policy Reviewed/Amended:	November 2017
Chair of Governors:	
Headteacher:	
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Reviewed by:	

Appendix 3 – Support Groups

Organisation	Details	Telephone	Website
Optum UK Employee Assistance Programme	Schools have the option of buying into the Employee Assistance Programme provided by Optum UK. It offers online, telephone and face to face counselling on a range of personal and professional themes such as financial advice, relationship and bereavement support, stress counselling, work/life balance, increasing confidence etc. and supports both the employee and their family.		www.optum-uk.com
HSE (Health & Safety Executive)	Useful section on drugs and alcohol in the workplace	NA	www.hse.gov.uk/alcoholdrugs/links.htm
Alcohol Concern	A national agency working to reduce the incidence and cost of alcohol misuse and improve services to those with alcohol misuse problems.	0300 1231110	www.alcoholconcern.org.uk
Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)	Website and telephone line supporting a network of local AA groups in the UK.	0845 769 7555	www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk
NHS	'Alcohol – Know your Limits' website	NA	www.nhs.uk/units
The Drinkaware Trust	An independent charity, Drinkaware aims to increase awareness and understanding of the role of alcohol in society, enabling individuals to make informed choices about their drinking.	0207 7669900	www.drinkaware.co.uk
FRANK	A free, confidential 24 hour drugs helpline and informative website	0300 1236600	www.talktofrank.com
Gamblers Anonymous	Gamblers Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who have joined together to do something about their own gambling problem and to help other compulsive gamblers do the same.	N/A	www.gamblersanonymous.org.uk
Gamble Aware	Informative website on Gambling and how to find help.	0808 8020133	www.gambleaware.co.uk
Gamcare	Gamcare provides support, information and advice to anyone suffering through a gambling problem.	0808 8020133	www.gamcare.org.uk
Teachers Support Network	Free telephone support line for all teachers in England, Wales and Scotland	08000 562561	www.teachersupport.info
Samaritans	Free 24 hour helpline to provide emotional support for people who are experiencing feelings of emotional distress or despair, including those which may lead to suicide	08457 909090	www.samaritans.org