

# **Guidance for Maintained Schools and Academies**

## **Alcohol, Drug and Substance Use Policy**

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## Introduction

The school is committed to providing and maintaining a safe and healthy working environment for all employees. The school recognises that health and safety, performance, conduct and work relationships may be affected by the misuse of alcohol, other drugs or substances.

The school believes it is important to have a policy that positively encourages the early identification of alcohol, other drug or substance misuse and to offer a constructive and preventative strategy for dealing with the issue. The school recognises that people with alcohol, other drug or substance misuse problems may require medical or counselling help.

Health and safety, performance, conduct and relationships at work can also be affected by alcohol use that does not fit the definition of misuse in this policy, or by the use of prescribed drugs or 'over-the-counter' remedies. It is therefore necessary to set out some guidelines and rules on alcohol consumption, and also on the use of prescribed drugs or 'over-the-counter' remedies.

While a key objective of this policy is to prevent, recognise and/or offer appropriate support in cases of alcohol or substance misuse, it must be emphasised that **drunkenness at work or being unable to carry out duties through the influence of any substance, including drugs and alcohol, is a disciplinary offence which, depending on the precise circumstances, may be considered as misconduct or gross misconduct.**

This policy applies to all employees, which includes apprentices and temporary members of staff.

## Responsibilities

### Line Managers:

- Line managers will monitor employees' work through normal working and should look for patterns of absence, changes of behaviour or deterioration in performance that could be due to alcohol, drug or substance misuse (see Appendix 1).
- Line managers are advised to make themselves available for confidential discussions with any employee who is concerned about his/her use of alcohol, other drugs or substances.
- Managers should provide support and assistance, where appropriate and for a reasonable period, to staff who are dependent upon intoxicating substances to help their recovery.
- Managers should instigate disciplinary measures where appropriate to do so.

## **Employees:**

- Employees are responsible for familiarising themselves and ensuring adherence to this policy.
- Employees must report for work, and remain throughout the working day, in a fit and safe condition to undertake their duties and not be under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Employees are expected to present a professional, courteous and efficient image to those with whom they come into contact at all times and therefore have a responsibility to adopt a responsible attitude towards drinking and taking prescribed and 'over-the-counter' drugs.
- Employees are expected to co-operate with any support and assistance provided by the school to address an alcohol or drug misuse problem.
- Where it is felt to be necessary for the employer to have confidence in the employee's fitness to be in work, the employee would be expected to comply with a request to use a breathalyser.
- Employees who experience side effects as a result of taking prescribed or 'over-the-counter' medicines that impair their ability to perform their duties safely and satisfactorily must notify their line manager immediately.
- Employees must advise their line manager if they believe or know that a colleague's performance is being impaired by alcohol, drug or substance use, or if they suspect that a colleague has a drug, alcohol or substance misuse problem.
- Employees must not "protect" colleagues by keeping silent. All employees have a duty of care to raise concerns where a colleague's behaviour or performance is potentially putting themselves or others at risk. Making an appropriate person aware of any potential problem will also ensure that appropriate action can be taken to help the individual concerned.
- If an employee falsely reports that another employee is misusing, then the disciplinary process will be evoked.

## **PART 1 – Alcohol, Drug and Substance Use: General Guidance and Rules**

### **Alcohol Consumption Policy**

Employees must not consume alcohol during work time, either at school or at an external venue when representing the school. The only exception to this rule is where specific prior approval has been given by the Headteacher/Principal for alcohol to be consumed on special occasions outside of normal class session times.

It is expected that schools will have their own policy regarding residential trips and the expected conduct of their staff. Teaching staff should be mindful of the 'Teaching Standards' and specifically the requirement to "demonstrate consistently high standards of personal and professional conduct".

Employees must not take drugs, alcohol or any other substance before school, during a break or at lunch time that is capable of causing their behaviour, judgement or performance at work to be affected. This is particularly important for employees who drive, operate machinery, and everyone in school who has responsibility for children, and who come into contact with parents, Governors and any other members of the public and/or visitors (N.B. It is equally inappropriate for those working in close proximity to children to have alcohol on their breath even though this may not amount to drunkenness).

An employee who will be working after having consumed alcohol in non-working time may still have alcohol in their blood, even if they have slept for a number of hours in between. The school cannot control employees' alcohol consumption outside of working time. However, there are three main rules that must be observed relating to the influence of alcohol on employees during work time:

- Employees driving for business purposes must not exceed the UK limit for driving.
- Work performance must not be impaired.
- Health and safety must not be jeopardised, for example where the job involves operating machinery or working with children.

Any breach of these rules will be dealt with in accordance with the school's capability and disciplinary procedures. Line managers will need to decide what action is appropriate based on the circumstances and may wish to seek advice from their HR Provider and/or Occupational Health.

Further information about drink driving and the health implications of alcohol consumption is in Appendix 2.

## **Prescribed Drugs or ‘Over-the-Counter’ Remedies**

Prescribed drugs or ‘over-the-counter’ remedies that are used in accordance with instructions from doctors or pharmacists should be considered separately from the issue of drug misuse.

Employees must check the detailed description and notes on any drugs or remedies regarding any potential side effects that may have an impact upon their work, and inform their manager of these if necessary. Also, in the event that they experience a reaction having taken any medication, they must inform their manager. This is particularly important if employees are required to drive, operate machinery or perform any other safety sensitive tasks. The employee must ensure that any such drugs are stored safely in accordance with school procedures.

Further information about driving and the consumption of prescribed drugs or ‘over-the-counter’ remedies is in Appendix 2.

## **Possession of, Use of or Intent to Supply Illegal Drugs**

The school will not condone illegal acts. Therefore, the buying or selling of illegal drugs whilst at work will be considered as gross misconduct and any employee involved will immediately be suspended from duty and face appropriate action under the disciplinary procedure. The Police will also be informed.

The school will always endeavour to offer support where appropriate, i.e. if a member of staff has admitted they have a drug addiction. However, the possession or use of illegal drugs whilst at work will be considered as gross misconduct and, following investigation, action may be taken in accordance with the disciplinary procedure.

## **Managing Incidents in which an Employee appears to be under the Influence of Alcohol, Other Drugs or Substances whilst at Work**

Immediate action must be taken where, during work, an employee is or appears to be under the influence of alcohol, other drugs (including prescribed drugs or ‘over-the-counter’ remedies) or substances to the extent that their performance is impaired or there are health and safety concerns. If the cause is unclear, the individual’s manager should take the employee to a private area and try to establish as quickly as possible what, if anything, they have taken.

The decision on what action to take should be based on the severity of the effects on the employee, the effect on other employees and/or pupils, and other health and safety implications. Advice should also be sought from HR Consultancy for Schools and in some cases Occupational Health in conjunction with HR Consultancy for Schools.

Depending on the situation, actions that the manager could consider include:

- Contacting the employee’s named emergency contact.
- Arranging transportation home for the employee, wherever possible in conjunction with the named emergency contact.
- In the event of a medical emergency, a First Aider may be able to assist and/or an ambulance should be called (telephone 999 or 112).

The emphasis of the approach to dealing with the situation should be on managing the situation, assessing the effect, seeking advice and contacting appropriate third parties.

The manager will then need to meet with the employee as soon as practicable to assess the incident and decide what further action to take. This will often be on the employee's next working day, when the effects of the alcohol, other drug or substance will have worn off or reduced sufficiently.

In the event that another incident occurred while the employee was under the influence of the alcohol, other drug or substance, for example an assault, then the LADO should also be contacted as soon as possible.



## **PART 2 – Alcohol, Other Drug and Substance Misuse: Guidance and Support**

### **Definition of Alcohol, Other Drug or Substance Misuse**

In employment terms, alcohol misuse can be defined as 'drinking which continually or repeatedly affects an employee's work performance'.

Drug or substance misuse refers to the misuse of illegal or prescribed drugs (including substances such as solvents).

An alcohol, other drug or substance misuse related problem does not normally include one-off instances, for example where employees drink inappropriately at leaving or Christmas parties. Drinking to excess on these occasions could be considered as a disciplinary matter and dealt with in accordance with the appropriate procedures.

### **Aims**

1. To minimise problems at school arising from the effects of drugs, alcohol or substance abuse and to promote the health and well-being of employees.
2. To create a climate of confidence for staff, management and unions in order for these difficulties to be dealt with positively, to the benefit of all.
3. To offer encouragement and support to employees who suspect or realise that their alcohol, other drug or substance use is problematic so that they can concentrate on its identification and resolution.
4. To offer encouragement and support to colleagues and management who suspect that a member of staff has an alcohol, other drug or substance use related problem.
5. To highlight the use of the disciplinary and managing sickness absence procedures in certain circumstances.

### **Confidentiality**

Information collected in relation to an employee's problems and treatment related to alcohol, other drug or substance use must be kept in the strictest of confidence. The Headteacher, the manager dealing with the employee's case, HR Consultancy for Schools and, if appropriate, Occupational Health and the Local Authority Designate Officer (LADO) should be the only persons informed of the employee's problem.

Information must only be released to any other parties with the employee's permission.

## **Support and Help Available**

The employee should be encouraged to seek support and advice from their GP. Advice, information and counselling may also be accessed through the school's Occupational Health Provider or via an Employee Assistance Programme (if the school has one).

Employees identified as experiencing workplace problems related to alcohol, other drug or substance misuse, or who themselves request help in order to prevent workplace problems developing, should be offered an immediate opportunity to seek help from appropriate specialist resources.

The offer of an opportunity to seek help should be made on the clear understanding that:

Where necessary, the employee will be granted leave to undertake whatever measures are necessary to resolve their alcohol, other drug or substance misuse problem. This is conditional on there being full co-operation from the employee during this treatment. Such leave will be treated as sick leave in accordance with the managing sickness absence in school guidance and any sickness absence lasting for more than 7 calendar days will require the submission of a medical certificate.

The employee will initially have the same protection of employment as any other employee with problems related to ill-health. Following satisfactory resolution of the cause(s) of the workplace problems, every effort will be made to return the employee to the same job. In those cases, where this is not advisable because of the individual's state of health, or a return to the former job may jeopardise recovery, or safety may be compromised, the school may consider suitable alternative employment.

Employees experiencing work problems thought to be related to alcohol, other drug or substance misuse who do not resolve their work problems after being given the opportunity to resolve them may then be subject to the normal disciplinary and sickness absence procedures. If the employee has begun treatment, it is recognised that it is not unusual for lapses to occur and that this need not necessarily indicate failure. However, each recurrence should be considered and evaluated on its own merits. In certain circumstances, the employer may wish to request the use of a breathalyser to provide confidence that the employee is fit to be in work.

The decision to undergo treatment for alcohol, other drug or substance misuse is the responsibility of the employee. No employee will be forced to accept assistance. However, employees should understand the possible consequences of failure to seek help. In such circumstances, sickness absence and/or capability problems will be dealt with under the normal procedures, which could result in dismissal in some cases.

## Useful Contacts and Organisations

There are a number of other external sources of confidential help for both the individual concerned, their family and other people affected. Some possible sources of assistance are:

### The employee's own GP

#### The Samaritans

9 Sansome Place, Worcester, WR1 1UA

Telephone: 01905 21121

*For someone to talk to who will give you support. Open 24 hours a day.*

#### Turning Point

35 Foregate Street, Worcester, WR1 1EE

Telephone: 0207 481 7600

*Confidential advice, support and counselling for drug users and their friends/relations.*

#### Swanswell

14 Castle House, Castle Street, Worcester, WR1 3AD

Telephone: 0300 303 8200 / Email: [worcsadmin@swanswell.org](mailto:worcsadmin@swanswell.org)

*Swanswell offers a range of recovery services for young people and adults, with support for friends and family. Hubs in Redditch, Kidderminster, Worcester, Bromsgrove and Malvern.*

#### Alcoholics Anonymous

National Helpline: 0800 9177 650 / Email: [hhelp@aamail.org](mailto:hhelp@aamail.org)

Website: [www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk](http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk)

*Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism.*

#### Narcotics Anonymous

Helpline: 0300 999 1212 (10:00am-midnight) / Website: [www.ukna.org.uk](http://www.ukna.org.uk)

*The NA Helpline is often the first point of contact for people needing support and advice about the nature of drug addiction.*

#### The National Association for Children of Alcoholics (NACOA)

National helpline: 0800 358 3456 / Email: [helpline@Nacoa.org.uk](mailto:helpline@Nacoa.org.uk)

*Providing information, advice and support for everyone affected by a parent's drinking.*

#### Education Support Partnership (previously Teacher Support Network)

Website: [www.educationsupportpartnership.org.uk](http://www.educationsupportpartnership.org.uk) or by calling the support line on 08000 562 561 (*which provides confidential telephone counselling and coaching*), offers practical and emotional support services to teachers and other staff in education.

## APPENDIX 1: SIGNS OF ALCOHOL, OTHER DRUG OR SUBSTANCE MISUSE

No single characteristic exists to identify alcohol, other drug or substance misuse, but the following characteristics and work-related problems, especially when occurring in combination, or as a pattern over a period of time, **may** indicate the presence of an alcohol, other drug or substance misuse problem. In addition, these are only some of the signs and there may be many others.

### 1. Evidence of Inadequate or Deteriorating Work Performance

- Frequent lateness, repeated brief periods of absence for trivial or inadequate reasons.
- Impaired concentration and memory.
- Absenteeism, particularly where a pattern is evident, e.g. related to weekends, and/or high absenteeism rates.
- Accident proneness, minor accidents at work and accidents off duty.
- Mistakes, errors of judgement.
- Improbable excuses for poor job performance.
- Increasing general unreliability and unpredictability.

### 2. Observation of Behaviour and Appearance

- Smelling of alcohol.
- Mood changes, irritability, lethargy, suspicious attitude towards others, excessive talkativeness.
- Deterioration in working relationships.
- A combination of hand tremor, slurred speech, unsteady movements, physical incapability, sleepiness, cold and sweaty palms, dilated pupils, red eyes, facial flushing, bleary eyes, poor personal hygiene, unkempt appearance.

### 3. Relationships

- Over-reaction to real or imagined criticism.
- Unreasonable resentment.
- Irritability.
- Complaints from colleagues.
- Avoidance of line manager, SLT or Governors.
- Borrowing from colleagues.

**N.B. Many of these signs may be caused by other factors such as stress and should be regarded only as indications that an employee may be misusing alcohol, substances or other drugs.**

## APPENDIX 2: THE EFFECTS OF ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS ON HEALTH AND DRIVING

The purpose of this appendix is to provide information about some of the effects of consumption of alcohol and other drugs on health and on driving.

### Alcohol

Alcohol is the common name for ethanol. It is a colourless flammable liquid that is a product of fermentation and, apart from being the constituent of alcoholic drinks, is also used as a fuel, solvent (e.g. methylated spirits) and an antiseptic. The effects of ethanol on the body are:

- Impaired memory, loss of inhibitions
- Impaired co-ordination
- Tunnel vision
- Impairment of central nervous system
- Irritation to the stomach and intestine (ulceration)
- Damage to the liver (cirrhosis)
- Impotence
- Death either through cumulative effects or from excessive short-term consumption (e.g. binge drinking).

### Alcohol Measurement and Health

To reduce these effects, it is necessary adopt a sensible approach to drinking alcohol, as publicised in Government campaigns. \*The recommended limit for men and women is currently 14 units per week. An additional recommendation is not to 'save up' the 14 units for one or two days, but to spread them over three or more days. People who have one or two heavy drinking sessions each week increase the risk of death from long term illnesses, accidents and injuries. A good way to reduce alcohol intake is to have several alcohol free days a week.

\* *Department of Health advice, published on 8th January 2016*

The following table and calculation can help determine a person's weekly consumption:

Container	Size (ml)	Contents	%AbV *	Units
Tumbler	225	Cider	5.3	1.2
Wine Glass (L)	175	Red Wine	15	2.6
Wine Glass (L)	175	White Wine	12	2.1
Wine Glass (S)	125	Red Wine	15	1.9
Wine Glass (S)	125	White Wine	12	1.5
Flute	100	Champagne	12	1.2
Can	500	Strong Lager	5.5	2.75
Pint	473	Beer	4	1.9
Half-Pint	236.5	Cider	7	1.7
Glass	90	Port / Sherry	20	1.8
Liqueur Glass	40	Liqueur	40	1.6
Tot (1/6 gill)	24	Spirits	40	1

\* %AbV = Absolute volume in percent

The following formula can be used to calculate the number of units in a drink: (Size of drink (ml) x %AbV) / 1000 = number of units.

## Drinking and Driving

The UK limit is 80mg alcohol per 100ml blood and exceeding this limit is illegal. There is no easy way to determine a 'safe' amount of an alcoholic drink to keep below the limit. This is because the rate of alcohol absorption into the human body varies according to various circumstances and individual factors. **However, as a rough guide, 3 units of alcohol will produce blood alcohol levels above the legal limit (see table above).** It is important to note that you cannot build up a tolerance to alcohol (i.e. an amount that doesn't affect you) and that the rate of alcohol metabolism (destruction) by the body is fairly constant.

- After a drink, it takes about an hour for the alcohol to be totally absorbed into the body.
- The body metabolises alcohol at about one unit per hour.

Examples (metabolism time starts following the last drink):

- the alcohol in one tot of whisky will be absorbed and metabolised in TWO hours
- a pint of beer will take THREE hours to be metabolised
- a bottle of red wine (~6 units) will take SEVEN hours to metabolise.

It is clear from these examples that someone who starts work after having a drink (even if they have been to bed for several hours) may still have alcohol in their body and may also exceed the UK limit for driving.

**N.B. Drinking lots of water or coffee, taking a cold shower or other 'remedies' will not alter the rate of alcohol metabolism.**

## Other Drugs and Driving

The majority of illegal and prescribed drugs can affect a person's ability to drive.

Depending on the drug being taken the following health effects that impair driving performance may occur:

- slower reactions
- poor concentration / confused thinking
- sleepiness / fatigue
- distorted perception
- overconfidence
- impaired coordination / erratic behaviour
- nausea
- hallucination / vision problems
- aggression
- panic attacks / paranoia.

In some ways these effects are similar to those of alcohol. The difference is that most people are aware of the effects of alcohol but are not aware of the effects of drugs. The penalty for a conviction for 'drug driving' is the same as 'drink driving' – a minimum one year driving ban, a fine of up to £5,000 and six months in jail.

The major problem with drug driving is that many drivers are taking prescribed drugs or 'over-the-counter' remedies to control health ailments. Anti-depressants, painkillers, anti-histamines and cold remedies can all have a sedative effect, and are often taken in the belief that the drugs have no effect and people are totally safe to drive.

**The plain fact is that as with alcohol, other drugs affect a person's ability to drive.**