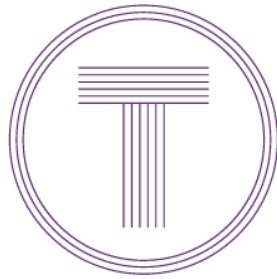




# SUBSTANCE MISUSE POLICY



THINKING  
**personnel**

This policy was adopted on	September 2017
The policy is to be reviewed on	September 2025

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## Adoption arrangements and dates

This procedure was adopted by the Board of Directors of The Thinking Schools Academy Trust on 1st September 2017 and supersedes any previous Substance Misuse Policy and Procedure. This policy is reviewed by the Board of Directors every 4 years or earlier if there is a need- the next review will be September 2025.

## Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide constructive and preventative strategies to encourage early identification of alcohol and drug misuse relation problems among employees. This extends to alcohol, illicit drugs, prescription drugs and “over the counter” medication which may be misused. Volatile substances, such as solvents, are also included.

As a Trust our aim is to help and support employees who are experiencing problems as a result of alcohol or drug misuse. The desire to support an individual must be balanced with the requirements of the Trust to comply with its duty of care to all employees and students.

This policy is concerned primarily with the effects of alcohol and drug misuse on conduct at work or on job performance and career prospects of employees. Alcohol and drug misuse can lead to such problems as:

- A reduced performance at work;
- Poor judgement;
- Accidents;
- Late start/early end to the working day;
- Absenteeism.

The Policy aims to encourage and support staff with alcohol or drugs related problems to seek help at an early stage.

- Provide managers with guidelines to assist them in managing alcohol/drug related problems.
- Refer staff to appropriate agencies for help.
- Restore health and effectiveness in the workplace.
- Retain staff.

In 2018/2019 the Crime Survey for England and Wales found 9.4% of adults ages 16-59 had taken a controlled substance (as classified under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971).

Drinkaware (2018) highlighted Alcohol misuse findings highlighted 15% of adults in the UK are classed as) high-risk drinkers (based on amount or frequency or consumption). 2% of people in this category were considered to be ‘possible dependence’.

## Policy Statement

The Trust recognises that alcohol and drug related problems are primarily health and social concerns and staff with such problems require help and treatment.

Alcohol or drug problems are defined as any drinking or taking of drugs, either intermittent or continual, which interferes with an employees' work performance in the areas of efficiency, productivity, safety or attendance at work.

This policy does not apply to employees who commit breaches of disciplinary rules because of over-indulgence in alcohol or the use of drugs on random occasions. While there will be an investigation of the circumstances of such offences, action may be taken under the Disciplinary Procedure.

Managers attention is drawn to the Substance Misuse Guidance for Managers, "The Legal Perspective" which clearly outlines the school's general duty under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.

Employees are required to take reasonable care of themselves and others who could be affected by what they do at work. Employees who are permitted to drink alcohol at lunchtime or other times during their working day should observe the conduct requirements under the Trusts Code of Conduct. Staff are expected not to act in any way that is unethical and/or brings the school or its employees into disrepute.

Where an Employee is taking prescription drugs or over the counter preparations which could affect performance and/or create a safety risk, they should inform their Headteacher/Principal or line manager. This will enable them to arrange for the appropriate facilities for the Employee such as a private room and/or facilities for the storing of medicines. This will also minimise the risk of misunderstandings or assumptions being made about the employee's personal circumstances.

Where an Employee is invited to attend a meeting to discuss alcohol or drug related problems affecting conduct at work or work performance, they will have the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague.

Where an Employee has sought professional help and where there is evidence that they are making an effort to deal with their alcohol or drug problems, they should be granted a reasonable amount of sick leave to undergo treatment.

Where an Employee accepts the opportunity to receive help, but their conduct or work performance reverts to the problem level, they will have the new situation considered on its merits. If appropriate, a further opportunity to accept and cooperate with help and treatment may be offered unless Occupational Health have advised that the Employee will not be fit to return to work in the foreseeable future.

At all stages of the procedure, the Employee should be encouraged to access the occupational health and confidential counselling services.

It is strongly recommended that managers seek the advice from the Trusts HR advisors in dealing with these procedures.

All employees to whom this policy applies should be provided with or have access to this policy.

## Confidentiality

All discussions with an Employee in connection with this policy and procedures will be treated in a confidential manner. However, absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in the following circumstances:

- There is a potential risk of harm to self or others;
- A criminal offence has occurred or may occur;
- There has been a breach of any of the school's regulations.

If any of the above occur the line manager must take appropriate action including informing the relevant authorities. The consent of the individual should be sought, however, if this is not forthcoming, such disclosure shall be made with the knowledge of the employee involved.

## Procedures

### Voluntary referral



Where an employee acknowledges that they have a problem with alcohol or drugs, they may approach their line manager or someone within the organisation that they feel comfortable reaching out to, to get support.



It is recommended that the employee should arrange an informal meeting with either their line manager or the headteacher/principal to discuss their concerns.



During the meeting it is important to ensure that employee is given encouragement and advised of any options available.



Suggested options for support may include:

- Confidential counselling;
- Directing the Employee to seek treatment from their GP;
- Accessing support through the Trust's EAP service;
- Seeking assessment through a specialist agency;
- Seeking a referral to Occupational Health.

## Management referral



Where a Headteacher/Principal may have a concern that an employee's alcohol or drug misuse is affecting conduct at work or work performance they should arrange to meet the employee, to discuss their concerns. The Headteacher/Principal should seek the advice from Thinking Personnel for HR support.

- When discussing the problem with the employee the purpose is to assist the employee and this should be focus of the Headteacher/Principal. It is important that accusations are not made, but details of concerns should be clearly stated and openly discussed.
- Where the Employee acknowledges the problem, advise on options for support, as detailed under the voluntary referral section.
- Where the problem is denied, the Employee should be reminded of the standards expected and agree a time-scale for improvement. They should be advised that, if behaviour which gave rise to the concern is repeated, appropriate management action will be taken. This can include; structured management support, capability or disciplinary proceedings.



The Headteacher/Principal should keep a note of the meeting and agreed actions and send a copy to the employee. The Headteacher/Principal will then monitor the employee's progress, and at the end of the agreed time-scale, meet with the employee to provide them with feedback.

In many circumstances, and particularly if problems are detected early, support can be provided without the need for absence from work. In other cases, absence for treatment/rehabilitation may be necessary.

## Absence from work

Absence from work under this policy may be on any of the following grounds:

- Sickness absence, certified by a medical practitioner;
- Precautionary suspension on medical grounds;
- Disciplinary suspension on grounds of conduct;
- Unauthorised absence, in which case salary will not be paid (a letter will be sent to the employee to notify them).

Headteacher/Principals considering any of the three latter actions should seek support from Thinking Personnel (HR).

During periods of absence employees are required to adhere to any contact requirements as prescribed by their Headteacher/Principal and in line with the Trust Sickness Absence Management Policy.

Employees are also expected to make use of the support services available and should be actively seeking and co-operating with help and treatment.

### Return to work

Where an Employee has been absent due to medical reasons the Headteacher/Principal/ may require confirmation from Occupational Health as to the employee's fitness to resume duties. Further guidance on return to work can be found in the Trust Sickness Absence Management Policy.

An Employee returning to work may need ongoing support and treatment, e.g. ongoing counselling sessions, prescribed medication which is dispensed daily from a local pharmacy etc. The Employee should attempt to arrange appointments outside work hours, or, if not possible, their absence from work should be only the minimum time required for the appointment. The Headteacher/Principal should attempt to provide the flexibility within the employees work schedule to accommodate such absences.

The Employee will be monitored on their return to work and if there is a relapse, will seek advice from Thinking Personnel (HR), who will consider the new situation on its merits and a further opportunity to seek and cooperate with help may be offered.

Where an Employee persistently:

- Refuses to acknowledge that there is a problem affecting work;
- Refuses the opportunity to receive help; or
- Discontinues a course of treatment with no legitimate reason, and the problem continues; The matter will be considered under the Disciplinary Procedure at the formal stage.

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### Raising awareness and Guidance

Guidance notes in the Substance Misuse Guidance for Managers assist the Headteacher/Principal to:

- Understand some key points about drug and misuse and why these can be dealt with in a similar manner;
- Promote the early identification of alcohol/substance misuse – what are the signs?
- Understand our legal obligations
- Understand the various types of illegal substance that exist
- Offer support and manage the procedure
- Be aware of the range of assistance offered by external agencies.

## Appendix 1 - Confidential Counselling Service for TSAT Employees

A confidential counselling service is available for all Employees across the Trust provided by Smart Clinic. The service offers information, advice and support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. This includes a telephone support line, access to advice and information including counselling and a variety of other services to support staff. To access the service please use the contact details below:

Telephone: 0845 862 2113

Online: [www.client.smartclinic.com](http://www.client.smartclinic.com) (with your log in details)

The App is also available to download.





## Appendix 2 – Services and Support

Please ensure that you have considered support from the Trust that includes:

The Employee Assistance Programme – details are in Appendix 1)  
Referral to Occupational Health

### Adfam National

Organisation that works with and on behalf of families affected by drug and alcohol problems. Helpful for the family of the alcohol or drug user.

Website: [www.adfam.org.uk](http://www.adfam.org.uk)

### Al-Anon Al-Anon

Family Groups UK and Eire provide support for anyone whose life is or has been affected by someone else's drinking.

Website: [www.al-anonuk.org.uk](http://www.al-anonuk.org.uk)

### Alcoholics Anonymous

The largest self-help group for people who acknowledge they cannot handle alcohol and want a new way of life without it. Services are free. The comprehensive website explains the philosophy of AA, what to expect, and local groups.

Helpline: 0800 917 7650

Website: [www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk](http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk)

### Alcohol Change UK

Leading UK alcohol charity formed from the merger of Alcohol Concern and Alcohol Research UK. Work for a society that is free from the harm caused by alcohol.

Website: <https://alcoholchange.org.uk>

### Cocaine Anonymous National

Self-help group specifically for cocaine users.

Helpline: 0800 612 0225, open 10:00am to 10:00pm, 7 days

Website: <https://cocaineanonymous.org.uk>

### Drinkaware

An independent UK-wide alcohol education charity. Provides advice and information to anyone concerned about their own drinking or someone else's and a range of support tools to help people

reduce their drinking, change their relationship with alcohol and improve their health. Free, confidential advice is provided through the online chat service,

DrinkChat, and helpline, Drinkline: 0300 123 1110

Website: [www.drinkaware.co.uk](http://www.drinkaware.co.uk)

### **Narcotics Anonymous**

The largest self-help group for people who want to stop using drugs. Services are free.

Helpline: 0300 999 1212

Website: [www.ukna.org](http://www.ukna.org) (includes details of local groups)

### **Release**

A registered charity able to advise on specialist areas of drugs law.

Helpline: 020 7324 2989

Website: [www.release.org.uk](http://www.release.org.uk)

### **Talk to FRANK**

A government-funded free service offering information and sources of support. The website provides detailed information on drugs that the non-specialist can understand.

Helpline: 0300 123 6600

Website: [www.talktofrank.com](http://www.talktofrank.com)

### **WDP**

Charity providing drug and alcohol treatment and recovery services across England. Also provide organisational training on drugs, alcohol, smoking, mental health and wellbeing.

Website: [www.wdp.org.uk](http://www.wdp.org.uk)

### **We Are With You (formerly Addaction)**

Drug, alcohol and mental health charity

Website: [www.wearewithyou.org.uk](http://www.wearewithyou.org.uk)

### **Rehab 4 Addiction**

An advisory and referral service for people who suffer from alcohol, drug and behavioural addiction.

Helpline: 0800 140 4690

Website: <https://www.rehab4addiction.co.uk/>

### **NHS Support**

- GP Support

- NHS: Drug addiction: getting help - <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/addiction-support/drug-addiction-getting-help/>
- NHS: Alcohol support- <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/alcohol-advice/alcohol-support/>



**drinkaware**