RHODES AVENUE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Rhodes Avenue Primary School

Staff Drug and Alcohol Policy

Date policy last reviewed: April 2025

Signed by:

M. Panayiotou Headteacher Date: 2 April 2025

FGB Chair of governors Date: 2 April 2025

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Statement of intent

At Rhodes Avenue Primary School, we are committed to promoting a safe, healthy and productive working environment for all our staff. This policy provides a framework for how we will deal with any problems arising from substance use and misuse.

We have a zero-tolerance approach towards the misuse of drugs and alcohol on the premises, and will not take such incidents lightly; however, we recognise that the misuse of drugs and alcohol may indicate a significant health concern and, as such, we aim to support employees in these situations.

This policy has been created to outline staff members' responsibilities in relation to their conduct and use of drugs and alcohol, as well as the disciplinary procedures if this policy is breached.

1. Legal framework

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

- Misuse of Drugs Act 1971
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Health Act 2006
- DfE (2024) 'Keeping children safe in education'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
- Health and Safety Policy
- COSHH Policy
- First Aid Policy

2. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, 'drug' is defined as any substance which, when ingested, alters perception and how the body works. This definition includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- All illegal substances
- Alcohol
- Tobacco
- Solvents
- Medicines
- Legal highs

3. Roles and responsibilities

The governing body is responsible for:

- Ensuring that effective policies and procedures are in place pertaining to the misuse of alcohol and drugs at school.
- Ensuring that this policy is maintained and disseminated to all staff.
- Ensuring that staff experiencing difficulties with alcohol and/or drugs can access the support they need.

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The day-to-day management of this policy.
- Providing a safe environment for all staff, pupils and visitors.
- Working with governors to ensure compliance with relevant legislation.
- Dealing with any alcohol- or drug-related issues within the school.

- Deciding upon any disciplinary action that will take place.
- Ensuring appropriate support mechanisms are in place to promote staff members' health and wellbeing.

All staff members are responsible for:

- Adhering to the procedures outlined in this policy.
- Taking reasonable care whilst at work, ensuring they do not endanger themselves or others.
- Bringing any alcohol- or drug-related issues to the attention of the headteacher; this includes in relation to themselves or other staff members.
- Ensuring that they report for work and remain in a condition to perform their duties free from the effects of drugs, alcohol or any other substances that may hinder judgement and cause changes in behaviour; this does not include over-the-counter painkillers such as paracetamol.

4. Staff training

Staff members will receive regular training regarding alcohol- and drug-related issues, as well as the support available to them.

Management staff, including the headteacher, will receive regular training in the following areas:

- How to implement and enforce this policy
- How to recognise the signs of alcohol and substance misuse and the effects on the performance, attendance and health of staff
- How to provide early and non-judgemental intervention for staff who are exhibiting indicators of substance abuse
- How to provide support and assistance to staff where appropriate
- The level of confidentiality with which such matters should be treated

The importance of reporting issues to management will be highlighted in training to encourage staff members to seek help.

Staff members will also receive additional training in response to any current issues.

5. Smoking and the use of e-cigarettes

In line with the Health Act 2006, the school is strictly a smoke-free environment; there are no designated areas available anywhere on school premises for smoking.

Staff are not permitted to smoke within the boundary of the school premises during school hours, and will not smoke in front of pupils or encourage pupils to smoke.

Smoking is not permitted in any personal vehicles within the boundary of the school premises.

Any individual who is witnessed smoking within the boundaries of the school premises will be subject to disciplinary sanctions in accordance with the school's Disciplinary Policy and Procedures.

Although the school recognises that the use of e-cigarettes has significant potential to reduce tobacco use and the harmful effects of smoking, it is the school's position that the use of e-cigarettes still poses some safety hazards.

The school does not consider the use of e-cigarettes to be professional behaviour and, therefore, staff are not permitted to use e-cigarettes in the presence of pupils, visitors or parents.

Staff members will adhere to all procedures outlined in the school's Smoke-Free Policy.

6. Legal drugs and prescribed medicines

The school understands that some staff members may require medication that has been prescribed by a doctor or other health professional.
Staff members will notify the headteacher of any side effects of medicines; if it is believed the side effects will affect their work, the headteacher will decide whether the staff member should return home until they are feeling better.

Medicines will only be brought on to the premises if it would be detrimental to the staff member's health not to administer them whilst at school. Medicines will be stored in locked cabinets or kept on the staff member's person at all times.

Staff members will be required to ensure that their medication cannot be accessed by pupils.

Staff members will not exceed the maximum dosage of any legal drugs or prescribed medicines. Staff members will also avoid taking legal drugs and medicines in the presence of pupils.

7. Alcohol and illegal drugs

Staff members are not permitted to consume alcohol or illegal drugs when carrying out their duties.

Staff members are instructed that they must not carry out their duties whilst under the influence of alcohol; this includes smelling of alcohol and exhibiting alcohol-related behaviours, e.g. slurring or unsteadiness.

Every member of staff is responsible for regulating their behaviour and is aware that they may be subject to disciplinary action.

Where it is believed that a staff member is carrying a prohibited substance, the staff member will be encouraged to hand over any substance reasonably suspected to be in their possession.

Where a staff member refuses to adhere to the above, the substance is believed to be illegal and it is considered appropriate to engage in formal proceedings, the school may search the employee in line with the following:

- The staff member consents to the search
- A second witness will be present
- The substance will be sealed in a plastic bag
- 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
- The police will be notified immediately
- Details of the incident, including the police incident reference number, will be included on the record.

Any substances found will be stored in a secure location, in the school safe, before they are handed to the police.

Where the staff member does not consent, no search will be undertaken and this will be managed in line with the Disciplinary Policy and Procedures.

The police will deal with the situation in line with agreed protocols, and the staff member will be subject to an investigation and any appropriate disciplinary action in accordance with the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure. A full incident report will be completed and submitted to the headteacher.
Staff members will not ordinarily be permitted to bring alcohol on to the school premises. If, however, a staff member does bring alcohol to school, e.g. for an appropriate after-school event, this must be in an unopened receptacle and be stored in the school safe inaccessible by pupils. Alcohol will not be retrieved until the end of the school day, or until they have finished carrying out their duties.

8. Solvents

Staff members are not permitted to bring solvent-based products on to the premises including, but not limited to, aerosol deodorants, compressed air and aerosol hairspray.

The school will ensure that potentially hazardous solvents are stored safely. Further information regarding solvents can be found within the school's COSHH Policy.

9. Disciplinary action

Disciplinary action will occur where staff members:

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

Disciplinary action will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

Once disciplinary action has begun, staff members will be invited to attend a formal meeting with their line manager and the headteacher, in order to discover whether an alcohol or drug problem exists.

Where a breach of procedures occurs, but it is established that an alcohol- or drug-related problem exists, and the staff member is willing to cooperate with the support offered to them, the school may decide not to issue disciplinary action.

An exception to the above would be where gross misconduct has occurred and disciplinary action is necessary regardless of whether they are willing to cooperate with support offered – this decision is at the discretion of the headteacher.

Staff who do not comply with the support offered, or continue to misuse alcohol and drugs, will be subject to disciplinary action.

10. Identifying a problem

Misuse of alcohol and drugs which affects performance and behaviour at work, e.g. through serious misconduct or an inability to meet standards of work performance, will not be tolerated.

A formal meeting will be held to discuss the problem and the headteacher will make a referral to the Occupational Health service. The Occupational Health service will be responsible for conducting an assessment of the member of staff, collecting relevant information and providing a management report. Disciplinary action will not commence until advice is obtained from the Occupational Health service, unless gross misconduct has occurred. If necessary, suspension arrangements will be followed.

The Occupational Health service will be responsible for monitoring the member of staff's progress; where there is a lack of progress, the headteacher will conduct another review with the staff member to consider whether disciplinary action is necessary. The school will aim to accommodate any recommendations made by the Occupational Health service, such as where the staff member has been off work and they require supervision upon their return.

If a member of staff misuses alcohol or drugs after support has been offered to them, the school will decide whether a second referral is appropriate, or in cases of gross misconduct, whether disciplinary action should be followed immediately without support.

Should the problems of the member of staff develop to an extent that continuation in their role is impossible, the school may identify alternative work arrangements or arrange for dismissal in line with the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure. If the problem is directly affecting the staff member's performance, but they do not wish to address it, reject the support offered to them, or fail to cooperate in their referral, disciplinary action will commence immediately.

11. Situations without disciplinary action

The school 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 has identified possible indicators of a problem and may wish to approach the individual, e.g. through a regular absence pattern. Through regular training, the school will highlight the importance of discussion and encourage staff to seek help from their employer or line manager in these situations.

If an employee seeks help with an alcohol- or drug-related problem from HR or a member of management staff and wishes to keep this confidential from other staff, this will be respected unless there is a reason to believe that this could put that staff member, their colleagues, pupils, or anyone else at risk. Any staff member who approaches their alcohol- or drug-related problem in this way will be strongly encouraged to seek external help, e.g. through the Occupational Health service.

Where the school is faced with this problem, the headteacher will:

- Seek advice from the Occupational Health service regarding whether, and how, the matter should be dealt with.
- Provide support for the member of staff and, if appropriate, arrange for the member of staff to be referred to the Occupational Health service.
- Where a problem exists, allow the Occupational Health service to establish, monitor and review support for the member of staff.

The school 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.

The headteacher may provide the staff member with references to external support organisations, should they wish to access them.

If a staff member decides to engage in the support offered by the Occupational Health service, there will be no further involvement from the school, unless the problem begins to affect their work performance. If the problem begins to affect their work performance, disciplinary procedures will be followed as outlined in the Disciplinary action section of this policy.

12. Medical emergencies

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.

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

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

The staff member's immediate family will be contacted to inform them of the incident.

Further information regarding medical emergencies can be sought from the First Aid Policy.

13. Threatening behaviour

Threatening or aggressive behaviour by staff members under the influence of drugs or alcohol will be taken very seriously.

Where threatening or aggressive behaviour is displayed, the school will not hesitate to contact the police. Any staff member displaying threatening or aggressive behaviour will be removed from the premises, and later disciplined in line with the school's Disciplinary Policy and Procedures.

14. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the headteacher; any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all members of staff.

The next scheduled review date for this policy is April 2026.