



## Alcohol Policy

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THIS POLICY APPLIES TO MILLFIELD.

### Rationale

The educational, physical, mental, social and moral welfare of all students is our priority. Alcohol is a depressant drug, particularly when taken in large quantities. There is a medical consensus that drinking alcohol has an adverse effect of the adolescent brain. Excessive consumption of alcohol can be fatal and will almost certainly lead to health problems later in life. The disinhibiting effects of alcohol can lead to other problems such as unwanted / unprotected sexual activity. Underage drinking remains a challenging social problem. We are mindful that alcohol consumption by young people is accepted within many areas of society today and that there are increasing pressures on young people to experiment with alcohol.

It is important that we make our position on alcohol clear so that students receive consistent messages. If alcohol is drunk in sensible amounts by adults it may produce feelings of relaxation and health risks are considerably reduced if drinkers keep below the recommended levels. However, even at low levels, the potential for serious accidents increases.

The aim of Millfield's Alcohol Policy is to encourage a mature approach by young adults to alcohol consumption, and respect for those who choose not to drink. Because the risks of alcohol consumption are age related and there are different legal positions the policy also makes a clear distinction between alcohol consumption by Sixth-Formers and by students in years 9 - 11. To achieve these objectives we set out to state our rules clearly, to educate coherently and to deter through disciplinary action, where appropriate.

We expect all staff, parents and visitors to support the policy.

### The Law

An individual aged under 18 commits an offence if he knowingly consumes alcohol on relevant premises. The Law, however, allows an exception to this where:

- a) The individual is aged 16 or 17,
- b) The alcohol consumed is beer, wine or cider,
- c) Its consumption is at a table meal on relevant premises, and
- d) The individual is accompanied at the meal by an individual aged 18 or over.

### Rules

- a) Students must not be in possession of alcohol or engage in unsupervised drinking whilst at school. The only exceptions are that students over the age of 18 may drink in specified local public houses between 8.00 p.m. and 10.00 p.m. on Saturday evenings with housemasters/mistress' permission. Permitted drinks: beer, wine or cider. No spirits or cocktails allowed. Meal Chits are available through Housemaster/mistress and at their discretion. These chits allow Sixth Form students over 16 years of age to use a specified local restaurant for a meal and to consume alcohol in moderation in the company of over 18s. The chit system will be monitored by Assistant Head (Pastoral).

- b) Housemaster/mistresses (or colleagues delegated by them) may take Sixth Formers out for a meal and drink on other occasions. Otherwise no student may enter a public house, wine bar etc., without permission from a member of staff. Parents who take students out for a meal during term time should ensure that consumption of alcohol is supervised and in moderation, under no circumstances should those who are under age to be allowed to consume alcohol.
- c) The Sixth Form Club aka Bar is licensed, enabling Sixth Formers over the age of 18 to purchase alcohol and those over 16 to consume alcohol with a meal. It opens at the Headmaster's discretion.
- d) Housemaster/mistresses and other staff may permit the serving of beer or wine with a meal at their discretion to Sixth Form students under their personal supervision e.g. at the Christmas meal or to celebrate special events. Catering staff will serve the alcohol, a maximum of two small glasses of wine or two pints of beer is permitted. The housemaster or housemistress may serve a bottle of low alcohol beer or a glass of wine to a Sixth Former in their private residence at their discretion.
- e) Sixth Formers are allowed specified and monitored consumption of alcohol at certain, formal school functions where a meal is served. Alcohol will be served by appropriate adults i.e. school catering staff in small measures (e.g. ½ pint glasses) to discourage over-consumption. Attractive options of non-alcoholic drinks will always be available at such events.
- f) The purchase or supply of drink to other students is most likely to be illegal and is expressly forbidden.
- g) Specified and monitored low level consumption of alcohol may be offered with a meal to Sixth Form students on a school trip. Parents will have been informed and the tour leader will oversee serving and consumption.
- h) Rules on alcohol apply to students on and off the school premises during term time, school outings and expeditions. They also apply on journeys to and from school, on exeat, at the beginning and end of term and at half term. Students must not bring the school into disrepute for any reason associated with alcohol, whether or not the student is in the care of the School at the time.

In order to reinforce our message on the use of alcohol and excessive consumption will also be punished in accordance with the disciplinary sanctions listed in the policy.

## **Education**

Alcohol education is part of the PSHEE programme in a manner appropriate to the student's level of understanding:

- To enable students to make healthy, informed decisions by increasing knowledge, understanding, challenging attitudes and developing communication and social skills.
- To provide accurate and appropriate information.
- To help students develop an understanding for those experiencing or likely to experience alcohol misuse.

The Housemaster/mistress will vigorously reinforce this process. Heads of Year will issue reminders of the rules and the reasons for them at moments of most obvious temptation. Individual support is available; we encourage students to discuss in confidence any anxieties they may have about use of alcohol with a member of staff or a school counsellor.

Sixth form social events (e.g. the Headmaster's Party and House Christmas Dinners are designed so that older students may be introduced to alcohol in a structured social setting).

## **Welfare**

If a student is found under the influence of alcohol the initial priority is the well-being of the individual. If the student appears to be adversely affected by alcohol consumption (e.g. vomiting, stupor, coma) they should be taken to the Medical Centre immediately or equivalent medical provision if on a school trip. Help should be sought from the Medical Centre and the student's Housemaster/mistress should be informed.

Subsequent action will be determined and agreed by the Medical Centre and the House staff. It may be necessary to monitor the student until the effects of the alcohol wear off and in severe cases the student will be admitted to the Medical Centre and supervision provided by nursing staff. If a student is seriously ill then House Staff should inform parents as soon as possible. The student will only be allowed to return to his/her house on the advice and direction of the Medical Centre staff.

Pastoral support will be offered after the incident. The student will later be asked to explain how they came to be in the condition.

## **Suspicion of Alcohol Consumption**

If a member of staff considers it likely that a student has consumed alcohol in breach of the rules the student will be challenged. If the student denies consuming alcohol, but there is reasonable cause to suspect otherwise (smell, behaviour, intelligence etc.) then it might be suggested to the student that a breath test be conducted. Consent is given by the student. A written record will be kept when a student is asked to take a test and its outcome will also be recorded. The School will treat a positive test, although not infallible, as evidence that the student has consumed alcohol. Breathalysers are issued to all Housemasters/mistresses. If a student refuses to comply with a breath test: they will be asked to say why they have refused. The School will be entitled to draw inferences from the response and general demeanour; his/her parents will be informed and a meeting will be arranged with the Head or a Deputy.

If a student is suspected of being in possession of alcohol a search may be conducted according to our guidance on searches. Please see the Search Policy for further details.

## **Disciplinary Sanctions**

Students who break the rules on alcohol as set out above or who are found to be aiding and abetting the consumption of alcohol will be interviewed afterwards by their Head of Year or other senior member of staff who will discuss appropriate action with the Housemaster/mistress.

In considering the appropriate punishment the following may be taken into account:

- The level of consumption as indicated by evidence of consumption, visible intoxication and /or breath test.
- The Year group of the student involved (Y9-11 students will typically receive a tougher sanction than Sixth Formers for low level consumption).
- Whether the student has purchased or supplied drink to other students.
- Whether the student has overindulged with alcohol at a school function.
- The record of the student – particularly with regard to alcohol.

Typically:

#### **Head of Year Detention**

- A Sixth Form student who has overindulged with alcohol served at a school function but not so intoxicated as to be admitted to the Medical Centre.
- A Sixth Form student found in possession of a small quantity of alcohol (e.g. a can of beer).

#### **SLT Detention**

- A Sixth Form student who is possession of larger quantities of alcohol (e.g. bottle of wine/spirits) or consumes alcohol against school rules or who has overindulged whilst drinking.
- Any Y9-11 student who has consumed less than a unit of alcohol and is not at all intoxicated.

#### **Suspension**

- Any Y9-11 student who is known to have consumed an amount of alcohol (more than a unit) or is in any way affected by alcohol.
- A student who is seriously affected by the consumption of alcohol (i.e. vomiting, stupor or coma) or who has previously been sanctioned for alcohol consumption. This student will usually have been admitted to the Medical Centre because of concerns regarding significant levels of intoxication.
- Any student who supplies alcohol to others.

At each stage, a letter will be sent home outlining the offence and the likely outcome of any further transgressions.

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