Alcohol Policy

Ellesmere College

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1. Policy Statement

1.1 Ellesmere is committed to promoting the health and well-being of the school community. In today's society, excess alcohol consumption although not acceptable, does nevertheless take place in all age ranges. Peers, the media, schools and the family all play an important role in shaping a child's view on alcohol.

2. Scope

2.1 This policy has been authorised by the Head and is available to parents and pupils on request. The policy relates to possession and consumption of alcohol and applies to all pupils at Ellesmere College irrespective of their age. The policy may also apply at times when a pupil is not in the care of the College. The procedures and sanctions may be adapted as appropriate to meet the policy aims and the circumstances of each case.

2.2 Alcohol: means intoxicating liquor of all descriptions (including beer, cider, wine and spirits) and this policy covers obtaining, consuming, and supplying alcohol.

3. Policy Aims

3.1 In line with the government we want to reduce alcohol misuse and the harm it causes.

3.2 To obey the law with regards to young people and alcohol consumption.

3.3 To educate young people on the sensible use of alcohol.

3.4 To give clear guidelines/rules on when alcohol consumption, whilst under school's care, is acceptable.

To encourage a mature approach by young adults to alcohol consumption and respect for those who choose not to drink.

4. Education

4.1 Alcohol Education will be taught during Science lessons, PSHE, tutor periods and other relevant lessons in a manner appropriate to the pupil's level of understanding:

4.1.1 To enable pupils to make healthy, informed decisions by increasing knowledge, understanding, challenging attitudes and developing communication and social skills.

4.1.2 To provide accurate and age appropriate information about alcohol (be they positive or negative), associated with health risks and the law.

4.1.3 To help pupils develop an understanding for those experiencing or likely to experience alcohol misuse.

4.1.4 We also aim to encourage a sensible attitude towards alcohol, for now and in the future.

5. Alcohol and the Law

5.1 The College follows the **Licensing Act 2003** in relation to children and alcohol. Under the Act, it is an offence to *sell* alcohol to anyone under the age of 18 and for a child knowingly to *consume* alcohol on relevant licensed premises. **A limited exception exists under Section 150(4)**, allowing **16- and 17-year-olds** to **drink (but not purchase) beer, wine or cider** *with a table meal*, **provided they are accompanied by an adult aged 18 or over**. Spirits are **not permitted** under this exception. The College may apply stricter standards than the legal minimum for safeguarding reasons.

6. Drinking alcohol whilst under school care

6.1 Guidelines on when alcohol may be consumed:

	Pupils below the Sixth Form (whatever their age).	Pupils in the Sixth Form
6.1.1 Dinners on licensed premises. (Including meals on trips at home or abroad.)	No alcohol	Sixth Form pupils may consume **beer, wine or cider only**, and only **with a table meal** and **while accompanied by a member of staff or another responsible adult aged 18+**. Spirits are **not permitted**. The College applies a stricter limit of **no more than 2 standard drinks** (approx. 4.6 UK units), and may impose **zero-alcohol** restrictions for specific event
6.1.2 Internal school functions where alcohol is available for purchase.	No alcohol	Sixth Form pupils may only drink **beer, wine or cider**, and only when the event has been risk-assessed and supervised by staff. Alcohol may not be purchased by the pupil; if they are 18, parents may purchase on their behalf at the College's discretion. Spirits are **not permitted**.
6.1.3 Internal school functions where alcohol is provided.	No alcohol	According to custom and practice (no spirits at any time) but under no circumstances may consumption exceed a maximum of 5 units. (A standard glass of wine or regular beer equates to 2.3 units). Alcohol may be provided to Sixth Form pupils **only under staff supervision** and only **beer, wine or cider** (no spirits).

		A maximum of **2 standard drinks** applies unless a stricter limit is set for safeguarding reasons. All such events require a completed **risk assessment**.

Event-Specific Risk Assessments

All events, trips, or functions where alcohol might be present will undergo a **documented risk assessment**, covering supervision, access to alcohol, and control measures. Risk assessments will be reviewed annually alongside updates to DfE and ISI guidance.

7. Welfare

7.1 If a pupil is found under the influence of alcohol the initial priority is the well-being of the individual. If they are vomiting, in a stupor, or have passed out they will be taken to the Medical Centre or medical assistance asked to attend. If boarding, the HsM will be informed; for day pupils the parents will be contacted.

7.2 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 their House on the advice and direction of the Medical Centre staff.

7.3 Pastoral support will be offered after the incident and the student will later be asked to explain how they came to be in such a condition, and consequently, sanctions will be put in place.

8. School Rules

8.1 No pupil of any age is allowed to bring alcohol into school, irrespective of the intention to consume. Empty bottles or cans will be deemed to have been consumed in school. Pupils must not bring the school into disrepute for any reason associated with alcohol, whether or not the pupil is in the care of the school at the time.

8.2 Disciplinary Sanctions

Sanctions will always be **proportionate**, take into account a pupil's **age, SEND, and safeguarding context**, and align with the College's Behaviour Policy.

- First offence – will be dealt with in an appropriate manner by the Housemaster/Housemistress in consultation with the relevant Head of Section/Deputy Head: parents will be informed. Should the incident involve the use of spirits, it is likely that the pupils involved will be suspended (internally or externally).

- Second offence – will be dealt with by the relevant Head of Section/Deputy Head at their discretion and may result in external suspension: parents will be informed.
- Subsequent offences are likely to attract the ultimate sanction of exclusion. However, each incident will be dealt with on its own merits and support will always accompany any sanctions imposed.

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 school holds a breath alcohol test that may be used for this purpose).
- The year group of the pupil involved.
- Whether the pupil has purchased or supplied drink to other pupils.
- Whether the pupil has overindulged with alcohol at a school function.
- The behaviour record of the pupil – particularly with regard to alcohol.

8.3 Subsequent offences will lead to a higher level of sanction. Repeated suspensions will render a pupil liable to being required to leave the College.

9 Searches for alcohol

9.1 Searches: This is in line with the College's Behaviour and Discipline Policy on searching and confiscation (Appendix 3) and reiterated below:

9.1.1 Recording and Informing Parents

All searches for alcohol will be recorded, including the date, time, staff involved, the grounds for the search, and the outcome. Parents/carers will be informed as soon as reasonably practicable, in line with DfE statutory guidance.

9.1.2 Before any search is undertaken the pupil will usually be asked to consent. In seeking consent, the age and maturity of the pupil will be taken into account together with any special needs the pupil may have. Written consent will not usually be required.

9.1.3 Where the Head or an authorised member of staff have reasonable grounds to suspect that a pupil may have a prohibited item, consent is not required and the search will be carried out, using reasonable force where appropriate.

9.1.4 Searches will be carried out only on College premises or, if elsewhere, where the member of staff has lawful control or charge of the pupil, for example on a trip or in training settings.

9.1.5 Alcohol which has been confiscated will be destroyed.

10 Testing

10.1 A pupil caught with alcohol will not need to be tested.

10.2 A pupil obviously intoxicated will not need to be tested.

10.3 A pupil suspected of unauthorised consumption of alcohol may be asked to give a breath test if necessary. The reason for this policy is:

10.3.1 to provide appropriate pastoral care for the individual.

10.3.2 to deter breaches of College Rules.

10.3.3 to identify those involved.

10.3.4 to absolve those who have been wrongly suspected.

10.4 Informed Consent: The relevant consent to a test is that of the pupil rather than the parents, even if the pupil is under 16 years of age, provided he/she is of sufficient maturity and understanding and gives his / her informed consent in writing. The member of staff leading the investigation will determine whether or not the pupil is able to provide his consent and may request the additional opinion of a medically qualified member of staff.

10.5 Notifying Parents: Reasonable endeavours will be made, before a test is carried out, to notify a parent, guardian or education guardian of the requirement for a breath test and the reasons for that requirement.

10.6 Refusal: If a pupil refuses to be tested he / she will be asked to say why he / she has refused. The College will be entitled to draw inferences from his / her response and general demeanour. If a parent's consent is required and they refuse to consent to their child being tested, the College may draw inferences from the pupil's general demeanour. Consent for breath testing must be **informed and recorded**. Refusal does not automatically imply guilt but may be considered alongside other evidence. Parents will be notified **before or as soon as possible after** any test, in line with DfE guidance.

10.7 Test Result: The College will treat a positive test, although not infallible, as evidence that the pupil has consumed alcohol.

11. Support

11.1 Through the medical centre the College has access to CHAT (Confidential Advice for Teenagers) through a life and wellbeing coach. It is College policy to offer entry to this programme to pupils who require it. Under normal circumstances the programme can be arranged to cause only minimal, if any, interference with a pupil's academic timetable. Referral can also then be made to a GP and/or CAMHS, depending on the severity of the alcohol use/addiction.

12. Monitoring and Review

12.1 This policy will be reviewed every 3 years or following the issue of any new guidance from the Department of Education or ISI.

12.2 The review will be carried out by the Deputy Head Pastoral and recommendation sent to the Head for authorisation.

Authorised by	The Head
Date	February 2026

Reviewed by	DHP
Date	February 2026

Effective date of policy	February 2026