Staff Substance Misuse Policy

Policy Type:	**Trust Policy**
Date Issued by MAT:	**01/07/2026**
Approved By:	**Joint Policy Development Committee**
Approval Date:	**04/09/2025**
Review Date:	**September 2028**
Person Responsible:	**Human Resources Director**

Our Christian Ethos and Values

All policies within the Diocese of Norwich Education and Academies Trust (hereafter referred to as "the Trust"), whether relating to an individual academy or the whole Trust, will be written and implemented in line with our Christian ethos and values.

We have high ambition for all, and we truly value the wider educational experience.

We walk and talk our Christian values. We put people at the centre of the organisation and want to see them flourish and grow. Our schools are inclusive, welcoming those of all faiths and none.

Overall accountabilities and roles

The Trust has overall accountability for all its academies and staff. Through a Scheme of Delegation it sets out the responsibilities of the Trust, its Executive Officers, the Local Governance Committee and the Principal / Headteacher. The Principal / Headteacher of each academy is responsible for the implementation of all policies of the Trust.

All employees of the Trust are subject to the Trust's policies.

Contents

1. Introduction 3
2. Scope and Purpose 3
3. Definitions 3
4. Roles and responsibilities: 4
5. Potential Impacts of Substance Misuse 4
6. Legal drugs and prescribed medicines 5
7. Alcohol and illegal drugs 5
8. Solvents 6
9. Disciplinary action 7
10. Identifying a problem 7
11. Situations without disciplinary action 7
12. Medical emergencies during working hours 8
13. Threatening behaviour 8

1. Introduction

The Trust cannot condone the misuse of drugs and alcohol on the premises.

The Trust does however recognise that the misuse of drugs and alcohol may indicate a significant health or wellbeing concern and, as such, we aim to support employees in these situations. Drug or alcohol use can become problematic when an individual uses a substance so regularly or in such quantities that they start to depend on it to feel normal in everyday life. Dependence can develop into addiction, where day-to-day life focuses on obtaining and regularly drinking or taking a drug to maintain either a physically stable state or a preferred mental state.

This policy has been created to outline the responsibilities of all staff in relation to their conduct and use of substances, as well as the disciplinary procedures that may be applied if this policy is breached. One of the fundamental aims of this policy is to ensure that problems are dealt with effectively and consistently. This policy applies to all employees of the Trust, including school staff and central team staff.

2. Scope and Purpose

This policy has due regard to statutory legislation including, but not limited to, the following:

- The Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 (as amended)
- The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (as amended)
- The Health Act 2006
- The Transport and Works Act 1992
- Psychoactive Substance Act of 2016

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following Trust/school policies:

- Disciplinary Procedures for all employees (Trust)
- Health and Safety Policy (Trust)
- Staff and Volunteer Code of Conduct Policy (Trust)
- Staff Capability Policy (Trust)
- Management of Sickness Absence Policy (Trust)
- Trust Wide Smoke Free Policy (Trust)

3. Definitions

For the purpose of this policy, “substance” is defined as something which, when ingested, alters perception and the way in which the body works. This definition includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- All illegal substances
- Alcohol
- Solvents
- Medicines (to include over-the-counter and prescribed medications)
- Legal highs
- CBD products (including but not limited to: Drinks; gummies; oils & supplements; Vaping liquids).
- (With regards to Tobacco, please refer to the Trust Wide Smoke Free Policy)

For the purpose of this policy, the term 'Headteacher' includes the role of Executive Headteacher and Principal.

4. Roles and responsibilities:

4.1. The Headteacher is responsible for dealing with any issues relating to substance misuse within the school. For central team staff, this will be dealt with by the appropriate line manager.

4.2. The Headteacher or line manager is responsible for deciding upon whether the Disciplinary Policy may need to be instigated.

4.3. The Headteacher or line manager is responsible for ensuring appropriate support mechanisms are in place to promote staff members' health and wellbeing.

4.4. All staff are responsible for adhering to the procedures outlined in this policy.

4.5. All staff are responsible for taking reasonable care whilst at work, ensuring they do not endanger their own health and safety or that of others through substance misuse

4.6. All staff are responsible for bringing any substance misuse issues to the attention of the Headteacher or line manager; this includes in relation to themselves and other staff members.

4.7. All staff are responsible for accepting any support offered to them by the school/Trust in relation substance misuse

5. Potential Impacts of Substance Misuse

The following is a non-exhaustive list of examples: -

5.1 Organisational impact:

- health and safety concerns for employees, pupils, etc;
- detrimental impact on teaching and learning;
- lateness and absenteeism;
- unacceptable behaviour or poor discipline;

- adverse effect on the school's/Trust's reputation.
- Individual impact:
- loss of concentration;
- loss of co-ordination;
- decline in work performance;
- reduced ability to ensure their own health and safety;
- increased likelihood of suffering an accident.

6. Legal drugs and prescribed medicines

6.1 The Trust understands that some staff members may require medication that has been either purchased over-the-counter or prescribed by a doctor or other health professional.

6.2 All staff should notify the Headteacher or line manager if they are required to take over-the-counter or prescribed medicines which may impact on their work.

6.3 All staff should notify the Headteacher or line manager of any side effects of prescribed medicines if it is believed the side effects will affect their work. Similarly, staff must notify the Headteacher or line manager if they begin to feel side effects of prescribed medicines whilst at work. The Headteacher or line manager will decide on a case-by-case basis whether the staff member should return home for either their own health and safety or to safeguard others.

6.4 Legal drugs to include prescribed medicines and over-the-counter medicines should only be brought on to the premises if it would be detrimental to the staff member's health not to administer them whilst at work. Furthermore, legal drugs, prescribed medicines and over-the-counter medicines should be in the original packaging. All prescribed medicines should have a prescriber's label, clearly prescribed to the employee.

6.5 All staff must ensure that any legal drugs to include over-the-counter and prescribed medicines that have been brought onto the premises cannot be accessed by pupils.

6.6 All staff should not exceed the maximum dosage of any prescribed medicines.

6.7 All staff should avoid taking prescribed and over-the-counter medicines in the presence of pupils wherever possible.

7. Alcohol and illegal drugs

7.1 All staff are not permitted to consume alcohol or illegal drugs when carrying out their duties; this includes when they are carrying out their duties both on and off the premises, e.g. during school trips.

7.2 All staff should not carry out their duties whilst under the influence of alcohol.

7.3 All staff members will not be searched for alcohol or illegal drugs unless section 7.4 of this policy applies. Every effort will be made to encourage the staff member to hand over any such substance suspected to be in their possession.

7.4 Where a staff member refuses to adhere to the above and the substance is believed to be illegal, the school/Trust may search the employee, **with their consent.** However, the employer should have a reasonable and non-discriminatory ground for conducting a search. All searches must be in line with the following:

- The reason for the search should be clearly explained to the employee;
- The consent should be freely given and not coerced;
- The consent should be recorded on the “Employee consent to a search" form (see appendix 1, page 10);
- Only bags/belongings, pockets and the employees vehicle should be searched, and the employee should be asked to empty these themself, in front of the searcher and witness;
- If the employee initially consents but then withdraws consent, the employer must stop the search;
- A second witness of the same sex will be present;
- The search will be conducted in a private area to respect the employee’s privacy;
- If a substance is found, it will be removed from the employee, placed into a sealed plastic bag, and stored securely on site until it has been confirmed as to what the substance is (if it is illegal, see 7.6). The school/trust may take photographic evidence of the substance for potential disciplinary purposes;
- A record will be kept of the details of the substance, the date and time it was found, and the name of the second witness (see appendix 2, page 11);
- Depending on the nature and severity of the incident, the police will be notified immediately;
- Details of the incident, including the police incident reference number, will be included on the record.

7.5 If an employee refuses a drug search when required to consent, the School/Trust may consider this to be a breach of contract or a failure to follow a reasonable management instruction, which could lead to disciplinary action, potentially including termination.

7.6 Where applicable, the police will deal with the situation in line with agreed protocols, and the staff member may be subject to immediate disciplinary action in accordance with the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

7.7 A full incident report will be completed and submitted to the Headteacher or line manager.

7.8 If a staff member has alcohol in their possession, they are required to store this in a secure location inaccessible by pupils and not retrieve this until the end of the school day, or until they have finished carrying out their duties. This is relevant for staff leaving or birthday presents, where other staff may have bought alcohol as a present.

8. Solvents

8.1 All staff members are allowed to bring solvent based products including, but not limited to, aerosol deodorants, compressed air and aerosol hairspray on to the school/Trust site. However, these must be kept secure and administered away from pupils.

9. Disciplinary action

9.1 All staff members may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal for gross misconduct in accordance with the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure where they (this list is not exhaustive):

- Enter Trust premises under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.
- Are found to have illegal drugs in their possession.
- Consume alcohol or illegal drugs whilst carrying out their duties.

10. Identifying a problem

10.1 Misuse of alcohol and drugs which affects performance and behaviour at work may be deemed as misconduct or an inability to meet standards of work performance and is unacceptable.

10.2 Where a staff member suspects that a colleague may have a substance misuse problem and is therefore worried about their colleague's wellbeing and any potential safeguarding implications, the staff member has a responsibility to raise their concerns confidentially with their line manager. No staff member who raises concerns will be penalised for doing so or be subject to any detriment.

10.3 Further advice may be sought from Occupational Health if deemed appropriate.

10.4 The Trust will, where possible, make any reasonable adjustments to accommodate recommendations made by the Occupational Health service.

10.5 If a member of staff misuses alcohol or drugs after support has been offered to them, the Trust will decide whether disciplinary action should be followed immediately.

11. Situations without disciplinary action

11.1 The Trust understands that staff members could have a drug or alcohol problem, although it may not directly affect their work performance or behaviour. This could arise where a member of staff confides in another staff member, or the Headteacher or line manager has identified possible indicators of a problem and may wish to approach the individual and discuss this e.g. through a regular absence pattern.

11.2 The Trust will highlight the importance of discussion and encourage staff to seek help from their school or the Trust in these situations.

11.3 In such circumstances the Headteacher or line manager will provide support for the member of staff, which may include a support plan and, where a problem is identified, this will be monitored by the HR team in conjunction with the school.

11.4 The Trust recognises that the above procedures cannot take place without the cooperation of the staff member. If the staff member does not wish to participate, no further action will be required.

11.5 The Headteacher or line manager may provide the staff member with references to external support organisations, should they wish to access them.

11.6 If the problem begins to affect their work performance, disciplinary procedures will be followed in accordance with the Disciplinary Policy.

12. Medical emergencies during working hours

12.1 In alcohol and drug-related emergencies, trained first aiders will be contacted. A staff member will remain with the casualty until the first aider arrives.

12.2 Any other pupils or staff members will be removed from the immediate area, as soon as reasonably practicable.

12.3 Following an assessment by the first aider, a decision will be made to ascertain whether an ambulance should be called.

12.4 The staff member's next of kin (or immediate family if no next of kin has been provided by the employee) will be contacted to inform them of the incident.

12.5 Further information regarding medical emergencies can be sought from the school's First Aid Procedures.

13. Threatening behaviour

13.1 Threatening or aggressive behaviour by staff members under the influence of a substance will be taken very seriously.

13.2 Where threatening and/or aggressive behaviour is displayed, the Trust may contact the police.

13.3 Any staff member displaying threatening and/or aggressive behaviour may be removed from the premises and may be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

Appendix 1: Employee consent to a search form

An employer cannot legally search an employee's belongings without their express consent. The consent must be freely given and not coerced. This form is a record of that consent, including the reason for the search.

Name of Employee being searched:	
Name of Manager, and their job title, requesting search:	
Name of witness, and their job title:	
Date of search:	
Reason for search:	
Reason explained to employee? Y/N	
Confirm employee emptied own pockets/bag etc? Y/N	
Location of search conducted:	

If employee withdraws consent at any time during the search, please stop the search immediately and detail below why the employee has requested the search stop:

If employee refuses a search, please read section 7.5 of the policy, and ask the employee to detail their reason to the refusal below, and to sign next to their note:

I confirm, I have consented to the search of my belongings which took place as per the above information. The consent was freely given and was not coerced.

Employee Signature..... Date.....

Appendix 2: Record of breach of substance misuse policy following employee search.

As per reference 7.4 of the Staff substance Misue policy, this form provides a record of the details of the substance found on an employee, following a search, for which the employee provided consent (see completed form; "Employee consent to a search form").

Name of Employee:	
Name of Manager, and their job title, who requested search:	
Name of search witness, and their job title:	
Date of search:	
Reason for search:	
Detail of substance found:	
Detail of employee belonging item was found in	
Date HR Director informed (should be immediately)	

Signature of Manager who suggested the search:

Signature of employee who witnessed the search: