



# Drugs and Alcohol Policy

## PURPOSE

This policy forms part of Ark Schools’ overall commitment to safety, good employee relations and the promotion of health at work. As a responsible employer, Ark Schools recognises the need for a constructive and preventative strategy designed to encourage early identification of alcohol and drug related problems among employees.

Date of last review:	April 2015	Author:	Head of People Operations
Date of next review:	January 2019	Owner:	Head of People
Type of policy:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Network-wide <input type="checkbox"/> Tailored by school	Approval:	Management team
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## POSITIONING WITHIN ARK OPERATIONAL MODEL

Component	Element
<input type="checkbox"/> Strategic Leadership & Planning <input type="checkbox"/> Monitoring, Reporting & Data <input type="checkbox"/> Governance & Accountabilities <input type="checkbox"/> Teaching & Learning <input type="checkbox"/> Curriculum & Assessment <input type="checkbox"/> Culture, Ethos & Wellbeing <input type="checkbox"/> Pathways & Enrichment <input type="checkbox"/> Parents & Community <input type="checkbox"/> Finance, IT & Estates <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Our People	ER and Wellbeing Model

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy forms part of Ark Schools' overall commitment to safety, good employee relations and the promotion of health at work. As a responsible employer, Ark Schools recognises the need for a constructive and preventative strategy designed to encourage early identification of alcohol and drug related problems among employees.
- 1.2 The inappropriate use of alcohol or drugs can damage the health and wellbeing of employees and have far-reaching effects on their personal and working lives.
- 1.3 At work, alcohol or drug misuse can result in reduced levels of attendance, sub-standard work performance and increased health and safety risks not only for the individual concerned but also for others, for example work colleagues, students, members of the public, and contractors. Furthermore, the effects of alcohol or drug misuse are likely to be detrimental to the Ark Schools' reputation and image and its ability to deliver high-quality education to students.

## **2. Purpose**

- 2.1 This policy aims to:
  - Raise staff awareness of the risks and potential harm to health associated with the use of intoxicating substances.
  - Set out the rules regarding the use of intoxicating substances so that employees are aware of the likely consequences for their employment of misusing them.
  - Create a climate that encourages employees who may be misusing drugs or alcohol to come forward and seek help.
  - Provide a framework to enable instances of substance misuse by employees to be handled in an appropriate, fair and consistent manner.
  - Achieve a balance between supporting employees who come forward with a problem and the overriding need to preserve:
    - the health, safety and welfare of employees and others with whom they come into contact
    - the organisation's reputation
    - the delivery of high-quality education to students.

## **3. Scope**

- 3.1 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.
- 3.2 This procedure applies to all employees<sup>1</sup> except for those who are in their probationary period<sup>2</sup>, and subject to separate procedures.
- 3.3 This policy is not intended to apply to 'one-off' incidents or offences where there is no evidence of an ongoing problem, which are more appropriately dealt with under the Disciplinary procedure, when applicable.
- 3.4. This policy also applies to all agency and casual workers, contractors, volunteers and others working on Ark Schools behalf. Failure to comply is likely to result in the working arrangements being terminated.

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<sup>1</sup> This policy applies to all Ark staff. Appropriate substitutions will be made to accommodate differences in organisational structures across the Ark network and head office. For example, for primary academies all references to the principal are replaced with the head teacher. For Ark Schools head office and for Ark head office teams, all references to the principal are replaced with the CEO, Managing Director, or other appropriate senior leader, and all reference to the senior leadership team is replaced by the senior team.

#### **4. Equal Opportunities**

- 4.1 The Drugs and Alcohol Policy must always be applied fairly and in accordance with employment law and the Ark Schools Equal Opportunities Policy.

#### **5. Responsibilities**

- 5.1 Ark Schools is responsible for maintaining fair, consistent and objective procedures for matters relating to the inappropriate use of alcohol or drugs
- 5.2 Within the limits of what is practicable and within the law, strict confidentiality will be maintained when dealing with alcohol and drug related problems among employees.
- 5.3 The principal has overall responsibility for the internal organisation, control and management of each academy.
- 5.4 The members of the SLT (senior leadership team or designated senior manager) have responsibility for the internal organisation, control and management of their area of responsibility.
- 5.5 Managers are required to:
- Be aware of the signs of alcohol and substance misuse and the effects on performance, attendance and health of employees, and take reasonable and appropriate steps.
  - Ensure the health, safety and welfare of employees and others with whom they come into contact.
  - Ensure that staff are aware of the policy and the rules and consequences regarding the use of alcohol, drugs and other intoxicating substances.
  - Treat such matters confidentially as far as is legitimately and legally possible.
  - Monitor the performance, behaviour and attendance of employees as part of the normal supervisory relationship.
  - Intervene at an early stage where changes in performance, behaviour, sickness levels, attendance patterns are identified to establish whether alcohol or drug misuse is an underlying cause.
  - Ensure that staff are aware of the support that is available to them.
  - Provide support and assistance, where appropriate and for a reasonable period.
  - Seek advice from the Ark Schools' HR where the manager has concerns or is aware that an employee is adversely impacted due to drugs and/or alcohol.
  - In some instances, it may be necessary to instigate disciplinary measure.
- 5.6 Employee responsibilities:
- To familiarise themselves with this policy and comply with its provisions.
  - To present a professional, courteous and efficient image to those with whom they come into contact at work. They therefore have a personal responsibility to adopt a responsible attitude towards drinking and taking prescribed and over-the-counter drugs.
  - Employees are not permitted to possess, store, trade or sell controlled drugs on academy premises or bring the academy into disrepute by engaging in such activities outside of work.

- Employees are strongly encouraged to seek help if they have concerns regarding their alcohol or drug consumption. It is recommended that they approach their GP, and also their line manager so that the academy can assist in the provision of appropriate support to help speedy rehabilitation, for example referral to the occupational health service, medical professionals, professional drug/alcohol treatment agencies.
- Employees are expected to co-operate with any support and assistance provided by the academy to address an alcohol or drug misuse problem.
- Employees should not, even with the best of motives, 'cover up' for, or collude with, a colleague with an alcohol or drug-related problem but instead should encourage the individual to seek help.
- Where the individual concerned does not wish to come forward to seek help, and their colleague(s) genuinely suspect that the individual may be misusing drugs or alcohol, they have a responsibility to raise their concerns with the employee's line manager.

#### 5.7. At work:

- Employees must report for work, and remain throughout the working day, in a fit and safe condition to undertake their duties and not be under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Where the employee is required to drive for work purposes, they have a responsibility for ensuring they are not under the influence.
- Employees must notify their manager immediately should they be prescribed medication or plan to take over-the-counter medicines that may cause side effects that impair their ability to undertake their duties safely and effectively. This is particularly important if they occupy a post where it is not only their own personal safety but those of others that could be jeopardised.
- Similarly, employees who experience side effects as a result of taking prescribed or over-the-counter medicines that impair their ability to perform their duties safely and satisfactorily must notify their line manager immediately.
- Employees are not obliged to disclose the actual medical condition being treated nor the medication – simply the impact/side effects.

#### 5.8. Outside working hours

- Employees must not consume intoxicating substances before coming on duty or when they may be required to attend work at short notice, for example when they are on call.
- Intoxicating substances such as alcohol may remain in the system for some time and even small amounts can impair performance and jeopardise safety. Employees are personally responsible for allowing sufficient time for the intoxicating substance to leave their system before reporting for work.

### **6. Treatment**

- Ark Schools treats drug and alcohol dependency as a health problem that requires special treatment and help, and recognises that early identification is more likely to lead to successful treatment.
- Employees are strongly encouraged to discuss any problems they have at an early stage with their line manager. For employees undergoing treatment, this absence will be covered under the Absence Management Policy.

## **7. Breaches of the policy**

- 7.1. Ark Schools will, adopt a constructive and supportive approach when dealing with employees who may be experiencing drug or alcohol dependency/addiction.
- 7.2. This means that employees seeking assistance for a substance misuse problem will not have their employment terminated simply because of their dependence/addiction.
- 7.3. However, if performance, attendance or behaviour is unacceptable despite any support and assistance that can be offered, or where it is refused, ultimately dismissal may be unavoidable.
- 7.4. Notwithstanding the above, there will be circumstances where breaches of the policy, whether dependency-related or not, will be treated as a disciplinary matter and may result in the summary dismissal of the employee. Examples of issues that will be subject to disciplinary action, including the possibility of dismissal, are:
  - Deliberate disregard for personal safety and that of others associated with the use of intoxicating substances.
  - Serious unacceptable behaviour in the workplace associated with the use of intoxicating substances.
  - Being found incapable of performing normal duties satisfactorily and safely as a result of consuming alcohol or taking drugs.
  - Possession, consumption, dealing/trafficking, selling, storage of illegal drugs either on work premises or engaging in such activities outside of work.
  - Being disqualified from driving as a result of alcohol or drug-related offences (employees required under their contract of employment to drive a vehicle).
  - Making malicious or vexatious allegations that a colleague is misusing intoxicating substances.

This list is illustrative only and should not be regarded as exclusive or exhaustive. Any disciplinary action will be in all cases proportionate to the circumstances of the breach of the policy.

- 7.5. Where evidence warrants, Ark Schools will inform the police of illegal drug use or any activity or behaviour over which there are concerns as to its legality. For example, it would be necessary to report criminal behaviour associated with alcohol abuse such as having a drink-driving accident in a work vehicle.

## **8. Review**

- 8.1. This policy will be reviewed every three years in consultation with the recognised trade unions.