

Drugs Policy

Introduction

Drug misuse or abuse can be a serious problem within the School. Employees or students who take unlawful drugs are more likely to endanger their peers, have accidents at school, be absent from school; and work or study inefficiently.

This policy applies to drugs that are unlawful under the criminal law and not to prescribed medication.

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 drug-related problems during the course of their employment or course. The aims of this policy are to:

- Promote a responsible attitude to drugs by:
 - Making known to employees and students the harmful effects of drugs;
 - Minimising problems and accidents at school arising from the misuse of drugs;
 - 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 drug 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 drug-related problems affecting their work referral to an appropriate agency for diagnosis.

Advice and counselling

It is the School's intention to deal constructively and sympathetically with an employee's or student's drug-related problems, such as drug dependency. When it is known that an employee or student has a drug 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.

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

If an employee has a drug problem, they should seek appropriate help. If they have a drug problem which affects their conduct or performance at work 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 drugs in the workplace

If an employee or student is found under the influence of drugs at work, there could be serious health and safety consequences (see the section below on misconduct).

No drugs must be brought onto or consumed on School premises at any time, and for these purposes this includes performance-enhancing drugs, even if they are not unlawful under the criminal law, unless they have been medically prescribed by a doctor. Staff must never take drugs if they are required to drive private or School vehicles on School business. Staff must also never take drugs 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 absolutely prohibited from taking drugs on these occasions.

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.

Drug-related misconduct

Whilst these rules are aimed at assisting employees with drug problems, action will nevertheless be taken under the School's disciplinary procedure if misconduct takes place at the School as a result of taking drugs, or if an employee or student is found to be under the influence of drugs whilst at the School. Incapacity or misconduct caused by drugs at work is a potential gross misconduct offence under the School's disciplinary procedure and the employee is therefore liable to be summarily dismissed. This also applies to any employee believed to be buying or selling drugs or in possession of or consuming drugs on the School's premises.

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.

Drug 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 drug screening tests on employees or students 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 drug 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 a drug screening test will be dealt with through the disciplinary procedure.