



Alcohol and Substance Misuse Policy

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School: *HOLY FAMILY CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL, SOUTHPORT*

Signed by Chair
of Governors: _____

Signed by Head
Teacher: _____

Date: **27.11.23**

1. BACKGROUND

As with alcohol, the abuse and misuse of drugs covers a wide range of occupations and statistics have shown that only a small proportion of people with these problems actually approach agencies for assistance, and, some of these, are in employment. Workplace safety, job performance, efficiency and productivity can all be affected by the misuse of alcohol and drugs.

The effects of alcohol abuse or drug misuse are a matter of concern because somebody dependent upon either of these may:

- (i) present health problems and absenteeism
- (ii) act in a way which endangers them and others
- (iii) present problems of poor work performance or productivity

2. STATEMENT

This School does not encourage and does not approve of the abuse of alcohol or the misuse of drugs.

The intention of the Policy is that those who are affected by alcohol abuse or drugs misuse and accept that they have a problem, should be able to receive support and assistance in the workplace.

The School is prepared to recognise these problems and will treat such employees sympathetically, will arrange counselling, if appropriate and will encourage them to actively seek appropriate help whilst protecting, as far as it reasonably can, their jobs and career prospects.

Employees will be offered the opportunity to seek professional advice from the Local Authorities' Health Unit. The provisions of the Access to Medical Reports Act 1988 will apply in such circumstances.

If, during treatment, employees are unable to attend work, they will be considered as absent due to sickness, with normal conditions relating to sickness and ill-health applying.

If employees do not accept that they have an alcohol or drug related problem and fail to accept counselling/suitable treatment, the employment conditions relating to sickness and ill-health will not apply.

Every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality about an employee's problems but this may well be affected by the requirements of the law.

The School will actively seek to promote an awareness of the possible harmful consequences of excessive drinking and drug misuse.

Employees have the right to be accompanied by their trade union or work colleague of their choice at any stage in any disciplinary interview and may wish to be accompanied at other interviews.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY

The purpose of this document is to:

- (i) clarify the view of the school that whilst alleged alcohol abuse or drug misuse cannot be condoned, it may become a health problem which may affect work performance which may be overcome with help and support from the school.

- (ii) ensure that employees be made aware that help is available and that every encouragement be given to seek it
- (iii) ensure managers and supervisors are encouraged to address such problems as early as possible in order to advise the employee of the assistance available and to prevent the need for disciplinary action
- (iv) promote the health and safety of the workforce
- (v) promote an awareness of the possible harmful consequences of excessive drinking and drug misuse

4. APPLICATION OF THE POLICY

The Policy applies to every employee, irrespective of position held and is non discriminatory.

The Policy does not override the School's Disciplinary Procedure, Health and Safety Policy or Health & Safety Standards.

The Policy does not apply to social drinking; it is limited to instances where alcohol abuse persistently affects an employee's work performance. It does not extend to an employee who because of random excessive indulgence may occasionally behave in a manner contrary to the standards of health and safety and conduct required by the School. These are instances more appropriate for consideration under the disciplinary procedure.

The Policy does apply to Illegal drug use which is not permitted on School premises. Any employee who knowingly allows drugs to be used or supplied on the premises may be in breach of the Misuse of Drugs Act, 1971. Therefore, if drugs are found or confiscated from an employee at work, immediate action is required. If there is any doubt at all about the substances that have been found or that drugs are recognised, they must be handed over to the police for analysis and disposal without delay.

Furthermore, under Section 2 of the Health & Safety at Work etc Act, 1974 employers must ensure the health, safety and welfare of employees. Equally, under Section 7 of the same Act, employees have a duty not to jeopardise the safety of either themselves or others in the workplace.

The Policy will be co-ordinated by the Governing Body. Guidelines on its application within the School are attached at Appendix 1.

GUIDELINES FOR HANDLING ALCOHOL ABUSE AND DRUGS MISUSE IN THE WORKPLACE

1. PREAMBLE

The following Guidelines have been prepared to complement the School's Policy on Alcohol and Drugs. They are designed to assist in the identification of problems and following from this establish the proper procedure to be applied.

The Policy and Guidelines are fully supported by the Governing Body and the Head teacher. In order to assist in the effective implementation and maintenance of the Policy, appropriate training may be arranged for those involved.

The term 'Drug Misuse' means:

- (i) The non-medical use of drugs which are intended for use as part of a proper course of medical treatment (e.g. misuse of opioids, stimulants and sedatives) and
- (ii) The illicit use of drugs which have no generally accepted medical purpose (e.g. the misuse of LSD and Cannabis). This also includes the misuse of solvents and other volatile substances

It should also be noted that employees with a dependency on tranquillisers may receive drugs on prescription which may affect work performance. The Policy is also intended to help such employees and to afford them the same level of assistance.

All drugs are potentially harmful and many drugs may be habit forming.

The term "Alcohol Abuse" means:

- (i) any drinking, either intermittent or continual, which interferes with a person's health and/or work performance in the areas of efficiency, productivity, presentation, health & safety or attendance at work

Alcohol abuse and drugs misuse interferes with an employee's health and may also be a contributory cause of harm to others.

Alcohol abuse and drugs misuse exist in every social group and every type of background.

Studies of people known to abuse alcohol or misuse drugs suggest that many of them are in employment.

Alcohol abuse and drugs misuse are workplace issues because workplace health & safety, job performance and efficiency may all be affected by them.

In terms of social responsibility, the workplace can provide the environment where identification of a problem can be relatively easy, bearing in mind that many people with these types of problem try to hide their addiction. Good employers can influence employees to seek help both inside and outside the work environment.

Managers will not be expected to diagnose alcohol abuse or drug misuse in the workplace. They are however expected to be aware of the issue and be able to act appropriately should it come to light.

2. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 The Role of the Head teacher/ Line manager is to:

- ◆ be able to identify and monitor poor or deteriorating work performance, attendance and sickness absence and be familiar with the policy and procedures
- ◆ identify any aspect of the work situation which could be contributing to alcohol abuse or drug misuse and change it, if appropriate and possible
- ◆ advise staff of their rights and responsibilities under the Policy
- ◆ know when and how to direct employees towards professional help as soon as the problem is suspected
- ◆ encourage employees to seek help voluntarily
- ◆ help the employee at work and assist with rehabilitation
- ◆ maintain strict confidentiality wherever necessary
- ◆ use disciplinary measures only when appropriate to do so

2.2 The Role of the Trade Unions is to:

- ◆ help inform the workforce of the Policy
- ◆ represent their Members and advise them of their rights and responsibilities under the policy
- ◆ encourage employees to seek help voluntarily
- ◆ help employees at work and assist with their rehabilitation

2.3 The Role of the Health Unit is to:

- ◆ assist in the active promotion of the Policy
- ◆ provide advice on the application of the Policy and procedure generally and in relation to specific cases
- ◆ be available at the preliminary stages of the procedure (see Section 4 below) to advise and assist managers in informal discussions. To be available subsequently to advise, assist and facilitate in relation to referrals
- ◆ promote the diagnosis and prevention of alcohol abuse and drugs misuse and the treatment of those suffering from either of these problems
- ◆ accept referrals for employees experiencing either of these problems and to provide appropriate treatment; direction and to offer counselling.

3. IDENTIFYING IF THERE IS A PROBLEM

3.1 Alcohol or drugs related problems may come to light in two ways:-

- (i) Employees may choose to seek help voluntarily. They can ask for confidential help from the Health Unit or be referred to an appropriate outside agency
- (ii) An employee's colleagues/supervisor/manager/trade union may identify a pattern of deteriorating work performance or more obvious signs of a pattern of alcohol misuse or drug abuse

3.2 There are no single characteristics which identify alcohol or drug related problems but the following characteristics, especially when they occur in combinations or patterns over a period of time, **MAY** provide an indication:

Absenteeism	♦ frequent and unexplained absences ♦ excessive sick leave especially for stomach upsets, 'flu, diarrhoea, etc. ♦ frequent Monday/Friday absences ♦ excessive lateness, e.g. Monday mornings, after meal breaks ♦ leaving work early ♦ frequent trips to the cloakroom
High Accident Rate	♦ frequent injuries/accidents at work and elsewhere ♦ careless handling of equipment
Poor Work/Performance	♦ fluctuations in output ♦ unpredictability/unreliability/poor concentration/memory slips ♦ mistakes and errors of judgement ♦ lies about performance/excuses for poor work ♦ reluctance to accept responsibility ♦ concentration on short-term, routine tasks only
Personality Changes	♦ fluctuating relationships with colleagues ♦ irritability/mood swings/lethargy ♦ tendency to blame others/changes in attitude to Council ♦ over sensitivity to criticism/shunning company
Other Signs of alcohol abuse	♦ smelling of alcohol/under its influence at work ♦ facial flushing/blurry eyes/hand tremor ♦ untidy/unkempt appearance ♦ frequent borrowing of money
Other Signs of drugs misuse	♦ scorched tinfoil, tinfoil tubes and matchbox covers ♦ syringes, needles and needle caps ♦ scorched spoons ♦ small mirror, razor, straws ♦ twists or squares of paper (for holding powder)

These, rather than “medical symptoms”, are the cue to act and intervene

4. PROCEDURE TO APPLY

4.1 General

Prior to each of the following stages, Head teachers /Managers are invited to contact the Schools HR Team for advice and assistance.

A representative of that Department may attend interviews with an employee in an advisory capacity.

The subject of alcohol abuse or drugs misuse is emotive and interviews with employees must be conducted in a sympathetic and supportive manner; there must be no question of accusation. The arrangements for interviews are also important. Adequate notice of an interview must be given; there should be no interruptions; informal seating is desirable; the fact that the interview is private and confidential must be emphasised.

It must be emphasised that what appears to be the manifestation of an alcohol or drug related problem could, in fact, occur for many other reasons. Managers are asked to exercise caution in the assessment of the problem and to explore it thoroughly before making any decisions or taking any action.

Once a Manager has identified a pattern of deteriorating work performance, it is essential to maintain a careful and objective record. In this connection, the following is recommended:

- (i) make a factual and accurate record of work deterioration as it happens. Do not rely on memory
- (ii) be clear, be precise, and record the nature of any incident. Include date, time, place, those present
- (iii) be objective: record actual events not hearsay
- (iv) treat all documentation as confidential
- (vi) if it is necessary to refer information to another person (e.g. Head teacher, Supervisor, the Health Unit, Employee Counsellor/Schools HR Team) inform the employee

4.2 Procedure

(a) Informal Discussion 1

If a manager suspects an employee of having an alcohol or drugs related problem, informal discussions should take place, when the employee may be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague. Factors affecting conduct of work performance and the desire to help and guide the employee to treatment should be stated.

- (i) should the employee accept they have a problem and request help or agree to help being provided, and then an appointment at the Health Unit must be arranged with a view to assisting the employee to overcome the problem. At the same time, the employee should be advised to contact their GP
- (ii) should the employee deny they have a problem the factors affecting their conduct or work performance should again be outlined and the desire to help the individual emphasised. If following these discussions the employee accepts a problem exists and requires assistance, then an appointment must be made at the Health Unit and the employee advised to contact their GP
- (iii) If the employee maintains that the work related factors giving cause for concern are not associated with alcohol or drugs and that a problem does not exist, then they should be given the opportunity to improve their performance.

(b) Informal Discussion 2

Should their work performance not improve or improve for a short period only further informal discussions should take place. If the employee accepts that they have a problem, referral to the

Health Unit will be arranged. If the employee still does not accept a problem exists a further period of monitoring will take place.

Following this further period the matter will be discussed again with the employee to review their performance.

(c) Informal Discussion 3

Where there has been a lack of improvement or improvement has not been sustained it will again be put to the employee that a drink related problem is suspected. If this is accepted they will be referred to the Health Unit. Where the employee maintains that they do not have a problem the matter will then be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure.

(d) Treatment

If the employee accepts they have a problem and treatment is sought then leave taken to attend this for a continuous period should be treated as sick leave if required, and payments made accordingly. Time off with pay should be made available for short periods of treatment during working hours.

Following the treatment, careful monitoring, as part of the supervisory process, should be carried out to ensure that the problem doesn't recur.

Should the problem recur at a later date, then the employee should be interviewed by the Manager, and referred to the Health Unit. At the interview with the Manager the employee may be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague.

Employees who successfully complete their course of treatment will, where possible, remain in their present position without any detriment to career/salary prospects.

(e) Failure to Complete Treatment

Employees who fail to complete the course of treatment should be interviewed by their Manager with trade union or work colleague representation if desired. The purpose of the interview will be to ascertain the reasons for the non-completion of treatment. In these circumstances it may be necessary to revert to the disciplinary procedure to deal with the original cause for concern although other options should be considered in the light of circumstances including the possibility of repeating the treatment course.

At all stages of the procedure, Managers/Supervisors must inform employees of their right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or other work colleague.

Should there be a dispute over the operation of the Policy, employees may have recourse to the grievance procedure.

5. GENERAL

The School's Alcohol and Drugs Policy and its associated guidelines will be monitored by the Governing Body to ensure their continued relevance and effectiveness.