

# Canterbury College

## DRUG, ALCOHOL AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE

### 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 As a responsible employer the College is concerned to ensure the health, safety and welfare of its employees, the public it serves and all others who are affected by its activities. This procedure aims to set out clearly the College's position on drugs, alcohol and substances and the measures it will take to address the issues arising there from.
- 1.2 Misuse/abuse of alcohol, drugs and other substances can affect an employee's health, personal life, work performance, conduct and interpersonal relationships. There is also the risk of impairment of judgement and decision-making with potentially serious implications for the safety of service users.
- 1.3 It is the College's view that prevention is better than cure and its intention is to raise awareness of the issues and to foster a culture in which misuse/abuse is treated as a health problem in a climate of care and support to enable employees to come forward for assistance and to receive help in a confidential and non-judgemental manner.
- 1.4 Within this procedure, a 'drug' or 'substance' refers to anything which, when introduced into the body causes physical and/or mental changes including; altered states of consciousness, changes in mood and perception, impairment of cognitive functioning and loss of inhibitions, and can lead to addiction and ill-health.
- 1.5 'Misuse/abuse' refers to instances where drugs or substances are not used for the purpose for which they were produced or used by a person for whom they were not intended or, as in the case of alcohol, where there are concerns arising from the quantity and/or time consumed. Alcohol taken in moderation and at sensible times is not considered to be misuse for the purposes of this document.
- 1.6 This procedure applies to all employees of the College.

### 2. CODE OF CONDUCT

- 2.1 Employees must not report for work under the influence of illegal drugs, alcohol or other substances.
- 2.2 Employees must not possess, sell, trade or offer for such substances or otherwise engage in their use whilst at work.
- 2.3 Employees must not misuse prescription drugs. An employee may take prescribed medications, but should notify the Personnel Manager if the prescribed medication is likely to affect his/her ability to perform the job. The prescribing doctor or pharmacist will give advice on this.
- 2.4 Employees must not consume alcohol prior to starting work, at lunchtime or whilst at work if they operate potentially dangerous plant, equipment or machinery or drive.

- 2.5 All employees must have regard to the fact that the consumption of drugs or alcohol will alter their mental state and affect judgement. Where they are involved in face-to-face meetings with the public, clients and other persons and it is apparent that alcohol has been consumed at some point, for example, during lunchtime, it will project an adverse image of the College. Although the amount of alcohol consumed may be small and the employee feels no adverse effects, the negative impression given may be long lasting. Consumption of alcohol should therefore be avoided in such circumstances.

It is a contravention of the College Disciplinary Procedures for staff to be under the adverse influence of alcohol or any other intoxicating substances while on the College activities or premises.

## **2.2 BEING UNDER THE INFLUENCE AT WORK**

- 2.21 Employees who are suspected of being under the influence of alcohol, drugs or other substances during their working hours to the extent that their ability or judgement is impaired will be deemed to be putting themselves and others at risk. They will, therefore, be told they must leave the work environment and arrangements will be made to escort them home safely if necessary. Their initial absence should be treated as a temporary precautionary suspension and the employee will receive their normal pay.
- 2.22 The employee should be advised that they should return to work on the following day or on their next scheduled work period. A return to work interview will be arranged as soon as possible thereafter.
- 2.23 Where the individual by their actions endangers College property, themselves, staff or students as a result of misuse of drugs or alcohol then the appropriate provisions of the Staff College Disciplinary procedures may be invoked. To be under the adverse effects of alcohol or drugs while at work can be regarded as gross misconduct.
- 2.24 At the interview the employee will be advised that their behaviour/condition was unacceptable and an attempt should be made to establish whether the incident was a one-off event or a symptom of an on-going problem. If it is determined that the behaviour was an isolated event the employee should be advised that a re-occurrence may result in referral to the College's Disciplinary Procedure. If an on-going problem is identified the employee should be referred to the College's Occupational Health Service. In both cases welfare counselling should be offered.
- 2.25 If a member of the College staff knows or suspects another member of staff to be committing an offence as outlined in 2.1 and/or.2.2 the member of staff must immediately inform the following according to their availability: Immediate Line manager, Section Manger, Head of Faculty, Duty Officer or HR Department.

## **2.3 ALCOHOL AND DRUGS TESTING**

- 2.31 An alcohol/drugs test will be carried out in all cases where the employee has had any involvement in a workplace accident or in any incident that has caused or could have caused a danger to health or safety. Testing will also be carried out where management has grounds to believe or suspect that an employee is or may be under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

The objectives of this policy are to:

- maintain a safe working environment for all;
- assist in the early identification of alcohol or drugs-related problems;
- encourage employees who think they may have an alcohol or drugs-related problem to seek and accept help from the Company.

### **3.0 PROCEDURE**

3.1 It is the responsibility of supervisory staff to be aware when employees show noticeable changes in performance or behaviour that suggest that they may have an alcohol or other drug problem. The following circumstances are not exhaustive but *may* indicate a problem of misuse/abuse (please see appendix 1)

- Frequent lateness, repeated brief periods of absence for trivial or inadequate reasons.
- Persistent absenteeism – certified or uncertified – particularly around weekends and holidays, etc.
- Poor productivity, impaired concentration and memory.
- Accident proneness – minor accidents on the job (or near misses) or mistakes, errors of judgement away from the job.
- Inadequate work performance and/or attendance.
- Smelling of alcohol or appearing to be under the influence of alcohol/drugs/ other substances during working hours.
- Mood changes, irritability, lethargy.
- A combination of hand tremor, slurred speech, facial flushing, bleary eyes and poor personal hygiene.
- Actual evidence of misuse/abuse such as bottles or syringes.

3.2 As soon as misuse/abuse is suspected, the relevant line manager should discuss the matter with the employee, explain the reasons for concern and attempt to identify the cause of the problem. This should avoid any pre-judgement and give the employee the opportunity to amend behaviour or admit to any problem with alcohol, etc., which they may be experiencing. Strict confidentiality must be maintained. Advice and support is available from the College Welfare & Benefits Teamleader or the College's independent and confidential support line service.

3.3 If the employee denies misuse/abuse an attempt should be made to identify other possible causes of the problem. Failing this, referral to the Poor Performance/Capability Procedure or Sickness Absence Procedure as appropriate should be considered, including referral to the College's Occupational Health Department for advice and guidance.

3.4 Equally, when an employee suspects or knows that (s)he has an alcohol/drug or other substance problem, they should seek specialist help as soon as possible through the College's Welfare & Benefits Teamleader. All such approaches will be treated in confidence and with a view to providing advice and support. The employee will be advised of the range of specialist help which is available. An attempt will be made to reach agreement with regard to a referral on which a Recovery Programme can be based.

3.5 If an employee believes, because of inadequate work performance, attendance or observed behaviour, that a colleague might have a misuse/abuse problem, they should bring it to the attention of their colleague or their line manager in a confidential manner.

- 3.6 Employees cannot be compelled to report such concerns but should be aware that if they attempt to conceal the problems of a colleague in the mistaken belief that they are protecting or supporting the individual, they are more likely to be obstructing their colleague's potential for treatment and subsequent recovery.
- 3.7 If evidence of substance misuse/abuse (such as used needles) is discovered on College premises the individual concerned should document the finding, remove the evidence with caution to a safe and secure place and report the find as a matter of urgency to the Duty Officer.

### **MEDICAL REFERRAL**

- 3.11 The employee will be advised of their rights under the Access to Medical Reports Act 1988, prior to referral.

### **RECOVERY PROGRAMME AND SUPPORT CONTACT**

- 3.12 Subject to any specific advice from the College's Occupational Health Department, a Recovery Programme underpinned by a Support Contract will normally be established (appendix 2). The employee will be required to sign acceptance of the contract and the terms contained therein.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

- 3.13 Employees with a misuse/abuse problem will be treated in strictest confidence subject to any statutory provisions. The College undertakes to give them assistance willingly, and in complete confidence. All members of staff involved with misuse/abuse cases will be required to treat the matter with the utmost confidence. The confidential nature of any records or correspondence relating to staff who have undergone Recovery Programmes for misuse/abuse problems will be strictly preserved.

### **FAILURE TO ATTEND/COMPLETE THE RECOVERY PROGRAMME**

- 3.14 In the case of failure to attend or complete an agreed Recovery Programme the designated Senior Postholder will arrange to interview the employee to assess the situation, and will liaise with Personnel and other agencies that have been involved. Where appropriate, consideration should be given to applying the College's Disciplinary or Capability Procedures.

## Appendix 1

### **FEATURES WHICH MAY BE ASSOCIATED WITH SUBSTANCE MISUSE**

Managers should be aware that the symptoms listed below are not exhaustive and may not necessarily be as a result of substance misuse, but in the absence of an acceptable explanation being offered by the employee in question, this may indicate that there is a potential problem to be investigated.

However, the behaviour described in the checklist below will require action regardless of the cause.

- **Absenteeism**
  - instances of unauthorised leave
  - frequent Monday and/or Friday absences
  - excessive lateness eg Monday mornings, return from lunch
  - leaving work early
  - peculiar and increasingly improbable excuses for absences
  - unusually high absence rate for cold flu gastrics etc
  
- **High Accident Rate**
  - accidents at work
  - accidents at home, travelling to work
  
- **Difficulty in Concentration**
  - work requires greater effort
  - job takes more time
  - physical incapacity at work
  
- **Confusion**
  - difficulty in recalling instructions, details, etc
  - increasing difficulty in handling complex work
  - difficulty in recalling own mistakes
  
- **Spasmodic Work Patterns**
  - alternative periods of high and low productivity
  - increasing general unreliability and unpredictability
  
- **Reporting to Work**
  - coming to work in an obviously abnormal condition
  - aroma of alcohol, or other unfamiliar substances, particularly in the early mornings
  - tremors, especially of the hands
  - facial flushing, bleary eyes, sweating
  - drowsiness, loss of concentration and dizziness
  - increasing untidy appearance / lack of hygiene

- **Generally Deteriorating Job Efficiency**
  - missed deadlines, memory lapses
  - mistakes due to inattention or poor judgement and the use of deception to cover mistakes and behaviour
  - making poor decisions
  - wasting more material
  - improbable excuses for poor performance
  
- **Decline in Employee Relations**
  - over-reaction to real or imagined criticism
  - irritability, lethargy, mood changes
  - deterioration of relationships with colleagues at work
  - over-excitement
  
- **Other**
  - domestic problems eg in relationships with members of the family
  - financial difficulties, borrowing money
  - criminal offences
  - loss of interest – hobbies / family / friends.

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **Canterbury College**

#### **THE SUPPORT CONTRACT**

##### **SCOPE AND PURPOSE**

The aim of the Support Contract is to commit the employee to follow a supported programme of rehabilitation and the College to provide such counselling, therapy, treatment and support for the employee as is reasonable.

The Support Contract should be used in all cases as a supportive measure, in order to provide clarification of the procedures and conditions for all parties concerned.

##### **THE PROCEDURE**

Following receipt of advice from the College's Occupational Health Department, the relevant Director will, after consultation with the Welfare & Equality Team Leader arrange a meeting with the employee to discuss the terms of the Support Contract. The employee may be accompanied by their trade union representative or another employee of this College if they wish. The employee will be informed as to what will be required under a Support Contract, the monitoring and support arrangements and the timescale envisaged.

The employee's health and performance will be regularly monitored during the rehabilitation period and support will be given as appropriate.

Failure to accept or comply with the Contract may lead to the application of the College's Disciplinary or Capability Procedures as appropriate where conduct, inadequate work performance and/or attendance warrant this.

**SUPPORT CONTRACT TERMS**

1. I ..... (the employee), accept that I have a problem as defined in the report of the College's Medical Advisor and undertake to co-operate in a programme offering me support and assistance.
2. I ..... (Director), acknowledge the above employee's problem and agree to work with them through the following Recovery Programme.
3. The necessary programme will commence on ..... and continue for a period of ..... During this time a review/monitoring meeting will take place on a weekly/monthly basis.
4. The following support will be provided:-
  - i) A programme of consultations with the College's Welfare Counselling Service or an agreed outside agency.
  - ii) Time off with pay to attend the above in addition to any related medical appointments.
  - iii) A temporary change in working arrangements where appropriate.
  - iv) Monthly/weekly confidential supervision sessions.
  - v) Access to a confidential mentor.
5. I ..... (the employee) understand and agree that should I fail to comply with the requirements contained in this Contract or breach any of the conditions arising from the requirements therein, this agreement will terminate without further notice and the College's Disciplinary Procedure or Capability Procedure will be instituted.
6. I understand and agree that if during the continuance of this agreement or upon its cessation, at any time until such time as my employment with the College ceases, I attend work having misused/abused alcohol/drugs, I will be the subject of immediate disciplinary proceedings.
7. I agree to be bound by the terms of this Contract as defined above.

Signed: ..... (Employee)                      Date: .....

Signed: ..... (Faculty/Department Head)                      Date:  
.....

**Appendix 3**

