

## Alcohol Policy

### Introduction

Alcohol misuse can be a serious problem within the School as a workplace. Employees who drink excessively, or inappropriately, in relation to work are more likely to endanger their colleagues, have accidents at work, be absent from work and work inefficiently.

Alcohol misuse can also be a serious problem within the School as an education institution. A great proportion of our Students are young adults, and as such are either prohibited from purchasing alcohol, or, if above the age of 18, may be in danger of misusing it.

### Aims of the policy

The employees and Students of the School are its most valuable assets. However, the School recognises that, for a number of reasons, employees and students could develop alcohol-related problems during the course of their employment or course. The aims of this policy are to:

- Promote a responsible attitude to drinking within the School by:
  - Encouraging safe and sensible drinking habits;
  - Making known to employees and students the harmful effects of the excessive consumption of alcohol;
  - Minimising problems and accidents at the School arising from alcohol and its misuse;
  - Promoting the well-being and health of employees and students.
- Offer assistance and advice to employees and students who need it by:
  - Identifying employees and students with possible problems relating to alcohol misuse at an early stage;
  - Offering guidance and, where required, actively encouraging employees and students with possible problems to seek appropriate help;
  - Offering employees and students known to have alcohol-related problems affecting their work or study referral to an appropriate agency for diagnosis.

### Advice and counselling

It is the School intention to deal constructively and sympathetically with an employee's or student's alcohol-related problems, such as alcohol dependency. When it is known that an employee or student has an alcohol problem, the Principal Safeguarding Lead will be able to provide advice and guidance on how to seek suitable treatment. The primary objective of any discussions of this type will be to assist the employee or student with the problem in as compassionate and constructive a way as possible.

We recommend consulting [www.drinkaware.co.uk](http://www.drinkaware.co.uk) for advice on tackling problems related to alcohol consumption.

Whilst certain personnel records will be necessary, any discussions of the nature of an employee's or student's alcohol problems and the records of any treatment will be strictly confidential unless the employee or student agrees otherwise.

If an employee has an alcohol problem, they should seek appropriate help. If they have an alcohol problem which affects their conduct or performance at the School and they refuse the opportunity to receive help, the matter will be referred for action under the School's disciplinary procedure as appropriate. Likewise, if after accepting counselling and assistance, and following review and evaluation, their conduct or work performance reverts to the problem level, the matter may also be dealt with through the disciplinary procedure.

### **Prohibition on alcohol consumption in the workplace**

Social drinking after normal working hours and away from the School's premises is, of course, a personal matter and does not directly concern the School, although the School is keen to raise the level of awareness amongst staff and students of the risks of alcohol abuse. The School concern only arises when, because of the pattern or amount of drink involved, the employee's or student's attendance at work, work performance or conduct at work deteriorates. Even a small amount of alcohol can affect work performance and, if an employee or student is found under the influence of alcohol at work, there could be serious health and safety consequences (see the section below on misconduct).

No alcohol must be brought onto or consumed on School premises at any time. Staff must never drink alcohol if they are required to drive private or School vehicles on School business. Staff must also not drink alcohol when they are on operational standby or on call.

Employees representing the School at business functions or conferences, providing hospitality or attending School organised social events outside normal working hours are expected to be moderate if drinking alcohol and to take specific action to ensure they are well within the legal limits if they are driving.

A breach of these provisions is a disciplinary offence and will be dealt with in accordance with the School's disciplinary procedure. Depending on the seriousness of the offence, it may amount to gross misconduct and could result in the employee's summary dismissal.

### **General guidelines**

As a general rule, employees should refrain from any alcohol intake within 10 hours of the beginning of their duties. We also recommend not consuming more than 14 units of alcohol per week, and also not to 'save up' these weekly units for one or two 'heavy drinking sessions' in the week.

### **Alcohol-related misconduct**

Whilst these rules are aimed at assisting employees and students with alcohol problems, action will nevertheless be taken under the School's disciplinary procedure if misconduct takes place at work as a result of drinking alcohol, or if an employee is found to be under the influence of alcohol whilst at work. Incapacity or misconduct caused by an excess of alcohol at work is a potential gross misconduct offence under the School's disciplinary procedure and the employee is therefore liable to be summarily dismissed.

The School reserves the right in any of these circumstances to arrange for the employee to be escorted from the School's premises immediately and sent home without pay for the rest of the day or shift. The School also reserves the right to suspend the employee on full pay while carrying out an investigation.

## Alcohol screening

On the grounds of protecting health and safety and only where necessary to achieve a legitimate business aim, the School reserves the right to carry out random alcohol screening tests on employees in the workplace whose activities and job duties have a significant impact on the health and safety of others. The guidelines promulgated in the School's equal opportunities policy are to be followed in relation to alcohol screening.

If an employee receives a positive test result, this will be viewed as a potential gross misconduct offence and renders the employee liable to summary dismissal under the School's disciplinary procedure. Unreasonable refusal to submit to an alcohol screening test will be dealt with through the disciplinary procedure.