



Policy and procedure on substance misuse by students

Policy

1. Introduction

The College is committed to the prevention of illegal activities and the harmful consequences associated with substance misuse. It is also our belief that such misuse is incompatible with the learning environment of the College, its role in the community and duty of care towards its students, and can seriously damage a person's physical health and mental well-being.

2. Definition

In the context of this policy and procedure a drug is any substance that affects the way in which the body functions physically, emotionally or mentally and includes tobacco, alcohol, solvents, over-the-counter and prescribed medicines, as well as other legal and illegal substances.

3. Context

It is the view of the College that the use and misuse of illegal drugs and alcohol by those studying at the College causes problems for the individual, those immediately concerned with them, and the broader community of which the College is a part. The College is committed to ensuring that the educational environment we provide is one which manages drug issues through active education, effective links with local drugs/alcohol organisations, prevention and efficient management.

This policy refers to the use of alcohol and drugs and other substances, both legal and illegal, when used for the purpose of intoxication, pleasure or general misuse. It covers students in such settings as College premises and work placements or when they are otherwise engaged in College-related activities.

In practice the misuse of alcohol and drugs crosses into the management of discipline and this policy should be read in the context of the student disciplinary procedure. Such behaviour should be handled as recommended in that procedure.

4. Possible incidents

Incidents involving substance use and misuse can occur in some of the following ways:

- a) incidents of inappropriate intoxication and intoxicated behaviour within class or on College premises/work placements
- b) aggressive, threatening or insulting behaviour resulting from substance abuse, especially if causing a disturbance in class/public areas or a health and safety risk (e.g. if operating machinery/tools)
- c) the selling or supply or harassment to buy drugs, by students or others wherever College-related activities take place.

5. Equality and diversity statement

Bedford College is committed to the promotion and development of equality and diversity. We aim to provide a working and learning environment which values individuals equally regardless of age, disability, ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, religious belief or trade union membership.

This procedure is implemented in accordance with our policies on equality and diversity, disability and race equality. Decisions/actions taken in relation to any substance misuse issues are not influenced by the student's background or situation, and each case is dealt with on its own merits.

6. Every Child Matters

The College has regard to the broader issues of the general health and well-being of our students. It seeks to follow the principles enshrined in the Government's Every Child Matters agenda, and this policy is underpinned in particular by the 'be healthy' and 'stay safe' outcomes.

Procedure

7. Dealing with incidents

The College regards a state of intoxication (in which a person lacks control of his/her faculties) as an example of behaviour which is incompatible with the learning environment. When a person is encountered in this state the following procedures should be followed:

- a) where possible, seek the assistance of another member of staff. If appropriate contact Reception to request a member of the Safe Team.
- b) approach the person in a sensitive manner and establish their identity and which course they are on. If in your opinion, serious misuse has taken place, decide whether immediate medical aid is required

- c) if not too intoxicated, they should be asked to leave the College and go home. A member of the Safe Team may be asked to escort them from the premises.
- d) if they are too intoxicated to leave safely call the First Aider on duty, who will decide on the most appropriate action, having regard for the student's and others' health and safety
- e) the person should be told that they will be interviewed at a later date, when sober/free of the effects of misuse, under the disciplinary procedure
- f) the person should be told that they must not re-enter College premises until they are sober/free from the effects of misuse
- g) if a serious incident has occurred (e.g. violence), permission should be sought from the appropriate Centre Director (or in their absence, a member of the Executive) to suspend the student pending investigation under the college disciplinary procedure.

8. Reporting incidents

- a) A full report of any incident must be made by the person(s) dealing with the incident, using the standard incident report form. This should be sent to the appropriate Centre Director with a copy to the Director of Student Services
- b) the Centre Director should then ensure that the incident is investigated and, if appropriate, dealt with in accordance with the student disciplinary procedure
- c) the disciplinary interview is an opportunity to examine whether the incident was representative of a broader problem with alcohol or drugs, rather than an isolated incident of misconduct, and if so, to allow an opportunity to respond in a way which addresses any ongoing problem and if appropriate to suggest ongoing support via the Student Counsellor
- d) the College also reserves the right to inform the police, particularly where there is suspicion of dealing or that the student is in possession of quantities of an illegal substance. Note that only the police are permitted to search a student, or their bag or locker, without the student's consent. No member of College staff should take possession of an illegal substance.

Unauthorised visitors found on site must be reported to the police where there is a suspicion or knowledge of drug-related behaviour.

9. Supporting individuals with substance-related problems

Incidents involving intoxication are one way of identifying serious problems of misuse; they may also be self-reported by a student or arise through report from a third party.

Concerns may also arise from observation of the performance and behaviour of a person over a period of time as marked by such indicators as:

- a) poor performance at study, particularly a decline
- b) worsening sickness record with no clear reason
- c) suspicious or inappropriate behaviour
- d) financial or home concerns
- e) panic attacks
- f) a decline in attendance

Each of these circumstances should lead to an individual discussion with their tutor or the Student Personal Adviser for their course. This meeting should make every effort to determine the extent of the substance misuse problem. In some cases the problem may not involve serious use but reflect other life issues, and in such cases they may be advised to see or be referred to the Student Counsellor who can talk things through with them and offer ongoing support (attendance should not be compulsory or made into a condition of any agreement).

If the enquiry leads to the shared opinion that the behaviour is caused by substance dependency, then a course of action may be suggested and developed that enables the person to receive appropriate help. It may still be that disciplinary action is enacted, or it may be considered that such action be suspended whilst the individual seeks support. The student would need to be referred to the Student Counsellor who can discuss this with them and refer them on for more specialist help if appropriate. If a student does not want to address their substance misuse or declines support in doing this, and their behaviour continues to cause problems in College, then the disciplinary procedure should be followed.

A tutor may wish to negotiate special arrangements to enable the student to continue with their studies. However, in more serious situations, it may be necessary to suspend study until the problem is resolved to the satisfaction of the College.

10. Promotion of responsible attitudes towards alcohol and drugs

In line with the Every Child Matters agenda the College will make every effort to promote to students, staff and the broader community that it takes a responsible attitude towards substance misuse. This will/could involve the following:

- a) the availability of this policy and procedure to students and staff, via the intranet and website
- b) the inclusion of sessions on substance misuse within the group tutorial programme, to raise awareness of legal aspects, the harms associated with substance misuse and safe use of legal substances
- c) the accessibility of counselling and advisory services in relation to substances, whether in College or by referral
- d) the display in open-access areas of information about substances and helping agencies

- e) good working relationships with helping agencies and the promotion of their work within the College, for example via the Freshers' Fair and health awareness events.

11. Related documents

- Student disciplinary procedure
- Every Child Matters strategy.

Lesley Ferguson
Director of Student Services
January 2007

ANNEX A

The Misuse of Drugs Act (MDA) regulates what are termed controlled drugs. It divides drugs into three classes as follows:

Controlled Drugs

Class A: these include cocaine and crack (a form of cocaine) ecstasy, heroin, LSD, methadone, processed magic mushrooms and any Class B drug which is injected.

Class B: these include amphetamines, barbiturates and codeine.

Class C: these include mild amphetamines, tranquillisers and cannabis (in resin or herbal form).

Class A drugs are treated by the law as the most dangerous **but all these drugs are illegal.**

Offences

Offences under the Misuse of Drugs Act can include:

- possession of a controlled drug
- possession with intent to supply another person
- production, cultivation or manufacture of controlled drugs
- supplying another person with a controlled drug
- offering to supply another person with a controlled drug
- import or export of controlled drugs
- allowing premises you occupy or manage to be used for the consumption of certain controlled drugs or supply or production of any controlled drug.

NB Certain controlled drugs such as amphetamines, barbiturates, heroin and methadone can sometimes be obtained on prescription. In such cases their possession is not illegal.

Maximum penalties under the Misuse of Drugs Act are as follows:

	<u>Possession</u>	<u>Supply</u>
Class A Drug	7 years + fine	Life + fine
Class B Drug	5 years + fine	14 years + fine
Class C Drug	2 years + fine	5 years + fine

Over 90% of offenders are male and the majority are aged 17–24. Over 85% of cases concern the possession or supply of cannabis. This may result in a small fine or a caution, especially when it is a first offence involving a young person and the case not taken to court.

The law is even more complicated by the fact that some drugs are covered by other laws, are not covered at all or treated in an exceptional way under the Misuse of Drugs Act.

Alcohol is not illegal for a five year-old and over to consume away from licensed premises. It is an offence for a vendor to knowingly sell to an under 18 year old. A 14 year-old can go into a pub alone but not consume alcohol. A 16 year-old can buy and consume beer, porter, cider or perry (but not spirits) in a pub if having a meal in a designated area.

Magic mushrooms are not illegal to possess or eat in their raw state. It can be an offence to process them by cooking or making an infusion.

Poppers are not illegal to possess, buy or sell.

Solvents (aerosols, gases, glues etc) are not illegal to possess, use or buy at any age. It is an offence for a shop keeper to sell them to an 18 year old if they know they are to be used for intoxicating purposes.

Steroids are not illegal to possess or use without a prescription. It is an offence to supply them to another person.

Tobacco it is not an offence for people of any age to purchase or use cigarettes or other tobacco products. It is an offence for a vendor to sell tobacco products to someone they know to be under 16 years old.

ANNEX B

Sources of information and help

Bedford College Student Counsellors 01234 291911 or ext 5911

Talk To Frank 0800 776600
(National Drugs Helpline)

Plan B 01234 344911
(Young People aged 13-25)
26-28 Bromham Road
Bedford
Mk40 2QD

CAN 01234 354193
(Support groups for adults 17+)
26-28 Bromham Road
Bedford
Mk40 2QD

ADDACTION 01234 352220
(Adults 18+)

HealthLink 01234 270123
(Adults 18+, North and Mid Beds)

Narcotics Anonymous 0207 730 0009
(Telephone helpline)