

**St Mary's Catholic Primary School**

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# **ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**



## **Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea WORKPLACE ALCOHOL AND DRUGS POLICY**

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## Introduction

This document has been written following consultation between representatives from the Council's Occupational Health Service, trade unions, Drugs Action Team (DAT), Environmental Health Promotion Team, Community Education and Personnel.

Following the policy are two additional documents  
Workplace Alcohol and Drugs Policy – Guidance for Managers  
Guidelines for dealing with Alcohol or Drugs Misuse

## Aims of the Alcohol and Drugs Policy

This policy aims to:

- maintain and enhance a safe working environment for all staff by raising awareness of the risks and possible harm associated with alcohol or drug misuse
- promote a culture in which alcohol and drug misuse is discouraged and highlight their negative effects on work performance, service delivery and health and safety
- encourage staff who are experiencing problems with alcohol or drugs to obtain advice and support from an appropriate person or agency
- provide consistent and relevant guidelines, assistance and training, where necessary, for managers and staff, regarding sensible drinking and alcohol and drug misuse

***This policy applies to all Council employees and should be read in conjunction with local rules, the Code of Conduct for Employees, the Employee Disciplinary Code, relevant legislation and any relevant professional codes of conduct.***

## Responsibilities of All Employees

The Council expects all staff to report for work and remain in a fit and safe condition to perform their duties. Under the 'Health and Safety at Work Act 1974' employees are required to take reasonable care of themselves and of other persons who may be affected by their acts or omissions at work.

Employees should comply with the aims and procedures of this policy.

Employees are advised to seek help for an alcohol or drug problem. Information on helping agencies is available elsewhere in this document. Staff are encouraged to attend any health related events where alcohol and drug information and education is available.

Failure to comply with this policy, or a manager's actions relating to it, or to maintain a satisfactory level of performance, conduct or attendance may result in disciplinary action.

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## Responsibilities of Managers

If a manager is given reason to doubt an employee's capability for work as a result of alcohol or drug consumption, the employee should be sent home. The manager should see the employee at the beginning of the next working day and the appropriate action, which may include formal disciplinary action, taken.

This policy should be read in conjunction with local rules, the Code of Conduct and the Employee Disciplinary Code.

If a manager suspects or is made aware that a member of staff is experiencing difficulties with alcohol or drugs, the manager should encourage the member of staff to discuss this problem and seek help. The problem should be addressed with sensitivity and in confidence. Managers should remind staff of the Alcohol and Drugs Policy and inform them of the various agencies that can offer help.

Manager initiated referrals to Occupational Health for assessment will take place when there is deteriorating job performance or unsatisfactory conduct or attendance resulting from apparent health or behavioural problems linked with alcohol or drug use.

A manager must respond positively when made aware of alcohol or drug misuse and respect the individual needs of a member of staff experiencing difficulties. However managers must also take care not to place themselves in a position where they may be breaking the law.

### [Alcohol issues](#)

### [Drugs issues](#)

### [Workplace Alcohol and Drugs Policy – Guidance for Managers](#)

### [Guidelines for dealing with alcohol or drugs misuse](#)

## Alcohol issues

### Responsible Drinking

**Please note that the consumption of alcohol is not permitted in the workplace without the express permission of a manager or his/her deputy.** *Being under the influence of alcohol at work is defined as misconduct under the Employee Disciplinary Code and may be gross misconduct in some situations.*

The majority of people who drink alcohol enjoy it without experiencing problems. It is the aim of this policy to discourage the misuse of alcohol.

# St Mary's Catholic Primary School

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In order to achieve the aims of the policy staff will:

- have access to a copy of the policy. Health information and awareness raising programmes will be built into existing workplace events e.g. staff health and well-being events, lunchtime seminars, Adult Learners Week.
- alternatives to alcohol will always be made available.
- have access to information and guidance on how they can find confidential help within RBK&C, through the Occupational Health Service and outside the organisation regarding an alcohol issue

Training will be made available to managers to equip them with the skills required to implement the policy. This should be achieved through existing courses for managers offered by Learning and Development (e.g. Managing Staff Performance). These courses will be reviewed and upgraded as necessary through consultation with Learning and Development, Environmental Health Promotion Team, DAT and representatives from the Personnel department

## **Alcohol in the Workplace**

Staff are expected to arrive for work in a fit condition to perform their duties and to remain so until the working day is completed. Therefore alcohol should not be consumed by staff during working hours and they are encouraged not to drink during breaks as this may impair performance.

**Any member of staff whose work involves driving, operating plant or machinery or using power tools, electrical equipment, ladders or working at heights must not consume alcohol before coming on duty or during working hours or breaks.**

**Staff who are responsible for the care and health and safety of children, young people or vulnerable adults must not consume alcohol before starting work or during working hours or breaks.**

**Staff whose work involves meeting the public on a particular day must not consume alcohol before starting work or during working hours or breaks.**

Attention is also drawn to the fact that a person can still be under the effects of alcohol following heavy drinking the night before. Being under the influence of alcohol is defined as misconduct in the Employee Disciplinary Code and may be gross misconduct in some situations. Driving whilst under the influence of alcohol is a criminal offence.

It is acknowledged that there will be special occasions (e.g. staff departures, Christmas) when staff will wish to drink. This policy seeks to ensure that this may happen where permitted by local rules, but only when authorised by the appropriate head of department. Such occasions should be organised with respect to time of day, staff rotas and sensitivity to the public.

If alcohol consumption is authorised by a head of department, organisers, or those responsible for an event, must ensure that non-alcohol and low alcohol drinks will be available, as well as alcoholic ones, and a sensible limit should be placed on the amount of alcohol available.

**St Mary's Catholic Primary School RBKC Workplace Alcohol and Drug Policy**

# St Mary's Catholic Primary School

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The Council has a Staff Sports and Social Club at which alcohol may be purchased and consumed. Staff are however reminded that appropriate standards of conduct still apply and alleged misconduct is subject to the Employee Disciplinary Code.

## INDEPENDENT ALCOHOL AGENCIES

The following is a list of selected agencies which can offer help of various kinds to someone experiencing a problem with alcohol or to their partner and family:

### ACCEPT

724 Fulham Road  
London SW6 5SE  
020 7371 7477

(Offers services in education, prevention, training and treatment for people with an alcohol problem, their families and friends. Services include drop-in and abstinence groups, individual counselling, support groups. Self-referrals.)

### ALCOHOL CONCERN

[www.alcoholconcern.org.uk](http://www.alcoholconcern.org.uk)

020 7928 7377

National agency on alcohol misuse. Offers general information about alcohol and can provide details of local advisory services

### ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

[www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk](http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk)

020 7833 0022 London Help Line

### AL-ANON FAMILY GROUPS

020 7403 0888

(Helpline offering support for families and friends of problem drinkers)

### DRINKLINE

0800 917 8282

Gives confidential information and self-help advice.

### RUGBY HOUSE

<http://www.rugbyhouse.org.uk/arc.htm>

020 8960 5505

Alcohol Resource Centre

### Drug Issues

#### Drugs in the Workplace

**BEING UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF DRUGS AT WORK IS DEFINED AS MISCONDUCT UNDER THE EMPLOYEE DISCIPLINARY CODE AND MAY BE GROSS MISCONDUCT IN SOME SITUATIONS.**

**The possession, use or supply of controlled drugs is illegal and forbidden in the workplace. A controlled drug means any substance specified in the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971.**

It is an offence for a person:

**St Mary's Catholic Primary School RBKC Workplace Alcohol and Drug Policy**

## St Mary's Catholic Primary School

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- to have unlawfully a controlled drug in his possession
- to have a controlled drug in his possession, whether lawfully or not, with intent to supply it unlawfully to another
- to unlawfully supply a controlled drug: be concerned in the supply: offer to supply: be concerned in the making of an offer to supply

A manager could be breaking the law if he allows drugs or drug related activities in the workplace and fails to act.

Cannabis was reclassified from a Class B to a Class C drug in January 2004. As a Class C drug it will remain controlled under the Misuse of Drugs Act and possessing it will still be a criminal offence. The maximum penalty for possession is 2 years' imprisonment and the maximum penalty for supplying and dealing in cannabis is 14 years' imprisonment

Under the Misuse of Drugs Act it is not illegal to possess prescription drugs, for example Valium and Temazepam, without a prescription, but it is illegal to supply them to another person.

Where an employee is suspected of involvement in any of the above or similar drug related activities in the workplace disciplinary action including dismissal may be taken and a criminal investigation may be instigated. The Council will also involve the Police where controlled drugs, or what may appear to be controlled drugs, are found in the workplace. (See also Employee Disciplinary Code – Criminal Activity)

### **INDEPENDENT DRUG AGENCIES**

The following is a list of selected agencies which can offer help of various kinds to someone experiencing a problem with drugs or to their partner and family:

#### **THE NATIONAL DRUGS HELPLINE**

0800 77 66 00

Offers free and confidential advice about drugs.

#### **Frank (National drugs helpline)**

[www.talktofrank.com](http://www.talktofrank.com)

#### **RELEASE**

[www.release.org.uk](http://www.release.org.uk)

020 7603 8654

Confidential helpline offers advice on drug use and legal issues.

#### **ADFAM NATIONAL**

020 7928 8900

Provides a confidential support and information helpline for families and friends of drug users.

#### **RUGBY HOUSE**

<http://www.rugbyhouse.org.uk/fulcrum.htm>

020 8518 8333

Fulcrum – Drug day programme

**WORKPLACE ALCOHOL AND DRUGS POLICY**

**GUIDANCE FOR MANAGERS**

**Aim**

To enable the implementation of the Workplace Alcohol and Drugs policy through guidance and clarification.

**Objectives**

Managers should:

- have read and understood the Workplace Alcohol and Drugs Policy and its primary aim of promoting the health, safety and welfare of Council staff and those with whom they work
- be aware of the effects of alcohol consumption or drug use in the workplace and on general staff performance and health
- be able to identify deteriorating work performance or absenteeism on account of possible alcohol or drugs misuse and know how to direct employees towards professional help as soon as a problem is suspected
- have read and understood the Employee Disciplinary Code
- be aware of the legislation and the Council's position regarding drugs in the workplace

Managers will be offered training opportunities to acquire the skills needed for the above.

**The Role of Managers**

The Workplace Alcohol and Drugs Policy should be read in conjunction with local rules, the Code of Conduct for Employees, The Employee Disciplinary Code, relevant legislation any professional codes of conduct. The Workplace Alcohol and Drugs Policy is intended to draw attention to the potential effects of alcohol or drug misuse on staff health and performance and to existing information and documentation. Managers and staff need to be aware of the Council's "Guide to Customer Care".

Managers are required to:

- be familiar with existing procedures and guidance and ensure staff are conversant with the Workplace Alcohol and Drugs Policy and understand what is expected of them
- set a good example through the responsible use of alcohol
- be aware of the effects of alcohol and drug misuse

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- inform senior managers and the police if they find controlled drugs, or what appear to be controlled drugs, in the workplace
- monitor changes in work performance and attendance, sickness and accident patterns
- be aware of, and identify, any aspects of the work situation which could contribute to alcohol and drug misuse and seek to modify them
- refer staff for assistance as appropriate through the Personnel department to the Occupational Health Service, to their own G.P. or to an independent alcohol or drug agency
- intervene early and sensitively when there are signs of problems. This can be best achieved by adopting a non-judgmental approach and using sensitive interviewing skills to find out whether alcohol or drug misuse is the underlying cause of work problems

## **Alcohol and drugs in the Workplace**

The Workplace Alcohol and Drugs Policy is concerned with:

*controlling the consumption of alcohol in the workplace  
helping staff with an alcohol or drugs problem to seek help*

### **Alcohol**

Managers are not expected to "check" if staff have been drinking. The tone of the Workplace Alcohol and Drugs Policy is intended to promote an understanding of the ways in which alcohol misuse is linked to poor performance, ill health and absenteeism.

### **Responsible Drinking**

As part of ongoing workplace health initiatives, staff are encouraged to attend workplace events where information on the sensible use of alcohol is available. Managers are asked to encourage staff to attend specific health events such as staff Health Fairs or a lunchtime health seminar.

Where managers have given agreement to alcohol consumption in the workplace, such as at Christmas or a staff departure party, they have a responsibility to ensure:

- adequate cover is available to deal with routine public enquiries
- low alcohol and alcohol free drinks are also available
- a sensible limit is placed on the total amount of alcohol consumed
- the timing of these celebratory events should be such that they do not reduce the quality of Council services

Where Managers have given permission for alcohol consumption in the workplace, staff should not be expected to return to their duties that day.

# St Mary's Catholic Primary School

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The Council has a Staff Sports and Social Club at which alcohol may be purchased and consumed. Staff are however reminded that appropriate standards of conduct still apply and alleged misconduct is subject to the Employee Disciplinary Code.

## **Drugs**

This guidance note does not try to give a detailed process for dealing with every possible case. Each incident that arises will be different and will need to be treated on its merits. What this note aims to do is to highlight who needs to be involved and the essential steps that must be taken.

In general, any action in response to suspected drugs related activities should ensure that:

- Care is taken to be discreet. Especially in the early stages where evidence may be lacking, employees should not be rashly accused.
- Key people (see below) are alerted promptly and are kept informed.
- Responsibilities are clear

## **Who is involved in an investigation?**

Any member of staff who discovers evidence of illegal drugs should inform his or her line manager. Provided that he or she is satisfied that there is a case to be examined the line manager should inform the Head of Service, Director and the Personnel Manager for Employee Relations.

If an employee is suspended the Personnel Manager should inform the trade union.

The Head of Service should also brief the Executive Director and Personnel Manager for Employee Relations and make contact with the Police.

## **Establish who is in charge of the investigation**

It is important that everyone is clear from the outset who is leading an investigation. This will normally be a senior manager.

## **Gather the evidence**

Evidence of drugs related activities can be destroyed very quickly. Securing evidence may mean closing offices and keeping them out of bounds until desks cabinets etc can be properly checked.

## **Suspend suspected employee(s) and carry out a managerial investigation**

In some cases it is desirable to remove from the workplace an employee suspected of wrongdoing, whilst an investigation is carried out. Suspensions and the investigation should be carried out in accordance with the Employee Disciplinary Code.

[Click here for supplementary guidance on dealing with issues relating to alcohol or drug misuse.](#)

# St Mary's Catholic Primary School

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## GUIDELINES FOR DEALING WITH ALCOHOL OR DRUG MISUSE

### **Introduction**

These guidelines are part of a positive Council approach to dealing with the issue of alcohol and drugs in the workplace. They provide a framework for dealing with alcohol or drug misuse where:

an employee approaches their manager to seek help,

it has an impact on an employee's health and attendance at work or

it affects an employee's performance or conduct and thereby has an effect on service provision or the Council's image.

### **Aims**

The aims of these guidelines are:

- to raise manager's awareness of the possibility of alcohol or drug misuse amongst staff
- to help managers identify symptoms indicating possible alcohol or drug misuse
- to raise manager's awareness of the range of alcohol or drug problems and their impact on employee's performance and well-being
- to guide managers as to the most appropriate action

### **Self-referral**

If a member of staff has an alcohol or drugs problem, it should be treated in a similar way as a health problem. The member of staff should be encouraged to seek the advice of the Occupational Health Service through referral by the manager or from their own G.P. A list of independent agencies is given in the Workplace Alcohol and Drugs Policy and managers should encourage staff to self-refer.

It is not the role of the manager or any personnel officer to offer counselling and/or treatment for employees with alcohol or drug misuse problem. If an employee has approached you to seek help with an alcohol or drug misuse problem then you should:

- explore with the individual the nature of the problem and the possible causes.
- explore the sources of help available to the individual

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- identify whether the nature of their job contributes in any way to their problem.
- identify whether there are any implications for their work - e.g. are they operating heavy machinery or driving Council vehicles? Are they working with clients who themselves have an alcohol or drug misuse problem?
- agree an action plan which may include seeking a commitment to getting professional help
- monitor and review the employee's progress through regular discussion.  
(see below for an extended discussion of Monitoring and Reviewing)

### Tackling Alcohol and Drug Misuse

Employees will not always approach you if they have an alcohol or drug misuse problem. However, if you have concerns about possible alcohol or drug misuse then the following three stages should be followed:

- identify the symptoms
- explore the problem and identify the causes
- identify the appropriate intervention and take any necessary action

### Identifying the symptoms of alcohol or drug misuse

Alcohol or drug misuse may lead to impaired performance, increasing levels of sickness due to alcohol or drug related illnesses or hangovers and/or misconduct. The following list of symptoms **may** be signs that an employee is drinking too much or has a drug misuse problem. However, it is inadvisable for you to "diagnose" anyone as having an alcohol or drug related problem solely on the basis of these symptoms as these can be caused by other factors.

**Emotional symptoms** may include mood swings, depression, irritability and demotivation.

**Behavioural symptoms** may include higher levels of sickness absence, carelessness leading to accidents, difficulty in concentrating, missing work deadlines or reduced work performance.

**Physical symptoms** may include tremors, alcohol on the breath, specific alcohol-related illnesses.

# St Mary's Catholic Primary School

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## Exploring the problem and identifying causes

Alcohol or drug misuse may be particularly difficult to identify for two main reasons:

- people who misuse alcohol or drugs may not be aware that they have a problem and/or may strongly deny that they have a problem.
- alcohol or drug misuse may be manifest in a number of symptoms including poor performance, ill health and/or misconduct.

If you, as a manager, suspect alcohol or drug misuse is a problem then you will need to meet with the employee to try and discover the real cause. This initial meeting is exploratory in nature and should seek to encourage the employee to identify for themselves if there is an alcohol misuse problem. There are a number of "golden rules" that will help to create the right environment for discovering the cause:-

- Arrange a meeting in a room where, and at a time when, you won't be disturbed.
- Assure the employee of the confidentiality of your discussions. Any discussions should remain confidential between you and the employee - the aim is to try and encourage the employee to seek help for themselves. However, you should advise the employee that if evidence of misconduct or criminal activity comes to light you will not be able to maintain confidentiality. (See also the further discussion of confidentiality below)
- Avoid confrontational, "across the desk" positions.
- Avoid judgmental and emotive statements. Focus the discussion on work performance and behaviour. Indicate concern to help job performance.
- Have the facts at your fingertips - e.g. number of days sickness, examples of poor performance - e.g. number of invoices processed, etc. These are essential if you are challenged about your observations of the employee's health or performance record.
- Ask open questions such as how, why, what, tell me more about...?
- Listen attentively and do not interrupt - allow space for the employee to speak and do not rush to fill in the pauses.
- Check your understanding of what they are saying by trying to summarise what they have said.
- If you are not sure what they mean try and clarify by asking further questions.
- Seek an **agreed** outcome from the meeting - i.e. seek agreement about the nature and cause(s) of the problems and seek agreement about the next stage forward.

# St Mary's Catholic Primary School

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## **Causes**

Both the workplace environment and domestic circumstances can contribute to levels of stress which may make people more prone to rely on alcohol or drugs.

In the workplace some of the commonest factors are irregular or long hours, unsupervised or monotonous work, peer pressure, under or over-promotion, etc.

In an employee's home or social life factors may include marital or family breakdown, illness or bereavement, financial problems, etc.

Finally it should be noted that there are a number of different patterns of alcohol or drug misuse ranging from "one-off" incidents, through bingeing to daily dependence on alcohol or drugs. Managers should not seek to categorise staff but should be aware of the range of alcohol or drug problems particularly where it seems that the employee is dependent on alcohol or drugs.

## **Interventions**

If it has been established that there is a problem then the form of any subsequent intervention will depend on:

whether the employee accepts that there is an alcohol or drug misuse problem and whether they are prepared to seek help.

whether the fact that they have an alcohol or drug misuse problem influences the outcome of any disciplinary process.

### **Is the employee denying an alcohol or drug misuse problem?**

If the employee denies that there is an alcohol or drug misuse problem then the manager has no alternative but to proceed with the Council's normal procedures for dealing with poor performance, ill health or misconduct.

### **Is the employee accepting that there is an alcohol/drug misuse problem?**

If the employee has accepted that there is an alcohol or drug misuse problem and that this has contributed to their poor performance, etc. then the manager should:

- discuss what help may be available and if necessary seek a referral to a specialist agency for help.
- set out the standards of performance/conduct/attendance expected.
- set out the consequences if no improvements are made - the consequence of a failure to improve would be a resumption of the Council's normal procedures and may, ultimately, lead to dismissal.
- agree an action plan and establish a period for improvement.
- monitor the employee's performance/etc. during the review period.

## **St Mary's Catholic Primary School**

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- review the employee's performance/etc. at the end of the review period.

### **Monitoring and Review**

The primary aim of any intervention in these circumstances is to achieve an improvement in the employee's conduct, performance, or attendance. Both parties need to be clear what change is expected and what the consequences would be if this change is not made. If the performance, conduct or attendance displayed by the individual is not acceptable their employment could, ultimately, be at risk.

Where an employee has agreed to seek professional help, advice should be sought from the help agency when setting a timetable for improvement. This need not be the sole determining factor, however, and managers should also consider internal factors, such as the needs of the service, and any health and safety implications. In some circumstances, it may be appropriate

to seek a temporary transfer of duties to protect the welfare of the individual, colleagues and members of the public.

If the programme devised by the help agency is abandoned it may be appropriate to bring forward the review process as the review date is likely to have been set taking account of the original programme. If the programme is adjusted it may also be appropriate to reconsider the review process.

It is not possible to prescribe a set time for reviewing progress and the period set should take account of the individual circumstances. Ideally review periods should not be further apart than every three months as it may lead to the problem worsening without your knowledge. It is unlikely that there will be a full improvement in three months but the manager should acknowledge any improvements that are made and continue to monitor the employee's progress.

If insufficient improvement is achieved over the agreed time scale then advice should be sought from Personnel. At this stage it may be appropriate to follow the Council's established procedures for ill health, poor performance or misconduct as appropriate.

Similarly if the employee abandons their course of treatment and there is no improvement in their performance then the relevant procedure for dealing with poor performance, etc. should be followed. Abandonment of the treatment in, and of itself, is not grounds for disciplinary action.

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## **Confidentiality**

There is no obligation on an employee to disclose that they have an alcohol or drug misuse problem although if they are intending to seek professional treatment then they will need to discuss the arrangements for time off with their manager.

If the employee has disclosed to their manager that they have an alcohol or drug misuse problem then the content of these discussions should normally remain confidential between the employee and their manager.

If the employee receives counselling or treatment from an alcohol or drug specialist then it is likely that the content of these discussions will remain confidential. However, the manager should expect feedback about the employee's general progress and their fitness for work.

If it is necessary to resort to formal Council procedures and the employee offers alcohol or drug misuse as mitigation then further discussions will be needed, as part of those procedures, about the nature of the problem and whether help has been sought and persevered with.

Remember that being in possession of a controlled drug is illegal, and managers cannot condone or ignore any illegal activity at work. If a controlled drug is found in the workplace the matter must be reported to senior managers and to the police. A manager who fails to act when there is evidence of illegal activity may be breaking the law himself.