



John Wheatley College

Board of Management

Substance Misuse Policy

1. Introduction

Drugs may be taken for a number of reasons and can affect the body and mind in a variety of ways. These drugs may be medicines or drugs of misuse. The effects of some drugs may be prolonged and extend beyond recreational time into working time. This drug misuse may influence work performance even if it takes place outside the workplace. Like the abuse of alcohol, the misuse of drugs is associated with a variety of costs which have implications for the College, student or the member of staff. Health and Safety regulations may be infringed, performance may be adversely affected, levels of absenteeism may increase all as a result of the misuse of substances, whether illegal or prescribed.

Due to the illicit nature of certain drugs, the extent to which it occurs and the cost to the workplace are not as well documented as those costs attributed to the misuse of alcohol. However research indicates that the misuse of psychoactive drugs is on the increase and its considerable implications for health and safety at work, as well as legal issues for employers, require to be taken into account within the workplace.

A significant number of people who misuse drugs are in employment and the workplace may therefore provide opportunities for identification and support. The provision of support for students and staff who misuse drugs has benefits for those concerned and the College by reducing absenteeism and assisting in the improvement of individual performance both in programmes of study and work.

This policy states clearly John Wheatley College's position about its commitment and support to the welfare of students and employees and the unacceptability of drug misuse, and provides guidelines on how to prevent drug-related problems from occurring and how to manage them effectively if they do. The policy aims to minimise substance misuse and encourage both students and staff with drug problems to seek appropriate assistance thus protecting their own health and welfare.

2 Designation of the Term Drug

For the purposes of this policy the term 'drug' refers to any psychoactive drug whether illegal, available on prescription or over the counter from pharmacies and other retail outlets or other legal substances such as solvents. In the case of prescribed or over the counter drugs, their possession and prescribed use is acknowledged as legitimate.

3. Definition of Drug Misuse

For the purposes of this policy the term 'drug misuse' refers to the use of illegal drugs and the misuse, whether deliberate or unintentional, of prescribed medicines or other substances such as solvents. A drug misuse problem is defined as any situation whereby the use of such substances, whether through intoxication, regular use or dependence, affects their health and/or work performance/conduct.

4. Policy Statement

- i) This policy has been designed to reflect the College's commitment to ensuring a healthy and safe environment for students and staff. It is also designed to reflect the importance the College places on providing both its students and staff with access to appropriate drugs education;
- ii) although the illegal use of drugs will not be condoned, in most cases an employee with a drug misuse problem will be encouraged to seek help, advice and treatment;
- iii) infringements of this policy will be dealt with under agreed disciplinary procedures appropriate to staff or students;
- iv) where there is suspicion that the law has been broken by either a student or a member of staff the College will normally seek to involve the police; and
- v) the aims of this policy are:
 - a) to state clearly the College's position on drugs;
 - b) to seek to ensure a safe study and work environment for both students and staff;
 - c) to ensure that the law in relation to drugs is observed by students and staff during the College day;
 - d) to seek to ensure that appropriate drugs education programmes are provided for both students and staff; and
 - e) to encourage both students and staff who are experiencing drug-related problems to seek appropriate assistance/support at the earliest opportunity.

5 **Scope of Policy**

This policy applies to all students, staff and external contract personnel working with the College.

a) **Misuse of Drugs on College Premises or During the College Day**

The misuse of drugs on College premises by students, staff and external contract personnel during the College day is prohibited. The College considers it to be unacceptable for any person using its facilities to be under the influence of drugs. The College recognises the controlled use and possession of prescribed medicines for personal use as an exception.

It is a requirement of the College that no student, member of staff or external contract personnel shall:

- attend College intoxicated due to the misuse of drugs;
- attend College in an unfit state due to the use of drugs;
- be in possession of drugs while at College (other than those prescribed by a medical practitioner); and
- misuse drugs while on College premises (including outreach centres).

The College will seek to create an environment which encourages individuals who may use drugs to seek appropriate assistance/support.

6 **Commitment to Education**

a) The College will ensure that both students and staff have access to appropriate information on the risks involved in drugs misuse, as well as an understanding of how the misuse of drugs impacts on both programmes of study and the workplace;

b) The College will actively promote information to both students and staff about local agencies which provide advice and support on drugs; and

c) The College will:

- i) provide all staff with a copy of the Substance Misuse Policy via the staff handbook at their induction into the College and will ensure that staff are regularly made aware of the aims and objectives of the policy;
- ii) provide students with a copy of the policy as part of the induction process;
- iii) ensure that copies of the policy are available to students and staff via the College intranet;

- iv) display copies of the policy in student common rooms and staff workrooms;
- v) ensure that staff have access to a regular programme of drugs education;
- vi) provide regular information sessions for students on issues related to drug misuse;
- vii) in collaboration with appropriate agencies make use of publicity material which supports the aims and objectives of this policy; and
- viii) ensure that all line managers receive appropriate training in dealing with substance misuse in the workplace.

7 Voluntary Referral

- a) Employees or students who suspect or know that they have a drug-related problem are encouraged to seek help and treatment voluntarily.

The College will seek to provide information on appropriate organisations that will assist students and/or staff seeking to address their substance misuse. However those seeking this form of support are free to select agencies of their own choosing;

- b) In the case of a member of staff, if the programme requires absence from work, the employee's line manager will be notified. This will be done with the employee's consent. The line manager will in turn inform the Personnel Section; and
- c) The confidential nature of records will be strictly observed by all those involved in this process.

8 Management of Employees who are Suspected or Identified as Requiring Assistance with a Drug-related Problem

- a) Where an employee acknowledges a drug misuse problem the opportunity will normally be given to attend a programme of treatment with an appropriate agency identified by the College. Where an employee accepts such a referral, ongoing disciplinary action may be deferred until a medical report is received. However serious incidents judged to be as a consequence of an employee misusing drugs will normally be regarded as gross misconduct and will be dealt with under the agreed Disciplinary Policy;
- b) It is recognised that an employee may relapse during a treatment programme and provided the ongoing trend in the employee's performance is favourable, such relapses will be taken into consideration when monitoring and reviewing the management of the employees case in relation to any decisions taken. Formal disciplinary action during the treatment period will normally be reserved for serious under-performing or serious incidents which would attract a final

written warning or dismissal. Subject to the safety of students or other staff or other users of College services being threatened, impairment of performance of a less serious nature will normally be formally recorded but no further disciplinary action taken. This will be subject to the employee continuing with the agreed treatment programme. If an employee fails to attend or continue with the agreed treatment programme this will lead to the resumption of formal disciplinary action;

- c) If an employee requires to be absent from work to undergo a programme of treatment this will be dealt with under the College's Attendance Policy;
- d) Where an employee is able to continue working during the treatment period, reasonable time off with pay will be granted to attend appointments;
- e) Where an employee denies the existence of a drug misuse problem and therefore declines to accept assistance or treatment the issue of work performance or conduct will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Policy; and
- f) Strict confidentiality will be observed with all records relating to an employee undergoing a treatment programme for drug misuse.

The concern of this policy is limited to those instances of drug-related problems which impact upon the health, conduct and/or work performance of students and staff. However, even where an employee has a proven drug problem, the likelihood of disciplinary action following serious misconduct should be understood. The illegal nature of drug use allows employers the option of dismissal under the Employment Rights Act 1996, where drug use may be considered misconduct or breach of regulations.

9 Drug Testing

As part of a disciplinary investigation process there may be due cause for concern which requires the College to refer the employee for a drugs test, this information may be required to assist the College in determining the appropriate course of action to be taken, if any. Therefore the College may seek to refer the employee to the Occupational Health Service for testing. Referrals will only be arranged with the consent of the employee, should the employee refuse to undergo a drugs test then the College will base any decision taken on the evidence available as a result of the investigation. The College is committed to ensuring the safety of students, staff and other users of College services at all times.

10 Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually and monitored on an on-going basis to assess its implementation and effectiveness.

Annex 1

Support Agencies

- 1 Employee Counselling Service
77 Renfrew Street
Glasgow
G2 3BZ

Tele: 08000 435 768

A confidential service for employees who are having problems at work due to alcohol, drugs, gambling or stress.

Alternatively talk to the Human Resources Manager or manager/supervisor and get their support for a referral.

- 2 Drugs Crisis Centre Turning Point
54 Govan Road
Glasgow
G51 1LJ

Tele: 0141 427 8200

- 3 Easterhouse Drugs Initiative
Westwood House
1250 Westerhouse Road
Glasgow
G34 9EA

Tele: 0141 781 4002

- 4 National Drugs Helpline

Tel: 0800 776600

A confidential telephone information and advice service for anyone who has a drug problem, or is concerned about someone who may be using drugs. This service can arrange referrals to appropriate agencies.