

## **WORKPLACE ALCOHOL POLICY**

### **1 INTRODUCTION**

The Southern Education and Library Board has adopted this positive Policy designed to encourage early identification of alcohol related problems and so providing the Board with a constructive and preventive strategy regarding alcohol problems amongst its employees.

Alcohol problems can affect an individual's health and well being and cause a wide range of social problems. This Policy is concerned primarily with the effects of alcohol problems on the job performance and career prospects of the Board's employees.

The Alcohol Policy has four main objectives:

- i To *retain* employees;
- ii To *encourage* employees with alcohol problems to seek help;
- iii To *refer* employees for help;
- iv To *restore* health and productivity.

The Policy is intended to:

- 1.1 reduce and help prevent the incidence of alcohol related work impairment
- 1.2 reduce the personal suffering of employees with drink problems and also the consequential effects on colleagues;

### **2 BOARD'S POLICY**

- 2.1 The Board recognises that alcohol-related problems are primarily health and social concerns and, therefore, employees with such problems require help and treatment.
- 2.2 Alcohol-related problems in the context of this Policy are defined as any drinking, either intermittent or continual, which interferes with an employee's work performance in the areas of efficiency, productivity, safety or attendance at work.
- 2.3 When it becomes evident that an employee has a drink problem affecting conduct at work or work performance, that employee will be asked to discuss the matter with the officer designated by the Chief Executive\*. The employee concerned will have the right to be accompanied by a Trade Union representative.
- 2.4 When discussing these problems with employees the desire of the Board to assist the employee will at all times be uppermost in the mind of the designated officer. As a result of this discussion the designated officer will offer the employee the opportunity to seek an outside assessment of the problem and, if necessary, treatment from an appropriate agency. The designated officer will make clear to the employee that during any period of treatment all benefits and rights laid down in the contract of employment will be safeguarded. When the employee is judged to be fit to resume working it will normally be in that person's original post. If, for some reason, that is not possible every effort will be made to

find that employee suitable alternative employment in the Board. Should the employee not be satisfied with the arrangements being offered the matter will be referred to the Grievance Procedure.

- 2.5** The procedure established by the Agreement for assisting an employee with drink related problems is quite distinct from the Disciplinary Procedure. An employee with an identified problem, which affects conduct at work or which prevents the achievement of a satisfactory level of work performance and who refuses the opportunity to receive help, may have the matter referred to the Disciplinary Procedure. Equally, if an employee denies the existence of an alcohol problem or discontinues a course of treatment and then reverts to previous unsatisfactory levels of conduct or performance, the employee may have the matter referred to the Disciplinary Procedure.
- 2.6** An employee who accepts the opportunity to receive help, but whose conduct or work performance afterwards reverts to the problem level, will have the new situation considered on its merits. If appropriate a further opportunity to accept and co-operate with help and treatment will be offered.
- 2.7** The application of this Policy is limited to those instances of alcohol-related problems which affect the health and/or work performance or conduct of the employee. The Policy does not apply to employees who, because of indulgence in alcohol on random occasions, behave in the matter contrary to the standard of safety and conduct required by the Board. Such instances will be dealt with in accordance with the normal recognised Disciplinary Procedures
- 2.8** The Policy applies throughout the Board irrespective of sex, grade or position.

### **3 CONFIDENTIALITY**

All discussions with an employee in connection with this Policy will be strictly confidential. This will equally be the case with any counselling or other treatment undertaken by the employee. While appropriate personnel records will be kept it is accepted that any record of treatment will be the property of the person administering that treatment. No discussion about the employee will take place with another party without the permission of that employee.

### **4 TRAINING**

All employees will be given a copy of the agreed Alcohol Policy.

Specific training will be given to those with special responsibility for implementing the Policy. Depending on the level of responsibility and the knowledge and skills considered necessary, training programmes will cover as appropriate, the following:-

- I Basic understanding of alcohol and the rationale and procedures of the Policy;
- ii The nature of drinking problem, its possible causes and effects;
- iii The relationships between alcohol consumption, problems, behaviour, efficiency, safety and general work performance;
- iv The kind of help, such as counselling, available from local agencies.

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\* The designated Officer in charge is the Health and Welfare Services Manager.