



Misuse of Drugs and Alcohol Policy

Spring 2026



Misuse of Drugs and Alcohol Policy

The City Council is committed to working with its colleagues to support their general health and wellbeing whilst at work. It will provide an environment where they can obtain support, help and guidance in relation to problems arising from alcohol, drugs and substance misuse.

The objective of this policy is to advise schools on the misuse of alcohol, drugs and other substances and to provide a framework for support. This will include information on:

The responsibility of employees

- Health education
- Support options
- Disciplinary considerations

This policy is not intended for use in the event of excessive indulgence on random occasions that affect conduct and performance or contravene safety standards. In such instances the School's Disciplinary Procedure will apply.

This policy applies to all school based staff.

The responsibility of employees

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 sets out duties placed on the employee regarding their responsibility for their own health and safety and the health and safety of those who may be affected by their acts or omissions.

Employees should be aware that being under the influence of alcohol, drugs or other substances is a disciplinary offence and may constitute gross misconduct. Employees must therefore ensure that they are not under the influence of alcohol or drugs during work hours.

Employees who know or suspect that they have an alcohol, drug or substance misuse problem are encouraged to seek help and treatment and can do so without the need to go through their line manager should they wish to preserve anonymity.

Employer's Responsibilities

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, the City Council must ensure that so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety and welfare of its colleagues is protected.

Where it is suspected that an employee has an issue with alcohol, drugs or other substances, the head teacher must take steps to help towards resolving it.

Health Education

The City Council is committed to raising employees' awareness of the dangers of alcohol, drugs and substance misuse. The City Council fully supports and encourages employees with alcohol, drugs and substance misuse problems to seek appropriate help.

The City Council's Employee Wellbeing Service will provide information regarding alcohol, drug and substance misuse and will provide support to managers'/head teacher who are dealing with colleagues who have problems with drugs, alcohol or other substances.

A list of agencies that accept self-referrals is available to all colleagues from the Employee Wellbeing Service.

Alcohol, Drugs and Other Substance Misuse

Employees who work with plant, machinery or equipment, or who drive as part of their duties have a particular responsibility, under health and safety and road traffic legislation, to ensure that they are not affected by alcohol whilst carrying out those duties.

Employees should ensure that they do not use alcohol, drugs or other substances that may impair the performance of their duties immediately before and during working hours.

Prescription drugs are those prescribed by a registered medical practitioner or other health professional and being used by the individual to whom they were prescribed.

If an employee is, or will be, taking prescribed drugs which they believe may affect their performance, or the health and safety of themselves or others they must inform their head teacher, who will share this information as necessary (with Employee Wellbeing or Human Resources) on a need to know basis, while being conscious of the need to protect confidentiality. Head teachers must inform their Chair of Governors.

If an employee is required to take prescribed drugs which may affect their performance, head teachers may need to undertake a risk assessment to determine any potential impact on performance and to help reduce or eliminate any potential risks. Provisions may also need to be put in place to allow the employee to take their medication during working hours.

Consideration should also be given to the storage of prescribed drugs should the employee be required to take their medication during working hours. This would be agreeing a suitable location for the drugs to be stored which will not present a risk to children in the school. Therefore, access should be restricted to the employee if at all possible.

Prescription drugs/medication can be used by people to alleviate symptoms of underlying medical conditions. Special care should be taken with disabilities falling within the Equality Act (2010).

Non-prescription drugs are those drugs and other substances controlled by the Misuse of Drugs Act, together with glues, other solvents or drugs.

Support Options

The City Council recognises that alcohol, prescription drugs, non-prescription drugs and other substance addiction is primarily a health problem that should be dealt with sensitively. Employees

should be offered assistance when their performance and health at work is affected. However, this is balanced by the need to ensure acceptable standards of conduct and performance by employees.

In cases where an employee is found to have an alcohol, drug or substance misuse problem the issue should essentially be managed according to the same principles as any other employee suffering from a serious illness that affects their work. Dismissal would be unlikely to be fair if the employer had failed to exhaust all other possibilities, for example counselling and support.

Management will give employees who come to its attention as possibly having an alcohol, drug or substance misuse problem the opportunity to seek treatment and counselling.

Consideration will be given to authorised time off for employees to undergo treatment/counselling. Employees are encouraged to contact PAM Assist - Employee Assistance Programme for initial help, for further support options see Appendix 1 for Sources of Help and Support Groups.

It may be that employees will need to be on sick leave during their treatment. If the employee is unfit to return to their post following that leave, or that post hinders the long-term solution to the problem, consideration will be given to possible changes to the work situation. Advice should be sought from Human Resources and Employee Wellbeing.

If after returning to work, or following a period of treatment, work performance or conduct continues to be unsatisfactory as a result of the same problem then consideration will be given to time off to undergo further treatment.

If an employee declines to seek treatment, or discontinues a course of treatment before its satisfactory completion, or completes a course of treatment and continues with an unsatisfactory level of performance or conduct they may be subject to normal disciplinary procedures. The employee will be informed that their behaviour may eventually lead to dismissal.

Disciplinary Considerations

Where an employee does **not** have a substance abuse problem the issue may potentially be considered as misconduct, especially where it involves an isolated incident rather than a series of minor problems. The School Disciplinary Procedure - The Conduct of Employees lists 'being under the influence of drink or drugs sufficient to affect work performance' as an example of gross misconduct.

The above will normally justify dismissal for gross misconduct for a first offence but will depend on a number of factors:

- The nature of the job and the risk factors that could ensue if the employee has been drinking alcohol
- That all employees have been made aware of the fact that being under the influence of drink and drugs is given as an example of gross misconduct.
- The evidence that the employee is under the influence of drink or drugs
- The explanation offered by the employee

Supplying prescription drugs to other people may be a criminal offence and could be treated as gross misconduct, which may result in dismissal for a first offence, whether or not involving an incident occurring on Council/school property or in Council/school time.

The supply or possession of illegal substances may be a criminal offence and could be treated as gross misconduct, which may result in dismissal for a first offence, whether or not involving an incident on Council/school property or in Council/school time.



SOURCES OF HELP AND SUPPORT GROUPS

| | |
|--|--|
| Human Resources | Advice on all aspects of managing people with substance abuse problems |
| Safety Advisors Unit | For assistance with risk assessment and accident reporting procedure. |
| Employee Wellbeing | Referrals for employees Arranged by Human Resources |
| Mediation Service | For use where there is a specific need |
| Health and Safety Executive | Infoline – a confidential HSE phonenumber 0845 345 0055 |
| PAM Assist – Employee Assistance Programme | For employees who feel they would benefit from counselling Free phone 0800 882 4102 or PAM Assist Website. http://www.pamassist.co.uk |
| Teacher Support Network | Free information, support and counselling for teachers. 24 hours 08000 562 561 http://www.teachersupport.info/ |
| Trade Union | See current Trade Union representative list at http://nottinghamcity.gov.uk/nottinghamschools/ and selecting Human Resources |

SUPPORT GROUPS

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Drinkline | Advice, information and support to anyone concerned with their own or someone else's drinking 0800 917 8282 |
| National Drugs Helpline | 24 hour helpline for drug/solvent users, their families, carers and friends 0800 776 600 |
| The Samaritans | 24 hour helpline for emotional support 0845 7909 090 |
| Careline | Telephone counselling service for the general public 020 85141177 |
| NHS Direct | 24 hour confidential helpline for health concerns 0845 46 47 |