

EASTHAMPSTEAD PARK COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Substance Misuse Policy



1. Introduction

Bracknell Forest Borough Council, the Education Department and the Governing Body recognise that the management of issues associated with the misuse of alcohol and other substances is a sensitive matter. The Governing Body will support individuals seeking help in connection with any form of substance abuse, alongside any steps necessary to safeguard the operation of the school.

2. Scope of the policy

The Council, Education Department and the Governing Body have a duty to provide a safe and healthy working environment for its employees. The Governing Body is committed to raising employees' awareness of the dangers of alcohol and drugs misuse, which can be an illness, by making this policy widely available to all members of staff. It will fully support and encourage any member of staff who is affected by misuse to seek help.

Alcohol and drug dependency can affect attendance, work ability, work performance and the safety of employees and others. Helping the member of staff is a high priority, but safety in the work place and the maintenance of good quality teaching and support is equally important.

The rules and standards set out below refer to alcohol, the most common cause of misuse problems and for which the signs are easiest to detect. The rules and standards, however, apply equally to other substances that can impair work performance.

3. Principles

Dealing with a problem - Where a problem is identified it will be treated in the same way as other health matters. However, performance and or disciplinary issues may also need to be addressed.

Seeking help - Staff who have developed a dependency on alcohol or other substances and whose work is affected are encouraged to take the initiative in seeking early help and counselling.

Disciplinary action - At its most serious level, misuse of alcohol or other substances can seriously put at risk an individual's personal safety, that of other staff or students and any other person with whom contact is made. Deliberate disregard for personal safety and that of others, disobedience associated with any safety instruction and unacceptable behaviour in the workplace associated with illegal substances are examples of matters of misconduct which will be addressed through the school's disciplinary procedure.

Contact with parents, or other visitors - Many staff come into direct contact, either face to face or by telephone, with parents, or other visitors to the school. All staff have a personal responsibility to maintain the school's reputation which must not be impaired by behaviour associated with alcohol or substance misuse. Even a relatively small amount of alcohol consumed by a member of staff may be apparent to the parent or visitor and may present a negative image of the school. Also, if noticed by colleagues, it may lead to the impairment of working relationships.

Confidentiality = Any contact with the Staff Support Scheme will remain confidential. Occupational Health will report back to the Headteacher within the rules of medical confidentiality. The Headteacher will maintain confidentiality as far as is compatible with protecting health and safety and the provision of the service.

4. Rules regarding drugs and alcohol

Consumption of alcohol - No consumption of alcohol will be allowed while an employee is at work or on work premises, other than that permitted on occasions by prior agreement with the Headteacher. These will be restricted to special occasions and meetings involving external visitors and will normally be outside of working time. For some posts, particularly where there is a risk to the personal safety of the member of staff or the students, no alcohol will be allowed to be consumed at all during the working period. This prohibition may be extended to particular situations where, for instance, machinery is to be operated, vehicle driven or where vulnerable students are involved. The situations identified will need to be identified as part of a Risk Assessment, which the school is obliged to carry

out as part of its usual management processes. Even where drinking during a meal break is not specifically prohibited, it is expected that the consumption of alcohol will not have a negative impact in the school.

Fit to undertake duties - All staff must report to work fit to undertake their duties and in a condition which is acceptable to the Headteacher and Governing Body, colleagues and visitors to the school. Being under the influence of alcohol or drugs is not acceptable. Any member of staff on medication prescribed by their doctor must notify the Headteacher and Occupational Health if there is likelihood that the medication could affect job performance or the safety of themselves or others. Appropriate measures can then be taken and Occupational Health can advise on the likely effects of the medication.

Unacceptable behaviour - A member of staff seeking assistance for a substance abuse problem will not have his/her employment terminated simply because of dependency. However, if performance, attendance or behaviour are unacceptable, despite any assistance that can be offered, ultimately dismissal may be unavoidable. Drugs and alcohol dependency is not, in itself, misconduct.

Informing police - Where evidence warrants, the Governing Body, LEA and the Council will inform the police of illegal drug use. In some circumstances, it may also be necessary to report criminal behaviour associated with alcohol abuse (e.g. a drink driving accident in a school vehicle).

The process for dealing with suspected alcohol or substance misuse will be as set out in Appendix A.

5. **Provision of support**

The Governing Body, and Bracknell Forest Borough Council wish to help employees to confront and tackle substance abuse issues; fear of reprisals may make an individual hesitate to come forward for help. It is therefore important that managers do not automatically resort to the use of Disciplinary or Capability procedures where a dependency problem is involved, but will do so when health and safety, service delivery or the image of the school is seriously compromised. In all cases, the Headteacher should treat the employee's dependency problem firmly but with sympathy and attempt, wherever possible, to get the individual to seek help.

Reviewed and Revised:

June 2016

Responsibility for Implementation and Review:

Headteacher & Personnel Committee

Date of Next Review:

Summer 2018

Process for dealing with suspected alcohol or substance misuse**Guidance**

1. If the Headteacher believes an employee is demonstrating signs which may be associated with the misuse of alcohol or other substances, the matter should be raised with the employee in private and offer guidance and support through the Council's Occupational Health Service and/or Staff Support Service. Referral to Occupational Health is undertaken via reference to Education Personnel. The Headteacher should introduce the subject of deteriorating performance or behaviour without suggesting drugs or alcohol misuse directly in the first instance as a confrontational approach may be counterproductive.
2. When raising the issue, the Headteacher should remember the following points.
 - (a) The Headteacher is not expected to be an alcohol or drugs specialist or counsellor; the primary role is to address declining or unacceptable work performance or behaviour.
 - (b) Meetings should not be conducted in public, but in a private room out of earshot and somewhere interruptions won't take place. The member of staff should be encouraged to talk and the use of emotive language should be avoided.
 - (c) The Headteacher should not jump to conclusions, as the behaviour may not be due to alcohol or drug abuse. Asking the member of staff about how he/she views the work situation can be effective and get to the root of the problem.
 - (d) Any necessary paperwork including records of attendance, poor performance and/or poor colleague relationships should be on hand to show the member of staff that there is cause for concern.
 - (e) If no reasonable explanations are offered, the Headteacher may ask if drugs or alcohol are a factor, but the employee may deny it. However, the Headteacher will need to maintain a continuing dialogue on performance/behaviour issues with the employee and continue to offer relevant support.
3. Where a member of staff arrives for work and appears to be incapable of carrying out his/her duties due to the influence of drugs or alcohol he/she should be counselled by the Headteacher and informed of the possibility of disciplinary proceedings. The member of staff should then be sent home until the next day as safety or service delivery are likely to be seriously compromised by his/her apparent condition. On the employee's return to work, the Headteacher must speak to them regarding the incident of the previous day. If the member of staff indicates that there is a substance dependency, he/she should be referred to the Occupational Health Service. Where an unsatisfactory explanation is received, the member of staff should be informed of the expectations of the school and the consequences of further occurrences. In some cases immediate disciplinary measures may need to be taken. Such misconduct is not necessarily evidence of a dependency problem.
4. If a member of staff becomes concerned about a colleague's behaviour and observes possible signs of alcohol or other substance misuse, his/her concerns can be raised in confidence with either the Headteacher or with the Education Personnel section.
5. If a member of staff thinks he/she has a problem, then advice can be sought from the Headteacher, Education Personnel Officer or the Staff Support Counselling Services.
6. It is important that the Headteacher does not treat a referral to Occupational Health or an offer of counselling support as the end of the process. The Headteacher will need to continue to monitor the situation and offer help and support to the member of staff.

Possible further action

1. If the Headteacher thinks it necessary, the member of staff can be referred to Occupational Health by contacting Education Personnel.
2. The member of staff may need time off for treatment. This would be taken within the usual arrangements within the school's policy for medical appointments. Appointments should normally be made so that absence from duty causes as little disruption to the normal operation of the school as possible. Where arrangements cannot be made outside of working time, the time off will be without a reduction in pay.

3. If sickness absence has become a problem, the Sickness Absence Management Policy provides the Headteacher with a framework for addressing issues of this nature. The procedure emphasises the need to balance concerns for the wellbeing of the member of staff, against the impact of any absence/performance on the delivery of the service.
4. If the employee's performance has declined to such an extent that the Headteacher wants to take further action, the School's Capability Procedure can be used. Advice from Education Personnel should be sought before starting this process.
5. If appropriate, the Headteacher should consider use of the School's Disciplinary Policy. Misconduct may include work performance being severely affected by the after effects of alcohol consumption or having illegal drugs on his/her person in school. The Headteacher should refer to Education Personnel for guidance and use the disciplinary procedures as appropriate. If there are reports of misbehaviour, or even convictions outside work, related to drugs and alcohol and the Headteacher feels that they have an impact on the work place then Education Personnel should be contacted for advice on possible action.
6. However, it may be that action under the various school procedures set out above is not appropriate in a particular case and continuing help and support is considered sufficient. The substance dependency should be considered as a factor when determining what action needs to be taken.