



Dame Alice Owen's School

## ALCOHOL & DRUGS AT WORK POLICY

Agreed by the Governing Body Personnel & Remuneration Committee  
To be reviewed

May 2017  
Summer 2019

*(first approved in February 2010, with an appendix re. trips first agreed in  
October 2010; policy reviewed every 2 years)*

# Alcohol, Drugs & Gambling at Work Policy for Schools

**Based on the Herts County Council model policy:**

**Department:** Schools' HR advisory team

**Date of issue:** June 2015

**Review date:** June 2017

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, Drugs and Gambling 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, negatively 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 gambling, and 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 (please read this in conjunction with section 7)
- 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 DO (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 Headteacher and/or 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. The Headteacher 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

Organisation	Details	Telephone	Website
<b>Optum UK Employee Assistance Programme</b>	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.		<a href="http://www.optum-uk.com">www.optum-uk.com</a>
<b>HSE (Health &amp; Safety Executive)</b>	Useful section on drugs and alcohol in the workplace	NA	<a href="http://www.hse.gov.uk/alcoholdrugs/links.htm">www.hse.gov.uk/alcoholdrugs/links.htm</a>
<b>Alcohol Concern</b>	A national agency working to reduce the incidence and cost of alcohol misuse and improve services to those with alcohol misuse problems.	0300 1231110	<a href="http://www.alcoholconcern.org.uk">www.alcoholconcern.org.uk</a>
<b>Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)</b>	Website and telephone line supporting a network of local AA groups in the UK.	0845 769 7555	<a href="http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk">www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk</a>
<b>NHS</b>	'Alcohol – Know your Limits' website		NA <a href="http://www.nhs.uk/units">www.nhs.uk/units</a>
<b>The Drinkaware Trust</b>	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 <a href="http://www.drinkaware.co.uk">www.drinkaware.co.uk</a>
<b>FRANK</b>	A free, confidential 24 hour drugs helpline and informative website	0300 1236600	<a href="http://www.talktofrank.com">www.talktofrank.com</a>
<b>Gamblers Anonymous</b>	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	<a href="http://www.gamblersanonymous.org.uk">www.gamblersanonymous.org.uk</a>
<b>Gamble Aware</b>	Informative website on Gambling and how to find help.	0808 8020133	<a href="http://www.gambleaware.co.uk">www.gambleaware.co.uk</a>
<b>Gamcare</b>	Gamcare provides support, information and advice to anyone suffering through a gambling problem.	0808 8020133	<a href="http://www.gamcare.org.uk">www.gamcare.org.uk</a>
<b>Support Network</b>	Free telephone support line for all teachers in England, Wales and Scotland	08000 562561	<a href="http://www.teachersupport.info">www.teachersupport.info</a>
<b>Samaritans</b>	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	<a href="http://www.samaritans.org">www.samaritans.org</a>

## Appendix 3

### **Interpretation of the Dame Alice Owen School Alcohol, Drugs and Gambling at Work Policy regarding school visits**

#### **Drugs and Alcohol guidance**

The Governors and staff at Dame Alice Owen's School take very seriously the issue of the use of alcohol or drugs on school visits. All stakeholders are very aware of the unique nature of school trips, which require very high standards of behaviour to guarantee the safety and enjoyment of all participants. To ensure this, the following guidelines are a **requirement** for all school visits organised by Dame Alice Owen's School:

#### **Prescription drugs**

The use of prescription drugs by students in Years 7- 9 during a school visit must only take place under the close supervision of teaching staff on the trip. Students over this age will be expected to take responsibility for their own use. Parents must inform staff of any prescription drugs to be taken, and these must be stored by the party leader.

#### **Illegal drugs**

There must be no consumption of any proscribed drugs during any school visit, both as these drugs are illegal, and would place the health and safety of all members of the party at risk. Should any student or member of staff be found to have consumed any illegal drug during a school visit, the matter will be taken very seriously through the School's disciplinary code.

#### **Alcohol**

No student should consume **any** alcohol during a school trip. Should a student be found to have consumed alcohol on a school trip, each case will be considered on its seriousness, but it is likely that the appropriate step would be for the child to return home at the expense of and under the supervision of the parent. Staff should only consume alcohol in moderation on any school trip. (The governors define moderation to be under 4 units on any given day). Should these limits be exceeded, staff will be subject to the relevant disciplinary code.

In the case of residential overseas visits, there will be occasions where the visit leader will nominate staff who are officially on duty and required to avoid alcohol, while other staff are only on call and therefore may consume alcohol in moderation.

