Alcohol Policy

CONSUMPTION OF ALCOHOL

Alcohol is a depressant drug, particularly when taken in large quantities. Even at low levels, the potential for serious accidents arises. The Licensing Act 2003 makes it generally illegal for alcohol to be sold to or purchased by anyone under the age of 18. Students found in possession, using or under the influence of alcohol whilst under the authority of the School can expect to be suspended. Sixth form, and some Fifth Form boys, attending school functions on-site at which alcohol is available may consume such alcohol in accordance with the terms of the Premises Licence and under the strict supervision of staff as outlined in this policy.

There is abundant proof of the dangers of excessive drinking, primarily to health but also to educational achievement and general wellbeing. The School therefore has responsibilities both to educate pupils in the use and abuse of alcoholic drinks as well as ensuring that consumption within school is strictly controlled. The school's Citizenship programmes address the social use and hazards of alcohol consumption. Events using other specialist expertise, such as talks by visiting speakers or people whose lives have been touched by alcohol-related problems or behaviours, are also provided to ensure that all aspects of the consequences of drinking alcohol are considered. The school is also conscious that high self-esteem enables young people to resist abusing alcohol. This confidence is built through achievement and recognition in the classroom and in extra-curricular activities.

Despite this education, some pupils will drink excessive amounts of alcohol. When day boys leave the estate at the end of each school day, it is their parents’ responsibility to ensure their safety and welfare, but it is hoped that no boy would involve himself in activity outside school which would either bring the school into disrepute, or compromise his ability to function properly in the classroom.

In school no boy may obtain or possess alcoholic drinks. There may be school occasions when alcoholic drinks may be consumed but only in the presence of a member of staff and, in the case of boarders, with the House Master’s permission. It is the responsibility of the supervising member of staff to ensure, as far as possible, that no boy below the Fifth Form consumes any alcohol; that Fifth Form boys consume no more than two alcoholic drinks and that those in the Sixth Form drink sensibly. Spirits should never be consumed. Boys driving to and from school functions should never drink any alcohol.

The same expectations about alcohol consumption apply on trips and tours as in school. It is the responsibility of the supervising member of staff to ensure that no member of the party will participate in any activity that is likely to put any person in danger, or bring the School into disrepute, and this includes purchasing and consuming alcohol.

A pupil found intoxicated through alcohol will be given appropriate treatment, including medical attention if necessary, and parents will be informed as soon as possible.

Any pupil who exploits opportunities to drink on tours or trips by consuming more than he should may expect punishment, according to the severity of the offence, at the discretion initially of the tour leader or, in acute cases, of the Head Master.

A pupil found intoxicated through alcohol will be given appropriate treatment, including medical attention if necessary, and parents will be informed as soon as possible. Any alcohol found in the
possession of pupils on school premises will be confiscated and appropriate sanctions may be applied.

Any pupil who obtains or possesses alcoholic drinks, other than at school occasions when alcohol is permitted, or who exploits opportunities to drink at school events by consuming more than he should, may expect punishment, according to the severity of the offence, at the discretion of the Head Master.

Guidelines for boys on the School’s Alcohol Policy

These guidelines are designed to make clear the main features of the above policy.

You may think that it’s enjoyable to drink alcohol but you could face difficulties if you don’t know how to handle it. Because you have seen others drinking alcohol who look all right, don’t assume that you will be the same: some people’s bodies tolerate alcohol better than others’. You could get into trouble with your parents, with others you meet, with the School, with the police and most importantly, your health may suffer. You will get advice in school about all of these areas but here are the key facts about School policy and the law:

It is against the law:

- to knowingly sell alcohol to a person under 18 under any circumstances regardless of where alcohol is sold
- for anyone under the age of 18 to purchase or attempt to purchase alcohol
- for anyone to purchase or attempt to purchase alcohol on behalf of someone under the age of 18 (except as detailed under * below)
- to drink alcohol on the street in Bedford town centre.

*People aged 16 and 17 can drink beer, wine or cider with a table meal in a dining room, provided that the alcohol is purchased by an adult (18 or over) and that the adult remains with the underage person. Please note that bar snacks do not count as a table meal.

If you are a day boy, your parents are responsible for you at the end of the school day. However, any drinking which brings the school into disrepute or affects your ability to work properly becomes a problem for the school also.

If you are a Boarder, your House Master is responsible for you in your parents’ absence. You should always speak to him if you have any doubts about what to do.

There are some school occasions when certain year groups can drink alcohol but you must be clear about the rules.

- A member of staff must be present
- If you are a Boarder, you must have your House Master’s permission
- Spirits are never allowed
- Fourths and Removes are NOT allowed to drink alcohol
- Fifth Form boys are not allowed to drink more than TWO alcoholic drinks
- Sixth Formers must drink sensibly
- Never, ever drink and drive.

If you are going on a school visit or tour, the same rules apply. Please see Annex.
If you are found drunk, you will be looked after. Your parents will be contacted as soon as possible.

If you are found with alcohol in school, other than at a school occasion, or if you break the rules about drinking at school events, you can expect to be punished. The Head Master will decide on the appropriate punishment.

**REMEMBER**

*You should control your drinking of alcohol not only in order to follow these guidelines but also out of consideration for others. You are part of a family and community; it is your responsibility to avoid anti-social behaviour that causes harm, distress or inconvenience to others.*

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**James Hodgson**  
Head Master  

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