



Department of  
**Education**

# **Alcohol and Other Drugs in the Workplace Procedures**

Effective date: 11 December 2018

Version: 1.0

Accurate at the time of printing 29/07/2021.

These procedures must be read in conjunction with the Alcohol and Other Drugs in the Workplace Policy.

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**These procedures must be read in conjunction with the Alcohol and Other Drugs in the Workplace Policy.**

## 1. Policy supported

Alcohol and Other Drugs in the Workplace Policy

## 2. Scope

These procedures apply to all employees.

### Guidance

The authority to manage visitors impaired by alcohol and other drugs in Department schools and workplaces is governed by:

- section 57A of the Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984;
- Visitors and Intruders on Public School Premises Policy; and
- Community Use of Public School Facilities Policy.

The authority to manage students impaired by alcohol and other drugs in Department workplaces is governed by:

- Student Behaviour in Public Schools Policy and Procedures; and
- Duty of Care for Public School Students Policy.

## 3. Procedures

### 3.1 Responsibilities of employees

Employees must:

- be unimpaired by alcohol, medication or other drugs during work hours, including excursions, camps and other activities where employees have a duty of care for students;
- not be in possession of illicit drugs in the workplace;
- not be in possession of alcohol in the workplace without prior approval from their principal or line manager;

- not place the safety and health of others at risk, as outlined in section 20 of Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984;
- notify their principal or line manager where alcohol, medication or other drugs cause impairment or other effects that may impact the health and safety of themselves or others, duty of care obligations or work performance;
- if relevant, comply with established return to work plans that address fitness for work circumstances;
- immediately notify the principal or line manager if they observe behaviour that suggests a co-worker, student or visitor is impaired by alcohol, medication or other drugs; and
- store personal medications in a secure manner.

### Guidance

These procedures are underpinned by the Department's obligation and commitment to provide care and support for the safety, health and wellbeing of employees and reflect employee responsibilities as detailed in the:

- Department's Staff Conduct and Discipline Policy, Code of Conduct and Standards (staff only)
- Western Australian Public Sector Commission's Code of Ethics.

Employees are encouraged to seek advice from their medical practitioner if they have concerns related to alcohol, medication or other drug issues that may impact their ability to safely and effectively perform their duties and have an adverse impact in the workplace.

Support is available from the Department's Employee Assistance Program (staff only) with a counselling service for employees, their partners and dependent children under 25 years of age, who are entitled to six free sessions annually. This is an independent and confidential service. Appointments are available face-to-face, via telephone or Skype, phone 1300 307 912.

If an employee is taking medication that may have the potential to impact their work, it is important to consider discussing this with the principal or line manager to enable relevant support to be provided, if required.

Appendix A provides information on avenues of external support related to alcohol and other drugs.

## 3.2 Responsibilities of principals and line managers

Where it is observed that an employee may be impaired by alcohol or other drugs, principals and line managers must:

- immediately discuss their observations with the employee to ascertain support or assistance required;
- immediately determine if it is safe for the employee to remain at the workplace; and

- implement relevant support if the employee continues working.

Where it is deemed unsafe for the employee to remain at work, or the employee discloses they are impaired by alcohol, medication or other drugs, principals and line managers must:

- facilitate removal of the employee from the workplace and safe travel home or to a medical practitioner/medical facility;
- where prescription medication may cause impairment, work with the employee to develop a plan to manage situations, including considering reasonable adjustments to tasks/duties undertaken and possible flexibility related to work hours for a period of time;
- discuss repeated instances of alcohol or other drug impairment with the Department's Injury Management Consultants to determine whether a fitness for work review with the Department's occupational physician is instigated and consider referral to the Standards and Integrity Directorate;
- document incidents involving observed impairment by alcohol or other drugs and document actions taken to support the employee; and
- maintain confidentiality by only discussing issues with those who need to know, with information kept in a secure location at the worksite.

If illicit drugs, or a substance believed to be illicit drugs, are found in possession of an employee or in the workplace, principals and line managers must:

- secure the drugs in a manner that maintains workplace safety;
- contact the police and arrange for collection of the drugs (principals and line managers do not have authority to dispose of or distribute drugs to other parties); and
- report the matter to the Standards and Integrity Directorate if the drugs relate to an employee.

### **Guidance**

Alcohol, medication or other drug usage becomes an occupational safety and health issue if an employee's ability to exercise judgment, coordination, motor control, concentration and alertness at the workplace is impaired, leading to increased risk of injury or incidents to themselves or others.

Principals and line managers have a duty of care to employees who may be affected by alcohol or other drugs while at work. This includes providing and maintaining a safe working environment for all employees and making decisions based on an objective assessment of the situation and information available.

Duty of care provisions in the [Western Australian Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984](#) relate to:

- an employer providing a work environment in which employees are not exposed to hazards; and

- employees taking reasonable care for their own safety and health, and that of others, at work.

When an employee chooses to voluntarily disclose issues relating to use of alcohol, medication or other drugs, it is important for principals and line managers to provide support to the employee to enable them to seek relevant medical advice and assistance. See Appendix A for external support services and resources.

Where reasonable adjustments are implemented, in consultation with the employee and based on advice from a medical practitioner (if required) these need to be reviewed regularly to confirm employee needs are met.

When staff are removed from the workplace due to impairment caused by alcohol or other drugs, principals and line managers should determine whether the staff member is placed on sick leave or some other form of approved leave. Telephone Labour Relations for queries (9264 4921).

Advice to support principals and line managers dealing with situations related to alcohol or other drugs in the school or workplace is available from:

- [Employee Support Bureau](#) (staff only) for information and advice related to safety, fitness for work and facilitating referral to medical or counselling services;
- Standards and Integrity Directorate (phone 9264 4740, 1800 655 985 or email [complaints@education.wa.edu.au](mailto:complaints@education.wa.edu.au)) about staff conduct issues; and
- Labour Relations (phone 9264 4921) for queries related to performance and assistance with issuing a lawful order to comply with a principal or line manager's request to leave school premises until such time as fit to resume duties.

Support is available for principals and line managers dealing with managing employee issues related to alcohol and other drugs through the [Manager Assist Program](#) (staff only). Phone 1300 307 912 or 9388 9000.

Further support information is available in [Guidance Note - Alcohol and Other Drugs at the Workplace 2008](#), Commission for Occupational Safety and Health.

Appendix A provides a range of external support and information services available for employees.

## 4. Definitions

### Drug

A substance that when taken in or administered primarily affects the central nervous system, resulting in changes in mental processes. For example, mood, thoughts or perceptions and behaviour. This term includes but is not limited to:

- alcohol
- medication – prescribed or non-prescribed;
- illicit drugs – cannabis, cocaine, heroin, amphetamines, methamphetamines, etc; and
- other psychoactive substances such as solvents, petrol, glue, kava, nitrous oxide, synthetic drugs, etc.

### **Impairment**

The alteration of the normal physical or mental function which results in diminished performance, conduct or ability to perform tasks in a safe and productive manner.

### **Prescription medication**

Medication prescribed by a medical practitioner for that employee or another person.

### **Visitor**

All persons in Department workplaces other than current students and employees of the Department, who have good cause to be there. Visitors include:

- parents;
- volunteers;
- contractors;
- Parents and Citizens Associations, School Councils/Boards and individuals employed by such bodies; and
- other community members.

### **Workplace**

A workplace encompasses public schools, other Department worksites and school or work-related activities, including travel associated with such activities.

## 5. Related documents

### Relevant legislation or authority

[Industrial Relations Act 1979](#)

[Liquor Control Act 1988](#)

[Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984](#)

[Occupational Safety and Health Regulations 1996](#)

[Public Interest Disclosure Act 2003](#)

[Public Sector Management Act 1994](#)

[School Education Act 1999](#)

[School Education Act Regulations 2000](#)

### Related Department policies

[Community Use of Public School Facilities](#)

[Duty of Care for Public School Students](#)

[Employee Performance](#)

[Occupational Safety and Health](#)

[Staff Conduct and Discipline](#)

[Student Health Care in Public Schools](#)

[Visitors and Intruders on Public School Premises](#)

### Other documents



[Code of Conduct and Standards \(staff only\)](#)

[Grievance Framework](#)

[Guidelines for First Aid in the Workplace \(staff only\)](#)

[Guidance Note: Alcohol and Other Drugs at the Workplace 2008](#)

[Commissioner's Instruction No. 7 - Code of Ethics](#)

[Reporting Misconduct](#)

[Retirement on Grounds of Ill Health Guidelines](#)

[Western Australian Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drug Services Plan 2015-2025: Better Choices. Better Lives](#)

## 6. Contact information

### Policy manager:

Director Workforce Policy and Coordination

### Policy contact officer:

Manager Workforce Policy

T: 9264 5040

## 7. History of changes

### Effective date

11 December 2018

### Last update date Policy version no. Notes

These new procedures support the new Alcohol and Other Drugs in the Workplace policy that replaces the Alcohol on Public School Premises policy. Endorsed by the Director General at Corporate Executive on 31 October 2018.

## 8. Appendices

Appendix A: [External Support Resources](#) (PDF file - 375.1kB)

## 9. More information

### Supporting content

#### Policy

[Alcohol and Other Drugs in the Workplace Policy](#)

#### Procedure review date

11 December 2021

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