Alcohol and Drugs at Work Policy

Version 3

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Brighter Futures Learning Partnership Trust (BFLPT) is committed to providing a safe and productive work environment and to promoting the health, safety and well-being of its employees. The Alcohol and Drugs at Work Policy is designed to ensure that employees are aware of the risks associated with alcohol/drug misuse and the consequences of their actions.

The inappropriate use of alcohol or drugs can damage the health and well-being of employees and have far-reaching effects on their personal and working lives. At work, alcohol or drug misuse can result in reduced levels of attendance, sub-standard work performance and increased health and safety risks not only for the individual concerned but also for others, for example colleagues, pupils, parents and contractors. Furthermore, the effects of alcohol or drug misuse are likely to be detrimental to the Trust's reputation.

The policy applies to:

- All employees of the Trust.
- Members, Trustees and Governors.
- Staff who are self-employed or employed by other organisations e.g. the local authority **and** who work solely at the school/UTC.
- Staff employed in units or bases that are attached to the Trust.
- Volunteers/Advisory Boards when working in a capacity of representing the Trust.

2. PURPOSE, SCOPE, PRINCIPLES AND DEFINITIONS

Where the Headteacher/Principal is the subject of concern, it will be the responsibility of the CEO and Central Trust HR Manager to ensure that the steps in this policy are followed.

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.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Promote awareness and prevent alcohol and drug addiction.
- Identify and provide help and support to those with an alcohol or drug related problem.
- Encourage a sensible approach to the consumption of alcohol.
- Provide clear guidelines on the consumption of alcohol at work including off site activities.
- Safeguard employees, students and visitors from the hazards of alcohol and drug abuse.

- Provide appropriate support and advice to the Headteachers/Principal on how best to deal with employees who may suffer from alcohol and/or drug related problems.
- Engender a climate that encourages openness and honesty (within the boundaries of strict personal confidentiality and legal requirements) and that gives employees, Headteachers/Principal confidence to deal with substance misuse problems by following a clear procedure.

Drug and alcohol misuse should become a matter of concern to the Headteacher/Principal when misuse interferes with an individual's work capacity, conduct, health, attendance or brings the Trust into disrepute.

2.1 Definition of drug misuse

Drug misuse refers to the use of illegal drugs and the misuse, whether deliberate or unintentional, of prescribed drugs and substances such as solvents. Drug misuse can harm the misuser both physically and mentally and through the misuser's actions, other people and the environment.

2.2 Definition of alcohol abuse

Alcohol abuse is defined as a level of consumption which affects a persons ability to carry out their duties. The simultaneous use of alcohol and drugs is particularly dangerous.

2.3 Gambling

See Appendix 3 for guidance on gambling problems.

2.4 Code of conduct

All Trust staff, Members, Trustees, Governors, and volunteers who represent the Trust must not engage in conduct outside work which could seriously damage the reputation and standing of the Trust, or the employee's own reputation or the reputation of other members of the Trust community.

Work Related Social Events

Although work related social events usually take place away from the Trust and on occasion, outside of normal working hours, the Trust Code of Conduct must always be considered, and the following principles will apply:

- Alcohol should be consumed responsibly at work-related social events, irrespective of whether the Trust, school/UTC provides or pays for the drinks.
- Trust staff, Members, Trustees and Governors must not behave in any way at any work-related social event that could bring the Trust's name into disrepute.

3. EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES IN MANAGING ALCOHOL AND DRUG MISUSE

- All employees are expected to ensure that their personal consumption of alcohol or use of prescribed drugs does not interfere with their ability to perform their duties safely and competently. Being under the influence of drink and/or drugs

while at work may lead to suspension from employment while a disciplinary investigation takes place.

- Any employee suffering from drug or alcohol dependency should declare such dependency, and the school will subsequently provide reasonable assistance, treating absences for treatment and/or rehabilitation as any other sickness absence. See Appendix 2 for further reading and support mechanisms.
- Failure to accept help or continue with treatment or breach of the conditions in Appendix 1 may render the employee liable to normal disciplinary procedures.
- 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 responsible for allowing sufficient time for the intoxicating substance to leave their system before reporting for work, this can apply to reporting for work the next day.

4. CONSUMPTION OF ALCOHOL AND/OR DRUGS DURING THE WORKING DAY

4.1 Alcohol

To ensure the safety of all children and staff, all Trust employees and Governors including those who have direct or indirect contact with children are forbidden from consuming alcohol at any time during the working day, including breaks. Any breach of this condition is likely to be investigated under the Trust's disciplinary procedure.

For guidance on the consumption of alcohol on school trips, social events etc. please see page 10 of the Educational Visits Policy.

4.2 Illegal Drugs

The use of illegal drugs or the misuse of other drugs is forbidden at any time during the working day, including breaks and if alleged is likely to be investigated under the Trust's disciplinary procedures.

4.3 Prescribed Drugs

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. Employees must notify the Headteacher/Principal or HR/Business Manager immediately, should they be prescribed medication or plan to take medication that may cause side effects and impair their ability to undertake their duties safely and effectively, in which case the employee may need to have reasonable adjustments made to enable them to continue working or be certified sick as appropriate.

5. POSSESSION OR DEALING IN DRUGS

Possession or dealing in drugs at work should be reported immediately to the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) and police and the following action must be taken:

- Do not alert the employee of your intention to call the police and do not send them home.

- Contact the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer)
- Contact the police.
- Wait for further instruction from the LADO and police.
- Inform the CEO and Central Trust HR Manager of the above.

6. DRIVING BANS RELATED TO ALCOHOL OR DRUGS

Where employees who are required to drive as part of their conditions of employment are disqualified from driving as a result of an alcohol or drugs related offence the Headteacher/Principal may liaise with the CEO to consider redeployment, if appropriate within the school/UTC. If redeployment within the school/UTC is not an option, then the employees continuing employment may be at risk. Consideration should be taken to the possibility of the employee bringing the school/UTC into disrepute, which may then require an investigation under the Trust's disciplinary procedure.

7. PROCEDURE

If the Headteacher/Principal is the subject of concern, the CEO and Central Trust HR Manager should be responsible for following the steps identified below.

7.1 An employee who appears to be under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol while at work.

The Health and Safety Executive guidance states that if an employer knowingly allows an employee under the influence of excess alcohol or drugs to continue working and thereby placing the employee or others at risk, the employer could be prosecuted. Therefore, where suspected consumption of alcohol or drugs is judged to affect work performance or conduct, the Headteacher/Principal will need to inform the CEO and Central Trust HR Manager immediately and take appropriate action as follows:

- Send the employee home so that they and others are removed from potential risks. Consideration should be taken to their ability to return home safely, e.g. for them not to drive themselves home.
- Consider whether it is appropriate to initiate a disciplinary investigation under the School's Disciplinary Procedure.

7.2 An employee who appears to have a drug and/or alcohol problem

Employees who are identified as possibly experiencing alcohol/drug related problems (see Appendix 1 for examples), whether by observation, poor performance, conduct or by their own voluntary admission, must be given the following assistance:

- If the Headteacher/Principal has concerns that an employee may have a drug or alcohol problem, he/she must first arrange an informal meeting to discuss his/her concerns with that employee. The employee may be accompanied by a Union or Professional Association representative or a work colleague and no one else.

- During the initial meeting, the Headteacher/Principal should suggest to the employee that support is provided by way of a referral to the Occupational Health Department. The employee should be made aware that his/her co-operation is required during the referral process in order for the Occupational Health Department to be able to provide full support and advice.
- The Headteacher/Principal should make it clear to the employee that any necessary time off will be granted for treatment/ support in accordance with the leave of absence policy.
- The employee should return, as far as possible, to their normal duties during and after treatment. This will depend on their ability to perform those duties or on the consequent risk of relapse due to a return to those duties. If a return to normal duties is not considered to be appropriate, redeployment or other suitable options may be considered by the CEO.

8. WHEN TO APPLY THE DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE

The Trust 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.

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:

- working under the influence of alcohol or drugs;
- incapacity through alcohol or being under the influence of illegal drugs;
- being convicted of any criminal offence connected with alcohol or drugs, regardless of whether the offence took place inside or outside the workplace;
- reasonable suspicion of activities, such as possession, consumption, dealing/trafficking, selling, storage of controlled drugs, either on work premises or engaging in such activities outside of work.

This list is not exclusive or exhaustive. Disciplinary action will in all cases be proportionate to the circumstances of the breach of this policy.

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Appendix 1 SIGNS OF ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE

Listed below are examples of the kind of symptoms which someone with an alcohol or drugs related problem may present. **Not all these symptoms will appear in every instance and it is possible that some of these symptoms may not be connected with alcohol or drugs** in which case signs which give cause for concern should be addressed appropriately.

Absenteeism/Irregular attendance

- Multiple instances of unauthorised leave
- Frequent Monday or Friday absences
- Unusually high absenteeism (e.g. for colds, flu, gastritis and general malaise)

Reporting for work

- Excessive lateness, for example on a Monday morning or returning from lunch
- Smelling of alcohol
- Unkempt appearance/lack of hygiene

Absenteeism whilst at work

- Repeated absences from the post, more often than necessary
- Frequent trips to the toilet
- Overlong tea/coffee breaks
- Leaving work early

Lack of concentration and confusion

- Work requires greater effort
- Jobs take an unreasonable time to complete
- Difficulty in recalling instructions and details
- Increasing difficulty in handling complex assignments
- Difficulty in recalling errors

Spasmodic work patterns and deteriorating performance

- Alternate periods of high and low productivity
- Increasing general unreliability and unpredictability
- Missed deadlines
- Mistakes due to inattentiveness or poor judgement
- Complaints from colleagues about behaviour
- Attempts to borrow money from colleagues
- Avoidance of manager or colleagues

Appendix 2 **ADDITIONAL SUPPORT MECHANISMS**

Organisation	Details	Telephone	Website
HSE (Health & Safety Executive)	Useful section on drugs and alcohol in the workplace	N/A	**www.hse.gov.uk/alcoholdrugs/index.html**
Alcohol Concern	A national agency working to reduce the incidence and cost of alcohol misuse and improve services to those with alcohol misuse problems.	0207 264 0510	**www.alcoholconcern.org.uk**
Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)	Website and telephone line supporting a network of local AA groups in the UK.	0845 769 7555	**www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk**
Drink Line	Telephone helpline that offers information and self help materials, help to callers worried about their own drinking, support to the family and friends of people who are drinking and advice to callers on where to go for help.	0800 917 8282	NA
NHS	'Alcohol – Know your Limits' website	NA	**www.nhs.uk/units**
The Drinkaware Trust	An independent charity, Drinkaware aims to increase awareness and understanding of the role of alcohol in society, enabling individuals to make informed choices about their drinking.	0800 917 8282	**www.drinkaware.co.uk**
National Drugs website	Providing professionals with the latest news and guidance from government about the drug strategy	NA	**www.drugs.gov.uk**
FRANK	A free, confidential 24-hour drugs helpline and informative website	0800 776600	**www.talktofrank.com**
Gamblers Anonymous	Gamblers Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who have joined together to do something about their own gambling problem and to help other compulsive gamblers do the same.	0207 384 3040	**www.gamblersanonymous.org.uk**
Gamble Aware	Informative website on Gambling and how to find help.	0845 6000133	**www.gambleaware.co.uk**
Gamcare	Gamcare provides support, information and advice to anyone suffering through a gambling problem.	0845 6000133	**www.gamcare.org.uk**

Appendix 3 **GAMBLING**

Just as with alcohol and drug addiction, gambling is also an addiction and line managers should offer support (see Appendix 2) to any employees it suspects has a problem resulting from regular gambling which affects their performance.

Employees who use school/UTC computers or their own mobile devices during school time for online gambling will, in most cases be subject to disciplinary action.

Appendix 4 **CONSUMPTION OF ALCOHOL ON SCHOOL TRIPS, SOCIAL EVENTS ETC.**

Whilst this policy stresses in section 4.1 that the consumption of alcohol during the working day, including breaks is forbidden, there may be circumstances where the consumption of alcohol may be permitted at the discretion of the Trust. This could be but not exclusively a celebration event or an awards event where students/pupils are not present.

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher/Principal in consultation with Central Trust to clearly define the occasions when the sensible consumption of alcohol will be permitted. This will be limited to social events. Clear guidelines must be put in place so that all employees are fully aware of what the expectations are for the consumption of alcohol at such events and the consequences of a breach of such guidelines (e.g. investigation under the Trust's disciplinary procedures).