

# Schools HR Policy & Procedure Handbook



**Bomere and the XI Towns Federation**

## **Substance and Misuse Policy**

This Policy/Procedure has been agreed by the following professional associations and Trade Unions representing Teachers, Headteachers and Support Staff:

- National Education Union
- National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers
- National Association of Headteachers
- Association of School and College Leaders
- Unison
- GMB

This policy has been adopted by the governing body of

on

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## **Title of Policy/Procedure**

### **1. Introduction**

The inappropriate use of substances can damage the health and well-being of employees and have far reaching effects on people's personal and working lives. At work, substance misuse can result in reduced levels of attendance, sub-standard work performance and increased health & safety risks not only for the individual concerned but also for others, for example, pupils, work colleagues, members of the public etc. Furthermore, the effects of substance misuse are likely to be detrimental to the Schools reputation, image and its ability to deliver high quality education to pupils.

All employees have a general duty to be fit to undertake the duty of their role at all times; this includes reporting for work free from the effects of drugs and alcohol. The aim of this policy is to raise awareness of the effects of drugs and alcohol and to encourage staff with a drug or alcohol problem to voluntarily seek help and to advise on what steps will be taken to reduce the associated health and safety risks.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the schools managing attendance policy and procedure, disciplinary policy and capability policy.

### **2. Legislation**

As an employer the School has a responsibility under section 2 of the Health and Safety at Work Act etc. of 1974. S2(1) "It shall be the duty of every employer to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all employees."

The employee has a responsibility under section 7 of the Health and Safety at Work Act etc. of 1974. S7(a) "It shall be the duty of every employee while at work to take reasonable care for the health and safety of himself/herself and of other persons who may be affected by his/her acts or omissions;"

There is a duty under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, to assess the risks to the health and safety of employees or others who may be affected by this Act. Knowingly allowing an employee impaired by drugs or alcohol to continue working, which places the employee or others at risk, can lead to prosecution. Employees are also required to take reasonable care of themselves and others who could be affected by what they do at work. This is particularly important in safety critical roles where the duties require direct responsibility for the health and safety of the public.

The Road Traffic Act 1988 states that any person who, when driving or attempting to drive a motor vehicle on a road or other public place, is unfit to drive through drink or drugs shall be guilty of an offence. An offence is also committed if a person unfit through drink or drugs is in charge of a motor vehicle in the same circumstances, e.g. an instructor of a learner driver.

The School as an employer can be prosecuted under the Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007 if there has been a gross failing in the management of health and safety with fatal consequences of employees or members of the public.

The principal legislation in the UK for controlling the misuse of drugs is the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971. Nearly all drugs with misuse and/or dependence liability are covered by it. The Act makes the production, supply and possession of these controlled drugs unlawful except in certain specified circumstances (for example, when they have been prescribed by a doctor).

The **Human Rights Act 1998** makes public authorities more accountable for their decisions. Under the Act, everyone is entitled to expect that the Government, and all public agencies and organisations should have respect for their basic human rights – for example, their right to privacy.

Dofe and ACPO drug advice for Schools

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/270169/drug\\_advice\\_for\\_schools.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/270169/drug_advice_for_schools.pdf)

### **3. Scope**

The Substance and Misuse policy applies to all staff, governors, pupils, volunteers, parents, visitors and contractors, whilst they are on the school site. It also extends to staff employed directly through any third-party provider of contracted services, for example, catering or cleaning services. The requirement for this policy to be communicated and adhered to must be set out in Service Level Agreements and/or any other appropriate documentation governing a supplier arrangement.

### **4. Definitions and Terminology**

#### **Drug or alcohol problem**

“The inappropriate, excessive or habitual use, either deliberately or unintentionally of a substance, causing harm to health or functioning.”

#### **Drug or Substance**

“Any substance/drug which affects the way in which the body functions physically, emotionally or mentally and includes alcohol, solvents, over the counter and prescribed medicines as well as illicit substances.”

#### **Dependence**

“A compulsion to continue taking a drug or drinking alcohol in order to feel good or avoid feeling bad.”

Substance use – the consumption of any drug

Substance misuse – drug taking through which harm could occur, through intoxication, breach of school rules or the law, or the possibility of health problems.

Substance abuse – drug taking which harms health of functioning and which may be part of a wider spectrum or harmful behaviour.

### **5. Support**

As a caring employer the school has a responsibility to help and advice with the rehabilitation of those seeking support.

The school therefore actively encourages employees who suspect or know they have a substance misuse problem to take advantage of the support offered.

If a Headteacher/Line Manager identifies a substance misuse problem it is their responsibility to ensure that their response is open minded, confidential and sympathetic. The employee should be offered support and encouraged to access specialist services to allow them to continue, or to return to work safely. A referral should be made to Occupational Health Services.

## **5.1 Referral to Occupational Health**

When a Headteacher/Line Manager becomes aware of an employee with a drug or alcohol related problem they should make a medical referral to occupational health in accordance with the managing attendance policy and procedure.

The Occupational Health Adviser will meet with the employee and carry out a health assessment. Advice and guidance will then be given in a report to the Headteacher/Line Manager on how to manage the health problem in the school. The Occupational Health Adviser may need to liaise with the employee's GP for further information which may cause some delay.

Headteachers/Line Managers should consider the from report from Occupational Health, together with advice from their HR Officer in making any decisions about the best way forward.

## **5.2 Self-Referral to Occupational Health**

The School encourages employees who suspect or know they have a drug or alcohol related problem to seek help and treatment voluntarily through self-referral.

Employees should initially seek assistance directly from Occupational Health. This can be arranged directly by the employee

Any request for assistance on a self-referral basis will be maintained as strictly confidential between the employee and their choice of contact.

Occupational Health Practitioners follow guidance from the Faculty of Occupational Medicine. There may be circumstances when in the interest of risk management legal requirement or serious health risk, information may need to be shared e.g. child or adult protection.

## **6. Confidentiality**

Employees with drug or alcohol related problem have the same rights to confidentiality as they would in relation to any other medical condition. Involvement will be kept to a minimum ('need to know' basis) to ensure confidentiality. The number and nature of those people involved will be determined by the needs of the individual and the post/position held.

In most circumstances an agreement will be reached with the employee over what information will be shared. However, the safety of the individual, other employees and the pupils is paramount and where this deemed in the best interest of the school, information may be shared. In such cases the individual will be notified about the information what will be shared.

## **7. Roles and Responsibilities**

It is the responsibility of all employees to ensure they adhere to this policy. If any employee suspects any other employee of inappropriate use of substances covered by this policy, they should inform their line manager. If an employee does not feel able to raise a concern with their line manager or any other member of the leadership team at the school they should follow the procedure for reporting concerns under Whistleblowing Policy.

It is the responsibility of the Governing Body to communicate this policy timeously to all stakeholders, and to continuously monitor and review its effectiveness. The Governing Body should actively

demonstrate recognition of substance misuse problems by creating an environment where staff feel comfortable in asking for help.

The Headteacher/Line Managers should be familiar with the policy and ensure employees understand the policy and their own responsibilities. The Headteacher/Line Managers should be aware of the signs of substance misuse and the effects on performance, attendance and health of employees. They should ensure staff are aware of the support and assistance available to them. They should also liaise with their HR Officer for support to refer staff to Occupational Health or Counselling when there are concerns or absence due to substance misuse.

Employees should behave responsibly at all times to safeguard their own health and safety and that of those around them, and should co-operate with management in ensuring the implementation of this policy. They should not possess, store, trade, sell controlled drugs or alcohol to any other employee or other person on the school premises, or bring the school into disrepute by engaging in activities outside of work. The only exception of possession or storing of drugs would be where an employee has a prescription.

Employees should seek help if they concerns regarding substance misuse, it is advised that staff should approach the Headteacher or their Line Manager so that appropriate support to help speedy rehabilitation can be arranged, for example, referral to occupational health and counselling. If an employee has concerns about a colleague, they should raise the concern with the Headteacher or the Line Manager.

## **8. Indicators**

The following indicators are signs of possible substance misuse, although it is important to note that these can also be caused by other factors, such as stress, physical illness, new-born babies at home, mental health problems or the effects of prescription drugs.

- Repeated patterns of depression, or fatigue from sleeplessness, which last two or three days
- Erratic performance
- Unusual irritability or aggression
- Overconfidence
- Lack of self-esteem
- Inappropriate behaviour
- Sudden mood changes from extreme happiness to severe depression
- Reduced response times
- A tendency to become confused, poor concentration and memory
- Reduced productivity
- Absenteeism – an increase in sickness absence
- Poor time-keeping
- Lack of discipline
- Neglect of personal care
- Deterioration in relationships with colleagues
- Dishonesty and theft
- Financial irregularities
- Poor co-ordination, judgement, frequent injuries or accidents

## **9. Expectations**

### **9.1 At Work**

Employees must report to 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.

Employees must not consume alcohol or drugs at any time while at work including during breaks or lunchtimes spent at or away from school premises. Exceptions apply to drugs prescribed for the individual or over the counter medicines used for their intended purpose (in accordance with the instructions given by the prescriber, pharmacist or manufacturer) and where the safety of the individual or others with whom they come into contact is not compromised. The alcohol restriction does not apply to work-related functions or activities that take place at the end of an employee's working day after which they are not returning to work, although permission should be obtained from the Headteacher/Governing Body before consuming alcohol on the school premises for such a function. Particular care should be taken on residential events and trips when employees are responsible for the pupils in their care. Employees are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times.

Should an employee be prescribed medication or plan to take over the counter medicines that may cause side effects and impair their ability to undertake their duties safely and effectively, they must inform the Headteacher/Line Manager immediately.

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 the Headteacher/Line Manager immediately.

Employees are not obliged to disclose the actual medical condition being treated nor the medication – simply the impact/side effects. However, support can only be provided for the employee based on the information provided.

### **9.2 Outside Working Hours**

Employees must not consume intoxicating substances before arriving for duty or when they may be required to attend work at short notice, for example when any employee may have to attend an emergency call out. Please note, this can only be enforced when it is reasonably expected that call outs may occur and should not be unrealistic, for example, it would be unreasonable to expect an employee who lives on site to be available at all times.

Substances can remain in the system for some time and even small amounts can impair performance and jeopardise safety, employees must allow sufficient time for substances to leave their system before reporting for work.

Employees need to be aware that actions outside of working hours, which being or are likely to bring the school into disrepute, may lead to disciplinary action.

### **9.3 Acceptable Standards**

The school expressly prohibits the consumption of alcohol during the working day. The school expressly prohibits the consumption of alcohol outside working hours to an unreasonable level that may impair performance at work, impair working relationships, create a potential risk to health and safety or adversely affect the public image of the school.



The school regards drinking to an 'unreasonable level' as any of the following situations:

- The individual's conduct or performance is impaired
- The individual's behaviour may cause embarrassment to the Council/School or to others
- The individual continues to drink when instructed to stop by a Headteacher/Line Manager

The storage of alcohol at work for personal consumption in personal areas such as lockers, desks or drawers is also prohibited.

## **10. Alcohol**

All employees required to drive for the school (for example driving the school minibus) must be fit to do so at all times. Employees must not drive for work if their ability to do so safely is impaired by alcohol.

Information regarding daily benchmarks for safe alcohol consumption and the effects of alcohol on driving is shown at Appendix B.

Employees who have been officially cautioned, summoned or convicted in relation to alcohol offences during the course of their employment must inform their Headteacher/Line Manager. A discussion will take place about whether the employee may need help to ensure that they do not drive while impaired at work.

Where the individual is found to be under the influence of alcohol they will be sent home, having been cautioned not to drive. An investigation will take place and appropriate action taken. In consultation with the school HR Officer a decision will be taken whether it is appropriate to suspend the employee on full pay or to temporarily deploy to other duties.

### **10.1 Testing (NASUWT do not agree to Alcohol Testing)**

The school will undertake alcohol testing 'with cause' by means of a breathalyser test. The term 'with cause' is defined in this policy as being:

- 'If an employee's conduct or behaviour gives good cause to believe that the employee may be acting under the influence of alcohol'

Not every instance will require the need for an alcohol test to be carried out. It will be for the Headteacher/Line Manager, with advice from the schools HR Officer, to decide if testing is appropriate.

The individual will be informed by their Headteacher/Line Manager of the reason for carrying out the test and will be expected to sign a written consent to be tested.

Failure to give consent or refusal to provide a breath sample without good reason will be considered to be a breach of procedure and misconduct and will lead to disciplinary action being taken. Refusal to provide a breath sample will be taken into account when considering what support is offered or what disciplinary sanction to issue.

Signs that an individual may be under the influence of alcohol could include:

- Smelling of alcohol
- Unusual irritability or aggression



- Increased mistakes and poor judgement
- Changes in behaviour and work performance
- Dilated pupils
- Lack of concentration and confusion

It is important to remember that some of these symptoms could also be caused by other factors, such as stress, depression or taking prescribed medication.

Examples of when alcohol testing may be appropriate include:

- When the Headteacher/Line Manager believes that there is 'with cause' and the individual denies that they are under the influence of alcohol
- As part of an agreed rehabilitation programme

The breathalyser test will be carried out by a trained and certified member of staff, the Headteacher/Line Manager will need to contact their HR Officer before conducting a test. Where testing takes place the individual will be informed of their right to be represented. This may be a trade union representative, friend or colleague who is available to attend within a reasonable timescale (of up to 1 hour).

Full details of the testing procedure are shown at Appendix C.

## **11. Drugs**

The school expressly prohibits the use, sharing, and dealing of any illegal drugs or any use of prescription drugs (outside the confines of the doctor's prescription) whilst on duty.

Employees must not report, or endeavour to report, for work having consumed drugs that are likely to make them unsafe for work. Information regarding the effects of drugs in the workplace is shown at Appendix B.

It is a criminal offence to be in possession of, to use or distribute illegal drugs or for any such incidents to take place on school premises or in a school vehicle. This includes storing drugs in personal areas at work, such as in a locker, desk or drawer.

Any reports of such behaviour will be regarded as a serious matter, will be investigated by the school and may lead to disciplinary investigation and police involvement.

Employees who are taking legally prescribed medication or any over the counter medicines should seek advice from their GP and should inform their Headteacher/Line Manager if there are likely to be any side effects which could have an effect on their ability to work safely.

### **11.1 Testing**

Testing for drugs will not be carried out as part of this policy. This decision will be reviewed at regular intervals and may result in testing for drugs being considered in the future if deemed appropriate.

## **Driving**

All employees required to drive for work must be fit to do so at all times. Just like drink driving, driving whilst impaired when under the influence of drugs is illegal.

Information regarding the effects of drugs (both illegal and prescribed) on driving is shown at Appendix B.

Employees who have been officially cautioned, summoned or convicted in relation to drug offences during the course of their employment must inform their Headteacher/Line Manager. A discussion will take place about whether the employee may need help to ensure that they do not drive while impaired at work.

Where the individual is thought to be suffering from the effects of drugs they will be sent home, having been cautioned not to drive. An investigation will take place and appropriate action taken. In consultation with the school HR Officer a decision will be taken whether it is appropriate to suspend the employee on full pay or to temporarily deploy to other duties.

## **12. Procedural Guidelines**

The aim of this policy is to encourage employees with substance misuse problems to acknowledge the need of help and to seek support and treatment in order that they can continue to work safely.

The Headteachers/Line Managers role is to monitor changes in behaviour, work performance and attendance and intervene if there are changes in work performance or behaviour.

Headteachers/Line Managers will be responsible for making decisions relating to disciplinary action in accordance with the School's disciplinary procedure if:

- Help and support are refused; performance continues to be impaired; testing is refused without good reason.
- A positive test result is received having agreed a programme of recovery as part of a capability or conduct procedure.

Where an employee's actions or behaviour is impaired through alcohol they will be removed from the workplace immediately. An investigation will take place and appropriate action taken. In consultation with the schools HR Officer a decision will be taken whether it is appropriate to suspend the employee on full pay or to temporarily deploy to other duties.

### **12.1 When an employee says that they have a problem**

An employee may admit a problem to the Headteacher/Line Manager they may be informed of their problem via Occupational Health Services (OHS) who will then provide advice as to the capabilities of the employee. Where requested, OHS will maintain the employee's confidentiality.

As the Headteacher/Line Manager become aware of an employee who says that they have a problem do not try to speak to them in front of other employees. The Headteacher/Line Manager should suggest that they meet somewhere private where they will not be interrupted and offered the opportunity to be listened to.

During the meeting, the Headteacher/Line manager should ask open questions to the employee and try to establish the cause of the problem so that steps can be taken to solve issues and to ask what is causing the stress or issue. What potential problems does the employee have at home? The Headteacher/Line Manager should not make accusations, judge morals or comment on the employee's private life but try to establish facts and be objective and non-emotive. It should be reinforced that the conversation held would be treated in the strictest of confidence.

The Headteacher/Line Manager should ask the employee what help and support they would find useful and suggest that they should contact their GP. The Headteacher/Line Manager may also draw attention to the additional support the employee can receive. The Headteacher/Line Manager should make reference to both their and the employees responsibilities with regards to the policy, and in all cases the Headteacher/Line Manager should ask the employee if they wish to have support.

The Headteacher/Line Manager should make a referral to Occupation Health for the employee and identify and agree immediate health and safety implication through risk assessment and the actions required to prevent injury to the employee, their colleagues or pupils. During the meeting, the Headteacher/Line Manager should explain that where the employee has undertaken rehabilitation and they cannot return to their original job due to the duties involved alternative employment may be considered.

Where the Headteacher/Line Manager is immediately clear that the employee cannot remain at work it should be agreed how the employee will keep in touch by what means and how often. Once suitable a return to work programme should be put in place.

At all times the employee should be aware of any disciplinary consequence and the Headteacher/Line Manager should be firm and consistent without allowing the disciplinary process being seen as a threat, where the employee is a union member additional resources are often available.

The Headteacher/Line Manager should agree with the employee how they will review their progress and set specific work target as appropriate and make an accurate record of what was discussed and agreed. Future meetings should be arranged if necessary.

### **Subsequent Action**

It is important, wherever possible, to assist the employee to remain at work. It has been found that remaining at work, or minimising any absence, can significantly promote recovery. This will also allow the Headteacher/Line Manager to remain in close contact with the employee and avoids the need to distribute the employee's workload amongst other members of the team. Occupational Health can help a Headteacher/ Line Manager identify appropriate duties.

It may be that after reviewing the situation and the employee's capabilities the employee cannot be accommodated at work or their problem is significant enough that they should not be at work at all. In these cases the Capability Procedure should be invoked.

If an employee is unable to remain at work for medical reasons they will need to see Occupational Health, or provide evidence from their GP, and meet their Headteacher/Line Manger before returning to work

The Headteacher/Line Manager should explain to the employee that failure to follow the agreed supportive programme is likely to end in disciplinary procedures.

## **12.2 When a Headteacher/Line Manager suspects a drug or alcohol problem**

### **Arrange a meeting**

When a Headteacher/Line Manager becomes aware or suspicious of an employee they should not speak to the employee in front of other employees. It is recommend that they should meet somewhere private where they won't be interrupted and take place the next working day or at the

next earliest opportunity. The Headteacher/Line Manager should plan what they will talk about including the observation regarding the employee's performance and any specific incidents, the Headteacher/Line Manager should not rely on rumours.

If the Headteacher/Line Manager has formed a reasonable belief that an employee is acting under the influence of alcohol, and it is deemed appropriate, the employee may be requested to undertake an alcohol test. Please refer to the 'Alcohol Testing Procedure' shown at Appendix C.

During the meeting, the Headteacher/Line Manager should discuss their concerns with the employee and make it clear why there may be a problem. Gentle, open and non-threatening questions should be used with a supportive attitude.

During the meeting, the Headteacher/ Line Manger should ask open questions to the employee and try to establish the cause of the problem so that steps can be taken to solve issues and to ask what is causing the stress or issue. What potential problems does the employee have at home? The Headteacher/Line Manager should not make accusations, judge morals or comment on the employee's private life but try to establish facts and be objective and non-emotive. It should be reinforced that the conversation held would be treated in the strictest of confidence.

The Headteacher/Line Manager will need to remind the employee of the school's Substance and Misuse Policy contents, rules, responsibilities and procedure. An agreement should be sought with the employee that they will comply with the policy in the future.

The Headteacher/Line Manager should ask the employee what help and support they would find useful and suggest that they should contact their GP. The Headteacher/Line Manager may also draw attention to the additional support the employee can receive. The Headteacher/Line Manager should make reference to both their and the employees responsibilities with regards to the policy, and at all states the Headteacher/Line Manager should ask the employee if they wish to have support.

The Headteacher/Line Manager should make an offer to make a referral to Occupational Health for the employee and identify and agree immediate health and safety implication through risk assessment and the actions required to prevent injury to the employee, their colleagues or pupils. During the meeting, the Headteacher/Line Manager should explain that where the employee has undertaken rehabilitation and they cannot return to their original job due to the duties involved alternative employment may be considered.

At all times the employee should be aware of any disciplinary consequence and the Headteacher/Line Manager should be firm and consistent without allowing the disciplinary process being seen as a threat, where the employee is a union member additional resources are often available.

The Headteacher/Line Manager should agree with the employee how they will review their progress and set specific work target as appropriate and make an accurate record of what was discussed and agreed. Future meetings should be arranged if necessary.

The Headteacher/Line Manager should remember that when seeking acknowledgment of a problem can be a powerful aspect of the process and an extremely positive step forward. They should be aware that the employee may be very concerned that they could be labelled as an 'alcoholic' or 'addict'. They should also be aware that the employee may not admit to a problem during this discussion and it may take several discussions in order to develop their trust and encourage them to talk openly.

The Headteacher/Line Manager should advise that further issues with the employee's attendance, performance or conduct may be addressed through the appropriate policy.

### **Subsequent Action**

If the employee continues to deny any problem, and the Headteacher/Line Manager remains suspicious and the employee's performance and/or health and safety may be compromised they may need to take appropriate action relative to the risk and explain this to them. This could be modifying duties temporarily whilst additional advice is sought. The employee may then be referred to Occupational Health and a report requested on their capabilities in light of the evidence or concerns they. The Headteacher/Line Manager must state clearly the reasons for taking this action and advise that support can be sought.

The Headteacher/Line Manager should keep accurate records of performance and absence records of the employee. It should be explained to the employee that failure to follow the agreed supportive programme it will likely initiate the school's disciplinary procedure.

Should an employee deny a problem the Headteacher/Line Manager should contact their HR Officer and the disciplinary procedure may be initiated.

If an employee is unable to remain at work for medical reasons, they will need to see Occupational Health or provide evidence from their GP and meet the Headteacher/Line Manager before returning to work.

There may be instances where the school will be obliged to inform the police of any activity or behaviour for which there are concerns as to its legality.

## **12. Monitoring and Review**

The Governing Body will monitor the outcomes and impact of this policy/procedure on an annual/bi-annual basis in conjunction with school representatives.

This procedure will be reviewed no later than 2 years by Human Resources in consultation with Trade Unions.

### **Appendices**

Appendix A: The effects of drugs and alcohol in the workplace

Appendix B: Daily benchmarks for safe alcohol consumption and the effects of drugs and alcohol on driving

Appendix C: Alcohol testing procedure

Appendix D: Specialist support

## **Appendix A: The effects of drugs and alcohol in the workplace**

The school recognises the need to provide information to employees on the effects of drugs and alcohol in the workplace. The following information has been extracted from national agencies and organisations and will be updated as appropriate.

### **The extent of the problem**

The General Lifestyle Survey was able to provide the following information.

- 2.5 Million people drink more than 14 units of alcohol on their heaviest drinking day.
- Young people aged 16 - 24 years old were less likely to have consumed alcohol in the previous week, compared with those aged 45-64 however, young drinkers were more likely than any other age group to consume more than the weekly recommended limit in one day.
- The age group with the highest proportion of people not drinking at all in the last week was the 16 - 24 age group (50%). The proportion of adults who drank every day increased with each age group. 1% of the 16 – 24 age group had drunk every day during the previous week, compared to four per cent in the 25 – 44 age group, 9% in the 45 – 64 age group, and 13% in the 65 and over age group.

In response to this the Government is demonstrating their commitments to the health of the nation by encouraging employers to introduce alcohol policies and evaluate their impact.

### **Effects in the workplace**

Some of the effects on the workplace include increased absenteeism, effects on performance and productivity, increased accidents, costs and effects on employee morale.

### **Absenteeism**

Alcohol Concern reports that absence relating to alcohol costs an estimated £1 billion each year. The cost to industry due to drug use is estimated at £800 million each year. Studies have shown that employees who use drugs have an approximately 60% higher rate of absenteeism and a 47% higher rate of involuntary termination than other workers.

Binge drinking regularly makes the headlines and the effects of a 'drinking session' are often felt at work the next day. The HSE estimates that alcohol is the cause of 3%-5% per cent of all absences from work, resulting in up to 14 million working days lost a year.

### **Performance and productivity**

Alcohol Concern report that performance and productivity can suffer from 'presentism' – an employee may be at work but under-perform due to the effect of drink or drugs at lunchtime, during breaks or from the previous night. Chronic heavy drinking in personal leisure time can have a long term effect on an employee's performance. A weekend binge of alcohol and/or drugs may take someone longer than one day to recover. In this case an employee may suffer fatigue, depression or anxiety in the days following the binge. Regular heavy drinking or drug use will greatly impair an employee's performance and could lead to related health problems.

An employee's problems can affect morale amongst colleagues in the workplace. Colleagues may either resent or feel they must 'cover up' for someone with a problem.



## Accidents

Alcohol Concern report that it is estimated that alcohol contributes to 20%-25% of workplace accidents. Alcohol is a depressant and drinking impairs concentration, judgement and co-ordination. Accidents in the workplace can endanger not only the drinker or drug user but also those around them. The following drugs can also slow down a user's reaction times:

- Cannabis – the most commonly used illegal drug in Britain.
- Tranquillisers – including prescribed medications such as Valium and Librium. Opiates - including heroin, codeine and the synthetic opioid, methadone, which is often prescribed as part of treatment programme for heroine dependence.
- Some over the counter medicines for coughs and colds, flu and hay fever.

## Other effects of alcohol consumption

- Effects on School morale and employee relations. Bad behaviour and poor discipline.
- Adverse effect on School image and School relations.

## Factors contributing to the development of problems with alcohol or drugs

According to Alcohol Concern these are:

- Workplace Culture – may encourage or tolerate drug use or heavy drinking. A workforce may use drinking as a way of socialising or bonding.
- Personal Problems - alcohol and drug problems often stem from an attempt to cope with an underlying problem such as stress, relationship difficulties, depression or bereavement. As a result, the underlying problems, rather than being addressed are; exacerbated and then the alcohol or drug use itself can become a problem
- Work related stress – this can contribute to the development or worsening of an alcohol or drug problem. Early identification of symptoms of stress, followed by effective interventions, can prevent serious problems

## Costs

The HSE reports that there are three areas of potential costs that organisations face if issues of drugs and alcohol problems are not addressed. These are:

- Measurable costs, such as increased sickness, poor productivity and poor quality of work
- Hidden costs, such as diverted managerial time, friction amongst workers and staff turnover
- Other costs, such as disciplinary actions, legal actions and health and safety implications



## **Appendix B: Daily benchmarks for safe alcohol consumption and the effects of drugs and alcohol on driving**

The school recognises the need to provide information to employees on safe alcohol consumption and the effects of drugs and alcohol on driving. The following information has been extracted from national agencies and organisations and will be updated as appropriate.

### **What happens when I drink alcohol?**

Alcohol is absorbed into your blood stream within a few seconds of being drunk and is carried to all parts of your body, including the brain.

The concentration of alcohol in the body, known as the 'blood alcohol concentration', depends on many factors, but principally, how much you have drunk, how long you have been drinking, whether you have eaten, and your size and weight. It is difficult to know exactly how much alcohol is in your blood stream or what effect it may have.

It takes a healthy liver about 1 hour to break down and remove 1 unit of alcohol. 1 unit of alcohol is equivalent to 8gm or 10 ml (1cl) of pure alcohol. The following 'standard drinks' all contain one unit of alcohol:

- 1 half pint of ordinary strength beer, lager and cider (3.5% ABV)
- a single 25ml measure of spirits (40% ABV)
- a small glass of wine (125ml) (9% ABV)
- a small glass of sherry (50ml)
- a measure of vermouth or aperitif (50ml)

Home measures are usually much more generous than pub measures so care should be taken when gauging how many units they contain. It may be that one measure of spirit poured at home is equivalent to 2, 3 or even 4 standard drinks.

If someone drinks 2 pints of ordinary strength beer at lunchtime or half a bottle of wine (i.e. 4 units) they will still have alcohol in their bloodstream 3 hours later. Similarly, if someone drinks heavily in the evening they may still be over the legal drink drive limit the following morning.

Black coffee, cold showers and fresh air will not sober someone up. Only time can remove alcohol from the blood stream. The effects of heavy drinking the previous night can last well into the next day.

### **Daily benchmarks**

The following benchmarks are a guide to how much adult men and women can drink in a day without putting their health at risk. They apply whether you drink every day, once or twice a week, or occasionally. The benchmarks are not targets to drink up to. There are times and circumstances when it makes sense not to drink at all.

#### *Men*

If you drink between 3 and 4 units a day or less, there are no significant risks to your health, BUT...

If you consistently drink 4 or more units a day, there is an increasing risk to your health.

## *Women*

If you drink between 2 and 3 units a day, there are no significant risks to your health, BUT...

If you consistently drink 3 or more units a day, there is an increasing risk to your health.

Women who are pregnant or planning pregnancy should never drink heavily and should certainly avoid binges. If women limit themselves to an occasional drink, the risk to their baby will be very small. If they cut out alcohol completely, they cut out this risk completely.

Women are more affected by drink than men because the water content of a woman's body is between 45% and 55% compared to between 55% and 65% for men. Alcohol is distributed through the body fluids, so in men, alcohol is more 'diluted' than it is in women. A woman's liver is also more likely to suffer alcohol damage than a man's.

Note: the benchmarks don't apply to young people who have not reached physical maturity.

Even at blood alcohol concentrations lower than the legal drink/drive limit, alcohol reduces physical co-ordination and reaction speeds. It also affects thinking, judgement and mood. People may feel more relaxed and less inhibited after a couple of drinks but getting drunk can lead to arguments, mood swings and even violence.

Large amounts of alcohol in one session can put a strain not just on the liver but on other parts of the body as well, including muscle function and stamina. After getting drunk you should avoid drinking alcohol for 48 hours to give your body tissue time to recover. However, this is a short-term measure and people whose pattern of drinking places them at significant risk should seek professional advice.

Drinking alcohol raises the drinker's blood pressure. This can increase the risk of coronary heart disease and some kinds of stroke. Regularly drinking more than the daily benchmarks outlined above also increases the risk of liver damage, cirrhosis of the liver and cancers of the mouth and throat. People who drink very heavily may develop psychological and emotional problems, including depression.

Studies show that people who regularly drink small amounts of alcohol tend to live longer than people who do not drink. The main reason is that alcohol gives protection against the development of coronary heart disease. However, this protective effect is only significant when people reach a stage of life when they are at risk of coronary heart disease. For men this is over the age of 40. For women, it is after the menopause. The benefits come from drinking small amounts of alcohol fairly regularly i.e. between 1 and 2 units a day. No overall additional benefit comes from drinking more than 2 units a day, or from drinking a particular type of drink (e.g. red wine).

## **Drinking, driving and drugs**

### **What are the effects of drinking and driving?**

ROSPA (the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents) reports that driving is the most dangerous work activity that most people do. Research indicates that about 20 people are killed and 220 seriously injured every week in crashes involving someone who was driving, riding or otherwise using the road for work.

Around 10 people are killed and 50 seriously injured in drink driving crashes every week. It is not just the drivers who suffer, but often passengers, people in other vehicles, pedestrians, cyclists or motorcyclists, and the families of everyone involved.

The legal drink drive limit is 35mg of alcohol per 100ml of breath concentration or 80g of alcohol per 100ml of blood concentration. Drivers with a blood alcohol concentration between 50g and 80g per 100ml of blood are 2 to 2½ times more likely to be in a fatal crash. The risk increases massively when over the limit. A driver who is double the legal limit is 50 times more likely to be in a fatal crash.

Every year about 90,000 people are convicted of drinking and driving and face a driving ban of at least 12 months, a large fine and possible imprisonment.

Alcohol impairs judgement making drivers over confident and more likely to take risks. It slows their reactions, increases stopping distances, affects judgements of speed and distance and reduces the field of vision. Even a small amount, well below the legal limit, seriously affects the ability to drive safely.

Alcohol is absorbed into the blood stream very quickly but it takes about an hour for one unit to be removed from the body by a healthy liver. Safe limits of alcohol consumption are outlined above.

Never rely on trying to calculate accurately how much alcohol is in your body and whether you are above or below the drink drive limit.

### **What are the effects of taking drugs and driving?**

Driving while unfit through drugs, whether illegal, prescribed or over the counter medicines, is an offence that carries the same penalties as drink driving. The Police can, and do, conduct roadside tests to help them assess whether a driver may be impaired.

Around 18% of people killed in road crashes have traces of illegal drugs in their blood. The body can react in a variety of ways (depending on the drug). Symptoms can include:

- Slower reactions
- Poor concentration and confused thinking
- Distorted perception
- Over confidence, resulting in taking unnecessary risk
- Poor co-ordination
- Erratic behaviour
- Aggression, panic attacks or paranoia
- Blurred vision
- Tremors, dizziness, ramps
- Severe fatigue the following day

The effects can last for hours, or even days and can vary from person to person. They can be difficult for an individual to detect

### **Medicines**

For many medications it is difficult to predict whether, how, when and for how long they will affect a person's ability to drive safely. A driver may not even notice that they have been impaired until it is too late. The effects depend on how much, how often and how a medicine is used, plus the psychological and physical attributes of the person taking it.

Some medicines may cause:

- Drowsiness
- Dizziness or feeling light headed
- Difficulty concentrating
- Feeling edgy, angry or aggressive, feeling nauseous or otherwise unwell reduced coordination, including shaking and feeling unstable.

A person's ability can also be affected by the medical condition for which they are taking the medicine. Many over the counter remedies for coughs and colds, flu and hay fever cause unwanted drowsiness which may impair driving. Warnings about drowsiness are not always clear so, for example, if the label says "may cause drowsiness" assume that it will do so.

Check if there is a warning on the packet or in the patient information leaflet (but do not rely on just this). Ask a pharmacist or doctor if the medicine might affect driving, and if so, whether there is a safer alternative.

### **Alcohol and drugs**

Taking alcohol and drugs together is even worse as their effects combine and impairment can be multiplied.

### **Further contacts**

- [www.drinkaware.co.uk](http://www.drinkaware.co.uk)
- [www.facocmed.ac.uk](http://www.facocmed.ac.uk) – Faculty of Occupational Medicine
- [www.orsa.org.uk](http://www.orsa.org.uk)
- [www.drugdrive.com](http://www.drugdrive.com)

## Appendix C: Alcohol testing procedure

Where a Headteacher/Line Manager deems it appropriate, and has formed a reasonable belief that the employee may be acting under the influence of alcohol, the following procedure for testing will apply:

- The Headteacher/Line Manager will explain their justification for requesting a breathalyser test and the implications of refusing a test
- The employee will be escorted to a private room and will be advised of their right to have an appropriate representative present. This can be a friend, colleague or TU representative who is available to attend within a reasonable time scale (of up to 1 hour)
- Once an appropriate representative has joined the meeting, or alternatively the right to have an appropriate representative present has been declined, the employee will be formally advised of the Headteacher/Line Manager's concerns and why they are being asked to undertake a test for alcohol
- The relevant Headteacher/Line Manager will contact their schools HR Officer who will arrange for an appropriately trained colleague to carry out the testing procedure
- On arrival the certified individual will be introduced and will fully explain the process to be followed in strict accordance with the terms of the alcohol testing procedure
- The alcohol test results will be known immediately. The time and results of the test will be recorded on the 'Alcohol Testing' form. (*The 'Alcohol Testing' form forms part of established procedures with a nationally accredited laboratory which ensures that staff are suitably trained to follow the procedure and will complete a record to demonstrate authenticity.*)
- If there is a negative test result, no further tests are taken. If there is a positive test result, after 20 minutes the alcohol test will be repeated as per above and this result will also be recorded on another 'Alcohol Testing' form
- The details of the testing equipment will be completed on the 'Alcohol Testing' form and signed. A copy will be issued to the employee
- If the test is negative then the Headteacher/Line Manager will discuss the concerns which led to the test with the employee
- If the test is positive the employee **may** be subject to a disciplinary investigation. In consultation with the schools HR Officer, the Headteacher/Line Manager will determine whether it is appropriate to suspend the employee on full pay or, if employed in a safety critical role, temporarily deploy to other duties.

Failure to give consent or refusal to provide a breath sample without good reason will be considered to be a breach of procedure and misconduct and will lead to disciplinary action being taken. Refusal to provide a breath sample will be taken into account when considering what support is offered or what disciplinary sanction to issue.

## **Appendix D: Specialist support**

The School recognises the need to support employees who have decided to seek support and advice from specialist drug and alcohol services. In order to assist employees the following list of services has been compiled.

### **GPs and Primary Care Teams**

The first point of contact for employees should be their GP who will be able to make a referral for specialist treatment. Local health authorities listed at the end of this document can provide a list of alcohol and drug services and how to register with a GP.

For all services, the first appointment will include an assessment to discuss the problem and options for help. The main types of services and interventions available are outlined below.

### **Support offered to employees**

- Internally employees may self-refer to the school's Occupational Health Services (OHS) team who will put them in touch with the Employees Counselling Service and/or the Shropshire Community Services Substance Misuse Team (CSMT).
- Occupational Health Services 01743 252833
- Employee Confidential Counselling Service 01978 780479
- Shropshire Community Services Substance Misuse Team Tel: 01743 255741 (Services include drop-in sessions, assessments, casework, needles exchange and counselling)

Support offered to individuals regardless of whether they are employed by Shropshire Council.

### **Self-help Groups**

Narcotics Anonymous is a non-profit fellowship of men and women for who drugs has become a major problem. Recovering addicts meet regularly to help each other stay clean.

01952 260536 (Local)  
0207 730 0009 (National)

Alcoholics Anonymous is an informal society of more than 2 million recovering alcoholics across the world. Men and women share their experience with each other to help solve their common problem and help others recover from alcoholism.

01743 242392 (Local)  
08457 697555 (National)

### **Self-help groups for partners and families**

Al Anon offers understanding and support for families and friends of a problem drinker whether the drinker is still drinking or whether the drinker in their lives recognises that a problem exists.  
0207 403 0888.

Adfam is a national charity working with families affected by drugs and alcohol. Their on-line database supplies local support groups that help families hear about and talk to people who understand their situation.

admin@adfam.org.uk  
0207 928 8900 for local numbers.

### **Advice, information and counselling teams**

Drugs Anonymous Parent and Carer Support  
01952 249131/222691

IMPACT Alcohol and Addiction Services  
01743 245552 or 01952 223165

FRANK is a national helpline that offers free confidential advice and information about drugs 24 hours a day. Contact FRANK online or call 0800 77 6600 24 hours a day.

Drinkline provides free and confidential advice on any aspect of drinking.  
0800 917 8282.

Release is a confidential national drug helpline offering advice on drug and legal issues.

Email them at [info@release.org.uk](mailto:info@release.org.uk)  
Call 0207 729 9904

Alcohol Concern runs Drinkline (0300 123 1110)

### **Other**

The following can provide details of services available to advice on policy development and the provision of services designed to reduce the harm caused by drug and alcohol.

Shropshire Drug and Alcohol Action Team (DAAT)  
01743 252745

Drugscope  
TACADE  
0161 836 6850

Yellow pages under 'Counselling and Advice'  
The British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy for lists of independent counsellors in your area.  
[www.counselling.co.uk](http://www.counselling.co.uk)