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ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE POLICY

Scope of policy

For the purpose of this policy the term drugs will be defined as all mood-altering substances, either legal or illegal. This includes alcohol, prescribed and other medications, in addition to illegal and illicit substances.

Introduction

Alcohol and other drugs affect concentration, co-ordination and performance. It is recognized that the effects of alcohol and other drugs may spill over from ones private life into the workplace resulting in inefficiency, accidents and absenteeism. The organization recognizes its employees as its most valuable resource and is committed to providing a working environment, which is a healthy and safe one for the entire workforce. Therefore, this policy should be seen in the context of the promotion of health, safety and welfare of all employees of the organization.

Principles

The organisation recognises the desirability of promoting the health and wellbeing of employees by

- (a) encouraging a healthy lifestyle through preventing the development of alcohol and other drug related problems
- (b) offering assistance to employees who need it to overcome problems caused by alcohol or drug misuse.

Aims

This policy aims to:

1. raise awareness of the risks of alcohol and other drug related problems
2. promote the health and wellbeing of employees
3. minimize problems at work arising from the effects of alcohol and other drugs
4. identify employees with possible alcohol and drug related problems at an early stage
5. offer employees with alcohol and other drug related problems referral to an appropriate source for intervention and treatment if necessary

Policy Statement

- This policy applies equally to all staff
- All premises are alcohol and drug free during working hours
- Employees shall be alcohol and drug free while on duty
- After work functions and other social events are outside the remit of this policy.

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Intervention

Early recognition of individual alcohol and drug problems is a shared responsibility of all employees, staff and management. It is recognized that this is a complex and difficult issue and that supervisors and managers need training and support to recognize problems and deal with them effectively.

Identifying the Problem

Employees are encouraged to seek assistance on a voluntary basis. However, a problem may become apparent due to the observances of a colleague or manager/supervisor. NO ONE characteristic identifies someone with an alcohol and drug related problem but the following MAY be indicators especially if occurring in combination or over a period of time.

- Absenteeism
- Accidents and unusual incidents
- Fluctuating work performance
- Fluctuations in concentration and energy
- Late returns to work
- Unpredictable mood changes
- Poor co-operation with colleagues
- Unkempt appearance
- Frequent borrowing of money
- Smelling of Alcohol
- Excessive sweating
- Unreliability
- Aggression or irritability
- Confusion or drowsiness

Procedure

- Observation of behavior and keeping a note of incidents may lead you to believe that there is a problem. Signs, as those mentioned above, may be evident but do not automatically assume that the problem is drink/drug related but if problems persist, it should be further looked into.
- Where a supervisor/manager identifies a work performance or behavior indicator of a possible alcohol and drug related problem, he/she should raise this with the staff member and make them aware of the availability of support services (Occupational Health Department, Staff Counseling Welfare Service).
- The manager should only deal with work-related issues and not try to diagnose the personal problem.

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- He/she should keep factual and accurate written records of incidents and interaction with the employee. These records should be stored in a confidential file. The file will be anonymous until or unless suspicion is confirmed.
- The organization will Endeavour to ensure that any employee who seeks help will be treated with discretion and in confidence.
- If work-related problems persist, the staff member may be referred to support services with their agreement. Employees may seek help from other sources if they prefer.
- The decision to seek help, agree to referral and/or accept professional intervention will be the responsibility of the individual staff member and refusal to do so will not influence any present or future promotion or disciplinary procedures.
- Employees will be given the same sick leave and the same protection and employment rights as other employees with ill-health problems. Time off will be given for treatment or other specialist help or aftercare provided appropriate certification is submitted.
- Where however, an employees work performance or behavior remains unsatisfactory despite availability of services, the normal disciplinary procedures will be activated specifically in relation to these issues. The employee will be entitled to representation and due process.

Direct Contact

Any employee who feels they have a problem may approach services such as occupational health or others for support and assistance. Assurances and procedures as set out above shall apply to such contacts.

Alcohol and Drug Awareness

The organization will encourage a healthy and sensible approach to alcohol and drugs by providing education/training opportunities to employees:

- to increase awareness of responsible drinking
- to increase knowledge of the risks associated with alcohol and drug misuse
- to increase awareness of early signs of alcohol and drug dependency.

This will be done through:

- A. Specific projects e.g. Alcohol Awareness Week in the workplace
- B. Provision of appropriate information
- C. Modules on induction and other staff development courses

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