Avenue
CENTRE FOR EDUCATION

POLICY ON ALCOHOL, DRUGS AND SUBSTANCE MISUSE

2026 - 2027

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Policy on alcohol, drugs and substance misuse

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1.0 Introduction

The school/trust is committed to providing a safe and productive work environment and to promoting the health, safety and well-being of its employees.

Where this procedure is used within a Multi-Academy Trust (Trust), the roles and responsibilities set out within this policy should be read alongside the Trust's Scheme of Delegation.

The policy aims to ensure that employees are aware of the governing body's expectations in relation to the misuse of alcohol, drugs and other substances and the consequences, including the legal consequences, should such issues become apparent in the workplace.

We are committed to:

- upholding the school's health and safety policy, providing a safe and healthy environment which is conducive to the education of the children in the school
- providing a robust policy which outlines our zero-tolerance approach to drugs and alcohol misuse
- developing and improving the policy by reviewing it after each event

2.0 Purpose

2.1 The policy aims to:

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- raise staff awareness of the risks and potential harm to health associated with alcohol and drug misuse
- set out the school's expectations regarding the use of intoxicating substances and the consequences of misuse in the workplace
- create a climate that encourages employees who may be misusing drugs or alcohol to come forward and seek help
- provide a framework to ensure that employees with drug or alcohol problems are treated 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**
  - the school's image and reputation
  - the delivery of high-quality education
  - the school's code of conduct

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.

**section 2 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

3.2 The policy applies to all employees within the school. The responsibility for the implementation of the policy is delegated to the headteacher. In instances where the headteacher may be subject to the policy, the Chair of Governors will take responsibility for its implementation.

3.3 The school also expects agency and casual workers, contractors, volunteers and others working on its behalf to comply with this policy. Failure to do so is likely to result in the working arrangements being terminated.

4.0 Definitions

4.1 A drug, for the purposes of this policy, is any substance which affects the way in which the body functions physically, emotionally or mentally and includes:

- alcohol
- illegal drugs (any drug classed as illegal under UK legislation)
- over-the-counter medicines/ prescribed medicines
- solvents
- other substances that can affect physical or psychological states
- drugs listed under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 e.g. heroin, cocaine, crack and methamphetamine, psilocybin mushrooms, anabolic steroids, cannabis.

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5.0 Headteacher's responsibilities

5.1 Headteachers are expected to:

- be aware of the signs of alcohol and substance misuse and the potential effects on performance, attendance and health of employees. These signs may include the following, although this list is not exhaustive:
  - absenteeism which may be frequent and centred around weekends
  - unusually high levels of sickness
  - poor work standards/difficulties in concentrating
  - high accident or injury levels
  - personality changes
  - alcohol smell on breath
  - tired all of the time
  - inability to explain the reasons for doing something

- ensure the health, safety and welfare of employees and others with whom employees come into contact. This may require taking reasonable steps to minimise risk by sending home an employee (ensuring they do not drive any form of vehicle) who appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol. In some cases, it may be necessary for the employee to be accompanied home where the school feels it may be unsafe for them to do so alone.

- ensure that employees understand the policy and are aware of the rules and consequences regarding the use of alcohol, drugs and other intoxicating substances and that employees are aware of the support that is available to them should they have a problem.

- monitor the performance, behaviour and attendance of employees:

  - Intervene at an early stage where changes in performance, behaviour, sickness levels, and attendance patterns are identified to establish whether alcohol or drug misuse is an underlying cause. Where there are any initial concerns regarding potential alcohol or drug misuse, early intervention is advised, advice may be sought from the Luton HR Traded Services team.
  - Provide support and assistance, where appropriate and for a reasonable period, to employees who are dependent upon intoxicating substances to support their recovery.
  - Instigate disciplinary measures where appropriate to do so, but acknowledge that where an employee discloses a dependency and is taking appropriate action to address their condition, this may be considered mitigation.

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5.2 Where a headteacher is aware, or suspects, that an employee is misusing intoxicating substances they are strongly advised to seek advice from Luton HR Traded Services team on the approach to be adopted.

5.3 Line managers should familiarise themselves with the above signs of alcohol and substance misuse and the potential effects on performance, attendance and health of employees. Where a line manager has concerns about an employee they should speak to the headteacher in the first instance and then seek advice as appropriate from the Luton HR Traded Services team.

5.4 Such matters will be treated confidentially as far as is legitimately and legally possible. For example, it may be necessary in order to provide effective support for information to be shared with others, for example occupational health or other agencies.

6.0 Employee Responsibilities

6.1 Employees are required to:

- Familiarise themselves with this policy and comply with its provisions.

- Present a professional and courteous image to those with whom they come into contact at all times. They therefore have a personal responsibility to adopt and present a responsible attitude towards drinking and taking prescribed and over-the-counter drugs.

- Seek help if they have concerns regarding their alcohol or drug consumption. This includes self-referral to their GP and/or specialist support agencies. It is recommended that they approach their line manager or headteacher so that the school can facilitate the provision of appropriate support to help speedy rehabilitation, for example referral to occupational health

- Co-operate with any support and assistance provided by the school to address an alcohol or drug misuse problem.

6.2 Employees are not permitted to possess, store, trade or sell controlled drugs on school premises (this includes being stored in any vehicle or storage on school premises) or bring the school into disrepute by engaging in such activities outside of work.

6.3 Employees should not, even with the best of motives, ‘cover up’ for, or collude with, a colleague with an alcohol or drug-related problem but instead should encourage the individual to seek help.

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6.4 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, they have a responsibility to raise their concerns with the headteacher. Where there may be a health and safety risk, knowingly colluding with a colleague or failing to inform the headteacher that a colleague is under the influence of alcohol or drugs in the workplace, may result in that person being subject to their own disciplinary proceedings.

7.0 At work

7.1 Employees:

- Must report for work, and remain throughout the working day, in a fit and safe condition to undertake their duties and must not be under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Must not consume alcohol or drugs at any time whilst at work including during rest or meal breaks spent at or away from the school. 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.
- Must notify the headteacher immediately should they 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.
- 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 headteacher immediately.
- Are not obliged to disclose the actual medical condition being treated nor the medication – simply the impact/side effects.

8.0 Outside working hours

8.1 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.

8.2 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.

8.3 Employees should be aware of the expectations set out within the school's code of conduct. The school's code of conduct is clear that if employees engage in activity which could raise doubts, or concerns about their integrity, or ability to be in a

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'position of trust' with regard to children this could have a direct consequence on their ability to continue in employment/role.

9.0 Breaches of the policy

9.1 The school will, where appropriate to do so, adopt a constructive and supportive approach when dealing with employees who may be experiencing drug or alcohol dependency/addiction.

This means that employees seeking assistance for a substance misuse problem will not have their employment terminated simply because of their dependence/addiction.

9.2 However, if performance, attendance or behaviour is unacceptable, despite any support and assistance that can be offered, ultimately dismissal may be the outcome.

9.3 Notwithstanding the above, there will be circumstances where breaches of the policy, whether dependency-related or not, will be treated as a disciplinary matter and may result in the summary dismissal of the employee. Examples of issues that will be subject to disciplinary action, including the possibility of dismissal, are:

- deliberate disregard for personal safety and that of others associated with the use of intoxicating substances
- unacceptable behaviour in the workplace associated with the use of intoxicating substances
- being unfit to perform normal duties satisfactorily and safely as a result of consuming alcohol or taking drugs
- consuming intoxicating substances during the working day including rest and lunch breaks or when on call and liable to be called upon to work at short notice
- possession, consumption, dealing/trafficking, selling, storage of controlled drugs either on work premises or engaging in such activities outside of work

This list is illustrative only and should not be regarded as exclusive or exhaustive. Disciplinary action will be in all cases proportionate to the circumstances of the actions and/or breach of the policy.

9.4 Where evidence warrants, the school 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 misuse such as having a drink-driving accident in a work vehicle.

9.5 This policy may be used in conjunction with the school's Code of Conduct Policy, Disciplinary Procedure, Sickness Absence Policy and Procedure, Health and Safety Policy and Capability Procedure were applicable.

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9.6 Where an employee's performance or attendance is below the expected standard as a result of their alcohol, drug or substance misuse, it may still be managed using the school's Appraisal/Capability Policy or the Sickness Absence Policy and Procedure as appropriate.

10.0 Confidentiality

10.1 Employees' personal details will be respected in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 (GDPR).

10.2 Any action taken in accordance with this policy should be conducted with confidentiality and sensitivity.

11.0 Further advice and information

11.1 There is help and support available from the following agencies:

- Luton Drug and Alcohol Specialist Service (LDASS)
  Tel: 01582 528880
- Luton Drug and Alcohol Helpline (24 hours/7 days a week)
  Tel: 0800 787797
- Talk to Frank National Drugs Helpline
  Tel: 0800 776600
- Drug and Alcohol rehabilitation in Luton
  Tel: 0800 1404690
- ResoLUTiONs Luton is a free and confidential drug and alcohol service for adults, young people and families.
  Tel: 0800 054 6603
- Alcohol Services for the Community
  Tel: 01582 723434
- Young Peoples Drug Service
  Tel: 01582 657558

11.2 The Employee Assistance Programme

The Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) is a free, confidential counselling and wellbeing support service that provides support to all employees.

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Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

The EAP is a professional service that offers counselling, information and support for all types of work and personal related issues. EAP is now provided by PAM Wellness.

It's available 24 hours a day, seven days a week by calling a freephone number or via a live chat service.

The EAP is available to all employees and it can be especially useful for managers. The EAP can help you address:

- issues effecting the wellbeing of your employees
- management concerns
- all kinds of situations you may not be quite sure how to handle

Knowing that support is available can help make your job easier and less stressful.

Benefits of the service

- One-off support calls 24/7, 365 days, answered by a qualified counsellor
- Face-to-face, telephone or video counselling (via secure virtual platform)
- Computerised CBT
- Psychological assessment and referral for specialist therapies such as cognitive
- Behavioural therapy (CBT), via referral
- Legal, debt and financial support information
- Manager support and consultation
- Market leading ORCHA approved web and app-based wellbeing tools and resource
- Wellbeing training and workshops
- Critical incident response – including onsite support

Access the EAP
Freephone UK: 0800 882 4102
Organisation code: Luton1
Live chat: access via the app or portal at www.pam-assist.co.uk
Scan the QR code to download the app

Google Play

Apple App Store

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