



Alcohol and Drugs - Policy and Procedure

Alcohol and drugs

Alcohol and drug misuse can have an adverse effect not just on students and employees but on their peers, colleagues, and the public. Having a safe working environment for both students and employees is a safeguarding priority, having students or employees under the influence, in possession of or supplying alcohol or drugs will be treated as a major safeguarding concern and our safeguarding procedure will be followed.

Bale's Farm requires all students and employees to comply with the alcohol and drugs policy. Breaches of the policy will be taken very seriously and may be dealt with under Bale's Farm disciplinary procedure.

For the purpose of this policy, the term 'drugs' means illegal substances (or legal substances which induce similar effects to legal drugs) or other substances, for example, solvents. Drug misuse also refers to the misuse of prescribed medication.

Policy

Bale's Farm strongly discourages students and employees from drinking any alcohol or taking drugs prior to driving or to work. Students and employees must not turn up for their sessions or work under the influence of alcohol or drugs under any circumstances.

Students and employees must not drink alcohol or take drugs during sessions or working time. This includes any time between when students and employees report for sessions/work and the time they finish their session/work and includes lunchtimes. For employees, it includes any period of call out whilst on standby duty or overtime working.

Prescribed medication

The policy does not stop students and employees from using prescribed medication, over-the-counter medication or herbal remedies. However, medication such as tranquillisers, sleeping pills, painkillers, decongestants, cough suppressants, antihistamines (for treatment of hay fever or other allergies) and antidepressants can make students employees feel drowsy and may affect their work performance or the safety of themselves or others. If students/employees are taking any medication they should:

- a) check the possible side effects with their doctor or pharmacist and;
- b) let Bale's Farm manager know, in confidence, that they are taking medication and the possible side effects. Bale's Farm will, if necessary, make alternative arrangements for the employee.

Assistance

If an employee comes forward voluntarily and seeks help for an alcohol or drug problem, they will be given help and support by Bale's Farm which may include:

- c) Encouraging the employee to see their GP or a referral to Occupational Health
- d) Providing information, support and advice regarding drug and alcohol concerns
- e) Considering if it is possible to move the employee to alternative role if their role is safety critical
- f) Time off to get expert help

If the employee thinks they have a problem and may be violating this policy as a result, Bale's Farm strongly encourages the employee to come forward and seek help. Bale's Farm will be sympathetic and ensure the employee gets the help and support they need which may include direction to external specialists. If an employee volunteers information to Bale's Farm that they have an alcohol or drug problem they will be treated with dignity at all times.

If a student discloses they require assistance with an alcohol or drugs problem, then the safeguarding procedure will be followed with appropriate communication to schools, colleges and parents/guardians to ensure the student is supported with obtaining assistance for their problem.

Any discussions will be in the strictest of confidence.

We recognise that students and employees may continue to struggle with alcohol or drug dependency even after they have sought and are receiving assistance. Bale's Farm will make every effort to provide ongoing support to the student/employee.

Absence

If employees are absent from work, or students absent from the mentoring programme, due to attendance for treatment in relation to alcohol or drug abuse, that absence will be treated as normal sickness absence.

Formal procedures

Whilst Bale's Farm will be sympathetic to those who are experiencing difficulties with alcohol and drugs, it may be appropriate to implement a disciplinary or capability procedure as appropriate where conduct or performance is not satisfactory, which could result in termination of employment or dismissal from the mentoring programme for students.

Criminal activity in the workplace involving drugs will, in every case, require Bale's Farm to alert the police.

Name: James Bosworth

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This policy will be reviewed annually, or as and when there are any changes in the law or procedures.