



## **ALCOHOL AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE POLICY**

### **SECTION A – ALCOHOL AND EMPLOYMENT**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

Whilst many people in this country enjoy drinking alcohol socially and in moderation, there is a growing recognition that alcohol may contribute to inefficient working, accidents at work, absenteeism and, in extreme cases, health problems and social breakdown.

As an employer, the Campbell Harris is concerned to ensure the health, safety and welfare of its staff and others who may be affected by the activities of staff.

As an employer the Campbell Harris considers that alcohol should not affect the work performance of staff or have a detrimental impact on the college or other members of staff.

It is intended that both sections of this policy shall apply to all staff working Campbell Harris regardless of contractual status.

#### **1.2 Objectives of this Policy**

- i) To identify and promote good practice and to clarify expectations of reasonable behaviour.
- ii) To facilitate the early identification of problems related to alcohol amongst staff and the provision of support and/or treatment.
- iii) To outline appropriate management action where an employee is suspected of having an alcohol problem.

#### **1.3 Good Practice at Work**

- i) The consumption of alcohol by staff whilst at work is always considered inappropriate. There is no exception to this.
- ii) Staff should have regard to the potential consequences of substandard performance and to the undesirable effect on some people of even small quantities of alcohol.

- iii) “Special Occasions” e.g. to mark retirement or other celebrations, at which alcohol may be available and served in moderation, should be authorised by the Principal and will not take place during working hours. A choice of non-alcoholic beverages will be available for those who have to return to work, drive home or choose not to drink alcohol.
- iv) Staff should be made aware of the procedure for dealing with a problem drinker and of the strictly confidential nature of that procedure.
- v) Individuals should be encouraged to raise any issue concerning their use of alcohol in strict confidence with the Principals.

## 2.0 **Dealing with the employee who either arrives or returns to work under the influence of alcohol**

- i) Staff arriving or returning to work, having consumed alcohol must be interviewed immediately by the Principal and advised of the seriousness of the situation. Where appropriate such staff should be sent home for the remainder of the day. Where the situation is considered serious the staff should be advised that the use of the College’s disciplinary procedures could arise. (Staff who have driven to work should be advised against driving home whilst under the influence of alcohol.)
- ii) Where such incidents are repeated staff should be managed in accordance with the procedures in paragraph 3 below.

## 3.1 **Disciplinary aspects in relation to the “problem drinker”**

- i) Alcohol dependence is not in itself a disciplinary offence and will be dealt with as any other health problem. The aim is rehabilitation and support, re-entry to the work situation being an important part of the process. It is also important that the appropriate levels of confidentiality are maintained, as would be the case with any other health issue. However, inappropriate and unacceptable behaviour whilst under the influence of alcohol may warrant disciplinary action being considered.
- ii) Where the Principal is satisfied that an offence or work problem e.g. absenteeism, violent behaviour, or substandard work results from or reflects alcohol use, this must be taken into account in determining the appropriate course of action.
- iii) In other than the more serious cases, where the Principal and employee acknowledge the health problem and agree a course of action aimed at rehabilitation, disciplinary action may not be appropriate.
- iv) In the more serious cases, disciplinary action including dismissal may be appropriate. However, where an employee acknowledges the problem and agrees to accept appropriate help and/or treatment, this

will be taken into account in determining whether, and at what level, disciplinary sanctions are appropriate.

## **SECTION B – SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND EMPLOYMENT**

The misuse of drugs whether prescribed or illicit, together with volatile substances - will collectively be referred to as “substance abuse” for the purpose of this policy. (See Appendix 2)

### **1.1 Introduction**

The College recognises the use of drugs may result in physical and/or mental illness and may significantly affect work performance.

As an employer, the College has an obligation to ensure the health, safety and welfare of its staff who may be exposed to the effects of substance abuse.

Under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, the College or an individual, would be colluding in a crime if it were to “knowingly permit the production or supply of any controlled drugs, the smoking of cannabis, or certain other activities to take place” on its premises. The College will not allow staff to be involved in illegal drug activities whilst on College premises. Staff should note that the College will take disciplinary action including referring offences to the Police and any drugs will also be handed over to the Police.

The College may also take action against staff where they are involved in illegal drug activities off College premises, if such activity may have an impact on the College, students or staff.

It is intended that both sections of this policy shall apply to all staff in the College regardless of contractual status.

### **1.2 Objectives of this Policy**

- i) To facilitate early recognition of, and if necessary supportive treatment for, any employees suspected of having a substance abuse problem.
- ii) To outline appropriate management action where an employee is suspected of having substance abuse problems.
- iii) To inform staff about the possible consequences if they are caught using or supplying controlled drugs.

## 2.0 **Management of employees suspected of having a substance abuse problem**

- i) Substance abuse in itself is not a disciplinary offence (unless it takes place whilst on the premises and/or has an adverse effect on the individual's performance or brings the College into disrepute) and in most cases will be dealt with as any other health problem. Whilst acknowledging the College's overriding responsibility to ensure the safety of staff and others, the management aim in relation to substance abuse is rehabilitation with appropriate guidance and support provided by the appropriate agencies. The appropriate standards of confidentiality will be observed throughout.
- ii) A suspected problem cannot be ignored; to do so would be risking committing an offence particularly in relation to the Misuse of Drugs Act.
- iii) The occurrence of substance abuse may come to the attention of the Principal in several ways, for example, directly from the employee concerned, through information supplied by a colleague or other person, or through the characteristics identified in Appendix 1.
- iv) On becoming aware of a potential problem the Principal will, in discussion with the employee, and if the problem is confirmed, refer him/her to an appropriate advisory body. An employee may be accompanied by a workplace Union representative or colleague in any discussion and must be advised of this.

## 3.0 **Disciplinary aspects in relation to substance abuse**

- i) Where the Principal has reasonable belief, which can be substantiated, that an offence or work problem results from or reflects possible substance abuse, this must be taken into account in determining the appropriate course of action.
- ii) In other than the more serious cases, where the Principal and the employee acknowledge the health problem and agree a course of action aimed at rehabilitation, disciplinary action may be inappropriate. This may well not be the case in the event of any subsequent failure to maintain acceptable standards of performance and conduct in relation to substance abuse.
- iii) In the more serious of cases, disciplinary action including dismissal may be appropriate. However, where an employee acknowledges a health problem related to substance abuse and agrees to accept appropriate help and/or treatment, this will be taken into account in determining whether, and at what level, disciplinary sanctions are appropriate.

- iv) Staff should be left in no doubt as to the possible consequences (i.e. disciplinary action and police involvement) if they are caught using, growing, possessing and supplying controlled drugs in the workplace.

## APPENDIX 1

**RECOGNISING SUBSTANCE ABUSE**

It is important to recognise that the following characteristics, in isolation may appear insignificant, but when appearing in combinations **may** indicate the presence of a substance abuse related problem.

**a) Absenteeism**

- multiple unauthorised leave
- excessive sick leave
- absence on certain days, particularly near weekends
- excessive lateness
- leaving work early
- frequent occurrences of certain illnesses e.g. diarrhoea, colds, flu, gastritis etc.

**b) High Accident Rate**

- frequent accidents both in and out of work

**c) Difficulty in Concentration**

- work requires greater effort
- tasks take more time
- difficulty in recalling instructions, details etc.
- increasing difficulty in handling complex assignments

**d) Spasmodic Work Patterns**

- alternate periods of high and low productivity
- increasing general unreliability and unpredictability

**e) Generally Deteriorating Job Efficiency (unusual for the individual)**

- missed deadlines
- mistakes due to inattention or poor judgement
- wasting materials, supplies etc.
- making bad decisions
- improbable excuses for poor work performance

**f) Poor Employee Relations at Work (unusual for the individual)**

- over-reaction to real or imagined criticism
- unreasonable resentments
- irritability
- complaints from co-workers
- avoidance of line manager or colleagues

**APPENDIX 2**

“Substance” in the context of this policy includes:

Illegal Drugs	e.g. cannabis, amphetamine, Ecstasy, heroin cocaine.
Controlled prescribed drugs	e.g. methadone, diamorphine, DF118, tuinal, anabolic steroids.
Other prescribed drugs Other substances	e.g. diazepam, temazepam. e.g. over the counter medication, solvents etc. which when used inappropriately or excessively can be dangerous.

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