

Drugs and Alcohol Policy

INTRODUCTION

1. The College aims to balance respect for the privacy and freedom of individual students with the imperatives of compliance with the law and maintenance of a safe, productive and legal environment in the best interests of all students.
2. The College recognises the risks that may be caused by the misuse of alcohol, drugs and other substances.
3. The College in no way condones the misuse of drugs or alcohol and will balance disciplinary action with appropriate support for students who misuse them
4. The policy aims to facilitate the early identification of such problems and to encourage students to seek advice, help and assistance voluntarily before their studies are adversely affected. The College will achieve these goals through educational, counselling and disciplinary approaches.

THE LEGAL CONTEXT

5. The misuse of substances known as 'controlled drugs' is against the criminal law. The term 'controlled drugs' covers a wide range of substances, but the best known are cannabis, cocaine, and heroin, together with the many derivatives or hybrids of these drugs. The term 'misuse' includes the use, possession, trade, distribution, selling, offering for sale and purchase of controlled drugs as well as the illegal use of prescription drugs (i.e. the use of prescription drugs that have not been legally obtained or in a manner or for a purpose other than as prescribed).
6. The College Terms & Conditions state that 'Illegal drugs are not allowed on College property. The Master may from time to time put in place procedures under which the student may be given the opportunity to provide a urine sample, if the Master has reasons to suspect that the student has taken illegal drugs. If it is found that the student tests positive for drugs, or if the student fails or refuses to provide a sample, disciplinary action may be taken against the student, up to and including expulsion.'
7. The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 requires the College to do what is reasonable to protect the health and safety of staff, students and visitors.
8. The College has a responsibility to uphold the law. Students who contravene the legislation outlined above, may be subject to disciplinary

action by the institution and this may include reporting incidents to the Police.

MANAGEMENT

9. A protocol exists between the College and the Metropolitan Police. The protocol ensures that the correct procedure is followed when activities involving illegal substances occur on College property.
10. Where there is physical evidence of illegal substances having been used on College property, the Master will be informed and will remove the evidence for safekeeping. If the Master is unavailable this will be the responsibility of a member of the Senior Management Team. The staff member has a legal obligation under the protocol to report all such cases to the Police and to hand over any evidence.
11. The Master will convene a meeting with the local police and other relevant staff members (Student Wellbeing Coordinator and the Registrar) to discuss the option of searching College premises. The meeting will normally be arranged within 10 working days of notification to the Master.
12. The Master and/or a member of the Senior Management Team has the right to search the College premises where there is reasonable suspicion that illegal activities are taking place.
13. Where breaches of the College Terms & Conditions are suspected, an investigation will take place. Disciplinary action may be taken against the student(s) but the main aim of the process is to educate them rather than impose penalties.

HELP AND ADVICE

14. The College regards an individual's dependency on either drugs or alcohol as a health problem. If a student reports the matter to the Student Wellbeing Coordinator, or any other member of staff, and agrees to a programme of rehabilitation, then the College will allow reasonable absences for advice and/or treatment as 'sick leave' and will take this into account when assessing any summative work, provided that the student has kept the College informed of their progress and it is clear that they are attempting to resolve any difficulties they may have. Students must provide documentation to confirm their attendance and progress. There will be no unnecessary disclosure of information and confidentiality will be respected unless the student is deemed in danger to themselves or others.
15. For those wishing to discuss their problems related to the use of drugs or alcohol, advice is available from the Student Wellbeing Coordinator, Personal Tutor or Head of Faculty in the first instance. Students can then seek support from their GP, or local support networks such as Turning Point or The Haven Club. If a student believes that someone has difficulty in controlling their use of alcohol or drugs they should encourage them to seek support. If they are concerned that they are a danger to themselves or others it is recommended that a senior member of staff be informed, for

example, the Master, Head of Faculty, Registrar or Student Wellbeing Coordinator.

16. Staff will not provide direct advice on substance misuse but will provide guidance as to where professional assistance is available.

EDUCATION

17. The College will endeavour to increase awareness and understanding of drug and alcohol related issues in a number of ways:
 - 17.1. the College will produce publicity material to raise student awareness, e.g. posters and leaflets.
 - 17.2. training will be provided to relevant staff.
 - 17.3. by inviting the Metropolitan Police and a representative from a local organisation (e.g. Turning Point or The Haven Club) to give talks at events during Freshers' Week and other appropriate forums throughout the year.

CONCLUSION

18. The College has responsibilities to its students and staff and recognises the importance of providing a safe place to work and study.
 19. The College will ensure that appropriate support and advice is available to students but will also take disciplinary action, where illegal activities are taking place and particularly when they endanger the individual student or other members of the College.
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