Drug and Alcohol Abuse Policy

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This policy forms part of the employer's overall commitment to safety, good employee relations and the promotion of health, safety and welfare at work. As a responsible employer, they recognise the need for a constructive and preventative strategy designed to encourage early identification of alcohol- and drug-related problems among employees. The employer is also firmly committed to encouraging the type of open dialogue that is required between an employee and their line manager.

1.2 The inappropriate use of alcohol or drugs can damage the health and wellbeing of employees and have far-reaching effects on their personal and working lives.

1.3 At work, alcohol or drug misuse can result in reduced levels of attendance, substandard work performance, and increased health and safety risks, not only for the individual concerned, but also for others such as work colleagues, students, members of the public and contractors. Furthermore, the effects of alcohol or drug misuse are likely to be detrimental to the employee's ability to deliver high quality education to students.

2.0 Purpose

2.1 This policy aims to:

- raise staff awareness of the risks and potential harm to health associated with the use of intoxicating substances
- set out the rules regarding the use of intoxicating substances, so that employees are aware of the likely consequences for their employment of misusing them
- create a climate that encourages employees who may be misusing drugs or alcohol to come forward and seek help
- provide a framework to enable instances of substance misuse by employees to be handled in an appropriate, fair and consistent manner
- achieve a balance between supporting employees who come forward with a problem and the overriding need to preserve:
  - the health, safety and welfare of employees and others with whom they come into contact
  - the delivery of high quality education to students
  - the organisation's reputation.

3.0 Scope

3.1 This policy covers 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.

3.2 This procedure applies to all employees, including all agency and casual workers, contractors, volunteers and others working on the employer's behalf.

3.3 The policy is not intended to apply to 'one-off' incidents or offences where there is no evidence of an ongoing problem, which are more appropriately dealt with under the disciplinary procedure, when applicable.

4.0 Equal opportunities

4.1 The drugs and alcohol policy must always be applied fairly and in accordance with employment law and the employer's equal opportunities policy.

5.0 Responsibilities

5.1 The employer is responsible for maintaining fair, consistent and objective procedures for matters relating to the inappropriate use of alcohol or drugs.

5.2 Within the limits of what is practicable and within the law, strict confidentiality will be maintained when dealing with alcohol- and drug-related problems among employees.

5.3 The Academy Head /CEO has overall responsibility for the internal organisation, control and management of each school/setting.

5.4 The members of the senior leadership team have responsibility for the internal organisation, control and management of their area of responsibility.

5.5 **Managers are required to:**

- be aware of the signs of alcohol and substance misuse and the effects on performance, attendance and health of employees, and take reasonable and appropriate steps
- ensure the health, safety and welfare of employees and others with whom they come into contact
- ensure that staff are aware of the policy and the rules and consequences regarding the use of alcohol, drugs and other intoxicating substances
- treat such matters confidentially as far as is legitimately and legally possible
- monitor the performance, behaviour and attendance of employees as part of the normal supervisory relationship
- intervene at an early stage, where changes in performance, behaviour, sickness levels or attendance patterns are identified, to establish whether alcohol or drug misuse is an underlying cause. Such investigation should be supportive and non-judgemental
- provide support and assistance where appropriate and for a reasonable period, and ensure that staff are aware of the support that is available to them
- seek advice from the employer's human resources (HR) department where the manager has concerns or is aware that an employee is adversely impacted due to drugs and/or alcohol.

5.6 **Employee responsibilities:**

- to familiarise themselves with this policy and comply with its provisions
- to present a professional, courteous and efficient image to those with whom they come into contact at work. They therefore have a personal responsibility to adopt a responsible attitude towards drinking and taking prescribed and over-the-counter drugs
- not to possess, store, trade or sell controlled drugs on school/academy premises or bring the school/academy into disrepute by engaging in such activities outside of work
- to seek help if they have concerns regarding their alcohol or drug consumption. It is recommended that they approach their GP, and also their line manager, so that the school/academy can assist in the provision of appropriate support to help speedy rehabilitation, for example referral to the occupational health service, medical professionals, professional drug/alcohol treatment agencies etc
- to co-operate with any support and assistance provided by the school/academy to address an alcohol or drug misuse problem
- not, even with the best of motives, to 'cover up' for, or collude with, a colleague with

an alcohol or drug-related problem but instead should encourage the individual to seek help

- where the individual concerned does not wish to come forward to seek help, and their colleague(s) genuinely suspects that the individual may be misusing drugs or alcohol, colleagues have a responsibility to raise their concerns with the employee's line manager.

5.7 **At work**

Employees must report for work, and remain throughout the working day, in a fit and safe condition to undertake their duties and not be under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Where the employee is required to drive for work purposes, they have a responsibility for ensuring they are not under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Employees must notify their manager immediately should they be prescribed medication or plan to take over-the-counter medicines that may cause side effects that impair their ability to undertake their duties safely and effectively. This is particularly important if they occupy a post where it is not only their own personal safety but those of others that could be jeopardised.

Similarly, employees who experience side effects as a result of taking prescribed or over-the-counter medicines that impair their ability to perform their duties safely and satisfactorily must notify their line manager immediately.

Employees are not obliged to disclose the actual medical condition being treated nor the medication – simply the impact/side effects.

The employer will take all reasonable steps to prevent employees carrying out work- related activities if they are considered to be unfit/unsafe to undertake work as a result of alcohol or drugs.

If a manager reasonably believes that an employee has arrived at work under the influence of alcohol or drugs, they shall immediately contact the Academy Head/CEO/or in the case of the CEO, the Chair of Trustees, and the employee may be sent home. Their absence will be treated as sick leave and any pay will be in accordance with the appropriate sick leave/pay policy. The Academy Head/CEO/Trust Chair, with advice from HR, will review whether the employee requires any support or if it is appropriate that the disciplinary investigation process should commence.

It is important to be aware that those suffering from diabetes, epilepsy and other conditions, including brain injuries/brain diseases, can at times appear drunk and thus due care should be taken to identify and respond to these individuals appropriately.

5.8 **Outside working hours**

Employees must not consume intoxicating substances before coming on duty or when they may be required to attend work at short notice, for example, when they are on call.

Intoxicating substances, such as alcohol, may remain in the system for some time and even small amounts can impair performance and jeopardise safety. Employees are personally responsible for allowing sufficient time for the intoxicating substance to leave their system before reporting for work.

5.9 **Treatment**

The employer treats drug and alcohol dependency as a health problem that requires special treatment and help and recognises that early identification is more likely to lead to successful treatment.

Employees are strongly encouraged to discuss any problems they have at an early stage with their GP and their line manager.

If an employee seeks help with an alcohol or drug-related problem directly from HR or occupational health and wishes to keep matters confidential from their manager and colleagues, this will be respected unless there is reason to believe that this could put the employee, their colleagues, students or anyone else at risk. In those circumstances, occupational health or HR will encourage the employee to inform their manager and will give the employee sufficient time to do so before discussing the matter with them.

For employees undergoing treatment, this absence will be covered under the absence management policy.

6.0 Breaches of the policy

6.1 The employer will, adopt a constructive and supportive approach when dealing with employees who may be experiencing drug or alcohol dependency/addiction.

6.2 This means that employees seeking assistance for a substance misuse problem will not be subjected to disciplinary procedures simply because of their dependence/addiction.

6.3 Notwithstanding the above, there may be circumstances in which breaches of the policy, whether dependency-related or not, will be treated as a disciplinary matter. Examples of issues that may be subject to disciplinary action are:

- deliberate disregard for personal safety and that of others associated with the use of intoxicating substances
- serious unacceptable behaviour in the workplace associated with the use of intoxicating substances
- being found incapable of performing normal duties satisfactorily and safely as a result of consuming alcohol or taking drugs, whether or not this is as a result of dependency
- possession, consumption, dealing/trafficking, selling, storage of illegal drugs either on work premises or engaging in such activities outside of work
- being disqualified from driving as a result of alcohol- or drug-related offences (if employees are required under their contract of employment to drive a vehicle)
- making malicious or vexatious allegations that a colleague is misusing intoxicating substances.
- This list is illustrative only and should not be regarded as exclusive or exhaustive. Any disciplinary action will be in all cases proportionate to the circumstances of the breach of the policy.

6.4 Where evidence warrants, the employer will inform the police of illegal drug use or any activity or behaviour over which there are concerns as to its legality. For example, it would be necessary to report criminal behaviour associated with alcohol abuse, such as having a drink-driving accident in a work vehicle.

Document Control

Changes History

Version	Date	Amended By	Details of Change
V1	04/10/2024	EFS	New policy to replace Alcohol Abuse Policy
V2	02/05/2025	DT	5.7.7 addition of Chair of Trustees in relation to the CEO

Approval

This policy will be reviewed every 4 years by Head of Service for People or as required by changes in legislation.

At every review, this policy will be approved by the Executive Committee.

The policy was last approved by the Executive Committee on 02/06/2025.

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