



Supplied by Education HR – September 2017

Drug and Alcohol Misuse Policy

Formally Adopted
Autumn 22

Watcombe Primary School



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1 Introduction

The School is committed to the promotion of good health and well being for all of its employees. However, it also has a duty of care to pupils and members of the public who come into contact with its employees.

The School will deal with all employees who are experiencing problems from drug, alcohol or substance misuse in a fair manner and will encourage them to seek support from trained counsellors and/or medical experts. Dealing with misuse positively reduces the risk of accidents, reduces costs due to absenteeism, recruitment and training and increases productivity. However, it is a disciplinary offence for any employee to be unfit for work due to the influence of alcohol, drugs or substances.

Tackling drug, alcohol and substance misuse in the workplace is an essential requirement of the School if it is to carry out its obligations under the provisions of the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 and Misuse of Drugs Act 1971.

It is a criminal offence for any employee to possess, supply, offer to supply, or produce controlled drugs. The School is liable to be prosecuted if it allows controlled drugs to be supplied, or offered for supply, or to be produced or taken on its premises. The School forbids the possession, use or distribution of non-prescribed illegal drugs on any of its sites, including vehicle and property. If anyone involved in the School's business is found to be involved in any of these activities this will be treated as gross misconduct and can lead to dismissal. In addition the police will be informed of any activities connected with controlled drugs on the School's property.

1.1 Scope

This policy is aimed to support School managers and colleagues to deal with concerns about an employee's or co-worker's drug or alcohol misuse, where professional or academic abilities are impaired. It applies to all employees of the School. Concerns relating to students concerning the misuse of drugs/alcohol should be raised in line with the School's Safeguarding policies.

1.2 Equality Statement

This policy applies equally to all School employees, regardless of their age, disability, sex, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership status. Care will be taken to ensure that no traditionally excluded groups are adversely impacted in implementing this policy. Monitoring will take place to ensure compliance and fairness.

1.3 Background

The misuse of alcohol, drugs and other substances can have a serious consequence in the workplace, especially when this misuse impairs the professional ability of employees, many of whom may have others in their care.

Drinking alcohol moderately is accepted as part of social life and is normally a private matter. However the misuse of alcohol within the workplace and how it impairs performance, safety and relations within the workplace is a matter for managers, employees and their union representatives. Anyone who either drives, operates machinery or is directly responsible for the care and safety of students as part of their job is expected to refrain from drinking during working hours or from being under the influence of alcohol or drugs while carrying out their normal duties. You may refer to the School's local policy regarding driving duties that may be required, e.g. School minibus. Employees are expected to maintain professional standards in their conduct and to ensure their performance and conduct in the School is not adversely affected through consumption of alcohol or drug misuse.

Those experiencing problems with alcohol dependency may view this as an intensely personal matter. An individual affected may feel that he/she will one day control and enjoy drinking. Some individuals will deny they have a problem until they are faced with the issue. They may live in a circle of fear, dependency and feeling ill. Alcoholism

affects all ages, all occupations, and men and women are equally affected. Until a person faces up to the fact that they have a drinking problem, they are unlikely to seek help to recover from their dependency.

Drugs misuse is the use of illegal drugs and the misuse, whether deliberate or unintentional, of prescribed drugs and substances such as solvents. Drugs misuse can harm the user both physically and mentally and through their actions, other people. Simultaneous use of alcohol and drugs is particularly dangerous. Misuse of other 'legal' substances e.g. alcohol gases, glues, solvents, legal highs, aerosols etc. are also included within the scope of this policy.

1.4 Warning Signs

A combination of any of the warning signs noted below may indicate that an employee is experiencing problems from alcohol or drug or substance misuse (they are not exhaustive as each individual may be affected differently).

- Loss of productivity and poor performance.
- Lateness, especially after lunch, and frequent one day absenteeism linked to weekends or rest days.
- Higher levels of sick leave especially for colds, flu and stomach upsets i.e. short term absence.
- An increased number of accidents in the workplace.
- Out of character behaviour such as irritability and aggression and strained relationships affecting other staff and/or students.
- Bad behaviour or poor discipline.
- Unusual problems with remembering instructions and difficulties with concentration.
- Smelling of alcohol or substances first thing in the morning and/or excessive use of mints and breath fresheners.
- Slurred speech; unsteady walking; hand tremors.
- Secretive behaviour and frequent unexplained times of absence from place of work.
- Unkempt appearance and reduced attention to personal hygiene.
- Loss of appetite
- Attempting to obtain money from colleagues or incidents of dishonesty and theft.
- Abnormal fluctuations in energy.
- Periods of withdrawal and depression.
- Poor time keeping.
- Hostile to advice.
- Leaving work early.
- Visiting toilets excessively.
- Complaints from colleagues.
- Extended tea breaks.

Many of these signs may also be attributable to stress or other physical illnesses, so the manager must be confident that drink or drugs are likely to be the cause of the problem before proceeding with any meetings with the employee under this Policy. The Headteacher/line manager may feel it appropriate to discuss their concerns with the Human Resources team.

2 Roles and Responsibilities

2.1 Employees

When an employee is taking prescribed drugs which may affect their ability to perform their normal duties e.g. driving or operating machinery, the employee must inform their manager in case alternative employment or adjustments to their job need to be arranged for the duration of taking the medication. Uncontrolled behaviour for any reason is a risk to Health and Safety.

The School is committed to assisting any employee who believes they have a dependency on alcohol or drugs. In such circumstances an employee is strongly encouraged to make use of counselling services. Alternatively, an employee may speak in confidence to a member of Human Resources. Human Resources can liaise to arrange support to the employee via the Occupational Health Service (*if the School buys into the service*).

2.2 Colleagues

Colleagues often turn a blind eye or attempt to cover for an individual who is misusing drugs or alcohol. They believe they are acting with the best of intentions and that they are helping the individual, but in fact they may be allowing the situation to deteriorate. In addition, resentment may grow from those colleagues who have to carry the employee whose work declines because of their dependency or inappropriate use, thus affecting the overall team spirit.

If a colleague suspects that a person is drinking abnormally or under the influence of drugs, they should speak to either the Headteacher or a member of Human Resources. Precise details of any occurrences which have given cause for concern should be provided. If an employee falsely accuses another of drug or alcohol misuse and it is found that this is done through malice rather than concern, that person may be subject to disciplinary action.

2.3 Interview meeting

If an employee is suspected of alcohol or drug misuse they will be initially interviewed by the Headteacher/School manager in the presence of a member of the Human Resources Team (if requested). The employee will have the right to be accompanied by a union representative or work colleague.

During this interview, the issues of concern regarding performance or conduct will be raised with the individual and they will be asked for their explanation. The opportunity to discuss any work related concerns will also be given.

The Headteacher/School manager will need to ascertain at the interview (if able to do so) whether or not the employee uses alcohol or drugs inappropriately on a regular basis as opposed to the matter being an isolated incident. If it is judged to be a "one off" incident, then the matter can be dealt with informally or using the School's disciplinary procedures, depending on the seriousness of the particular circumstances.

All discussions will be in confidence. Where there is just cause in the opinion of the Headteacher/School manager to suspect that an individual is experiencing problems from drug or alcohol misuse, they can normally be referred to the Occupational Health Advisor (where the School buys into this service) and offered counselling support. The Occupational Health Advisor may request that a blood test be taken. These tests are designed to ensure the School's responsibility for the health and safety of its employees is properly carried out. However, if the employee refuses to consent to medical testing, the Headteacher/School manager will only have the employee's performance in the job and observed conduct on which to make a judgement as to what further action should be taken. The employee will then not be able to rely on the results from any blood tests if the matter is pursued in a formal arena.

If the Headteacher suspects that the employee is working under the influence of alcohol or drugs and is posing a risk to pupils, public safety and/or to the School's business, the School reserves the right to send home or suspend the employee on full pay, pending advice from Occupational Health.

If the blood test proves to be positive, disciplinary action in line with the School's disciplinary procedure would be the appropriate next step to consider. However, the School may agree to suspend disciplinary action or action to address the employee's capability where drug or alcohol misuse is a key factor so as to assist the employee in tackling their problems. The School will support the individual as much as possible in helping them to address their problems, however, the employee should be aware that whilst the School will do all it can to support them in addressing their problems, it will be the individual's responsibility to tackle the problem.

The School will be justified in dismissing an employee for gross misconduct for working whilst under the influence of drugs or alcohol and posing a threat to public safety and the School's business e.g. where an employee fails to recognise that they have difficulties or where they refuse to seek treatment.

2.4 Treatment

On receipt of written confirmation from either the employee's GP or Occupational Health that treatment is necessary which will entail periodic absence from work, such absence will be treated as sick leave. Completion of the treatment and the employee's return to work will need to be supported by a medical certificate. The conditions laid down in the School's Managing Attendance policy will apply accordingly. It would be advisable for any proposed treatment to be considered by Occupational Health.

The School will not be liable for any costs regarding the treatment undertaken by the individual.

Every effort will be made to ensure that on successful completion of the recovery programme, the employee will be able to return to the same or equivalent work. A meeting prior to the return will be held with the Headteacher / manager and the employee (a member of Human Resources may also be asked to attend) to discuss a planned return to work. The employee has the right to have a union representative or work colleague present at this meeting. The location will be at the employee's choice i.e. work, home or a neutral place. After their return to the workplace, periodic reviews will also be arranged to ensure that the employee continues to receive the right support and is making the required progress for them to continue in their job role.

If there is a relapse after treatment or if recovery seems unlikely, the School reserves the right to consider termination of employment on the grounds of capability or to initiate disciplinary proceedings as necessary.

2.5 Useful Contacts

Alcoholics Anonymous

www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk

National Helpline: 0800 9177 650

Education Support Partnership

<https://www.educationsupportpartnership.org.uk/>

Torbay Council's Confidential Employee Counselling Service (where School buys into this service) -

Tel:

Trade Union members are advised to contact their Trade Union representative for additional support.

2.6 Monitoring

The School is committed under its duties within the remit of the Equality Act 2010 to monitor all its policies and employees involved in this process to ensure compliance and fairness.

3 Policy Feedback

Should you have any comments regarding this policy, please address them to the HR Policy mailbox –

HRpolicy@torbay.gov.uk

3.1 History of Policy Changes

Date	Page	Details of Change	Agreed by:

This policy was produced by Education HR and is intended for paying subscribers only

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