

## Alcohol and Drugs Policy

Date: May 2021

### 1. Introduction

This policy and procedure covers the management of alcohol and substance misuse issues Meadowpark School. Specifically this covers the responsibilities of the Proprietor, Head teacher and employees in managing alcohol and substance misuse.

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 & safety risks not only for the individual concerned but also for others, for example work colleagues and students.

Meadowpark School is committed to providing a safe and productive work environment and to promoting the health, safety and well-being of its employees. The drug and substance misuse policy is designed to ensure that employees are aware of the risks associated with alcohol/drug misuse and the consequences, including the legal consequences of their actions.

### 2. Policy Statement

Meadowpark School is committed to ensuring that this policy and its application reflect the School's Equal Opportunities at Work Policy. This means treating people fairly regardless of their colour, race, ethnic or national origin, language, religion or belief, gender or gender reassignment, marital status, sexuality, disability, age or any illness or infection.

Meadowpark School has a statutory duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and welfare at work of its staff. Staff should also be aware of their individual responsibility for their own health and safety and for those who may be affected by their acts or omissions whilst at work.

This procedure is designed to ensure that the school's interests for an effective, efficient and safe service are maintained whilst staff are treated in an appropriate manner. It aims to ensure consistent and fair treatment for everyone.

This procedure is therefore recommended for adoption by the Advisory Board and following its adoption, the procedure must be made known to all staff and remain accessible to them.

### 3. Who does the procedure apply to?

The procedure applies to all teaching and support staff at Meadowpark School.

#### **4. Definition**

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.

#### **5. Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) 2016**

Records will be treated as confidential in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) 2016 and the Data Protection Act 2018. Information and data collected in line with this policy is held securely and accessed and disclosed only for the purpose of managing the alcohol & substance misuse policy. Further details on how data is used and processed is provided in the school's privacy notice

#### **6. What are the main principles?**

Meadowpark School recognises that an alcohol or substance misuse problem may be an illness which calls for advice and support and should be treated in a confidential and constructive manner, notwithstanding that it may be appropriate to apply disciplinary measures. Early identification and appropriate treatment are the most useful ways of dealing with such misuse. The procedure aims to assist those affected to acknowledge the problem, and to encourage employees who recognise that they may have a problem to voluntarily seek advice and help.

Consumption of alcohol or substance misuse at work, during breaks or immediately prior to starting work is detrimental to job performance and incompatible with good practice in terms of health and safety. Employees should not attend for work whilst still under the effects of alcohol, drugs or other misused substances.

#### **7. Aims of the procedure**

The aims of the procedure are:

- To assist the Head teacher to identify employees with a problem at an early stage and to provide appropriate guidance and support.
- To assist the employee to overcome the problem, if they so wish, by creating an environment which actively encourages employees to acknowledge their problem and seek treatment.
- To assist an employee whose performance is affected to restore this to an acceptable level within a reasonable time scale.
- To increase employee awareness of the dangers associated with alcohol/substance misuse.
- To protect the welfare of employees, students and others and to minimise problems arising at work.

#### **8. Application of the Procedure**

Employees who believe that they have an alcohol or substance related problem, are encouraged to seek help and treatment voluntarily through their own GP or specialist agencies. Employees are also encouraged to approach their Head teacher.

Where an incident occurs which appears to be due to negligent or deliberate misuse of alcohol or any other substance, the employee will be subject to Meadowpark School disciplinary procedures.

The Headteacher needs to take immediate action when they suspect that an employee's consumption of alcohol or drugs is affecting their work performance or conduct. It is recommended that the employee is sent home to remove them and others from risk of harm.

Employees who come to the notice of the Head teacher, through observations or by disciplinary proceedings, as possibly having an alcohol or substance related problem will be offered the opportunity of help and support from outside agencies. However, this does not prejudice the school's right also to pursue the matter through disciplinary procedures.

Head teachers are not expected to diagnose alcohol/substance misuse or to recommend treatment as only those medically qualified to do so should make an assessment.

However, if they have reasonable suspicion that a member of staff has an alcohol/substance misuse problem then a referral should be made to a suitably qualified medical practitioner (eg Occupational Health) or equivalent.

Head teachers are advised to take initial advice from their Advisory Board. The Head teacher's role is to monitor job performance and attendance, to identify a deteriorating pattern of performance and/or attendance and to take corrective action as described in the procedure.

Employees will be expected to make medical appointments relating to treatment for alcohol or substance misuse as far as possible outside working hours.

## **9. Medical Suspension**

In certain circumstances the Head teacher can be required to suspend an employee from work on medical/health and safety grounds if they perceive there to be a risk either to them or others. Under normal circumstances it is expected that the employee will return to the same job after a period of sickness absence.

However, if an employee returns to work and the Head teacher feels that an employee is unfit to carry out their job role despite the employee stating they are fit, they may decide to suspend the employee on medical grounds.

Disciplinary action will be taken against employees who are convicted of an offence of driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs which is committed whilst on school business. Disciplinary action will also be taken against employees who have possession of controlled substances on school premises.

## **10. Refusal of assistance**

Should an employee refuse or discontinue any programme of assistance provided for them, then any unacceptable behaviour or inadequate standard of work will be dealt with on its merits through the schools disciplinary procedure.

Following return to employment, after or during treatment, if work performance should again suffer as a result of an alcohol related problem, each case will be considered on its merits and, if appropriate, a further opportunity for help and treatment will be offered.

## **11. Persistent Offending**

In an employee fails to achieve a satisfactory level of performance and behaviour, or relapses, the school may invoke disciplinary action. In exceptional circumstances it may be appropriate to offer further medical help.

### **Approval and Review**

The policy was approved by the Headteacher on 12th May 2021.

The renewal date is annually or earlier if there is a change in legislation.