# Alcohol and Substance Abuse Policy

Steps Ahead (SA) is committed to a safe, healthy, and productive workplace for all employees. It recognises that alcohol, drug, or other substance abuse by employees may impair their ability to perform properly and will have serious adverse effects on the safety, efficiency and productivity of other employees and the nursery as a whole. The misuse of legitimate drugs, or the use, possession, distribution or sale of illicit or unprescribed drugs at the nursery premises, is strictly prohibited and is grounds for termination of employment.

This Policy applies to all employees, temporary staff and visiting students

***The Definition of ‘Substance’ Includes the Following:***

1. Alcohol.
2. Illicit, prescription or over-the-counter drugs.
3. Any other substance that may impair an employee’s performance or conduct at work. i.e. inhalants and all other forms of substance abuse.

No alcohol or drugs must be brought onto or consumed onto the nursery premises at any time or whilst attending any training courses, whether internal or external, or at any other event where they are representing the Nursery or are wearing nursery uniform. For these purposes this includes performance-enhancing drugs used for “doping” purposes, even if they are not unlawful under the criminal law, unless they have been medically prescribed by a doctor. Staff must **never** drink alcohol or take drugs whilst on duty at the nursery.

Employees representing the nursery at any functions or training courses or attending Company organised social events outside normal working hours are expected to be moderate if drinking alcohol and to take specific action to ensure they are well within the legal limits if they are driving. They are prohibited from taking drugs on these occasions.

This policy aims to encourage those employees with an alcohol or drugs problem to seek appropriate medical help as early as possible and to accept treatment.

*Alcohol and Drugs*

The Policy aims to:

* ensure that employees are aware of the risks associated with the abuse of alcohol and drugs.
* assist the Managers in identifying a drinking or drugs problem at an early stage.
* ensure that other employees and the children are not put at risk or adversely affected by an employee’s alcohol consumption or drug use.
* ensure that the Nursery’s efficiency and reputation is not undermined by an employee’s alcohol or drug-influenced behaviour.

***Situations where the use of the Disciplinary Procedure is Appropriate***

Although it is the nursery’s intention to support employees with a substance abuse problem we will take disciplinary action, which may result in dismissal, for:

* Any employee found being under the influence of alcohol or drugs or other prescribed a substance that impairs performance, behaviour, conduct or effects attendance whilst at work. Being unfit for work because of use of drugs or alcohol is strictly prohibited and is grounds for termination of employment.
* Possession, use, distribution or sale of alcoholic beverages or illegal substances on nursery premises is not allowed. Any employee found to be in possession of or using such substances at work may be escorted off site and the police notified.
* It is also a potential gross misconduct offence for an employee to buy or sell drugs, alcohol or smoked tobacco products or to be in possession of or consume drugs on the nursery’s premises, and this includes buying or selling drugs, alcohol or smoked tobacco products and being in possession of them,.
* If an employee, identified as having an alcohol or substance abuse problem, fails to co-operate in referral or treatment arrangements or discontinues a course of treatment and there is any failure in work performance s/he may be subject to disciplinary action.
* If the process of referral and treatment is completed but is not successful, and failure in work performance or behaviour occurs, these will be dealt with through the Disciplinary Procedure.

**Outside of Working time**

* If we believe an employee may have been/are involved in any drug related action/offence (either at the nursery or out of work s/he may be suspended from work pending disciplinary investigation)
* Illegal use of drugs: if an employee is involved in the illegal use of drugs and criminal action is taken against the employee, SA will review the situation. If the actions of the employee have brought the nursery into disrepute in any way, SA may take disciplinary action which could include dismissal for gross misconduct
* If an employee is wearing an SA uniform, or has any other identifying factor, then the employee is seen to be a representative of the nursery – even if the employee is not working. The employee must not bring the nursery into disrepute by participating in the illegal use of drugs, or the excessive drinking of alcohol when the employee is dressed in SA uniform, or can otherwise be linked to SA. If an employee does bring SA into disrepute disciplinary action is likely to result, which could include dismissal for gross misconduct.

A breach of any of these provisions is a disciplinary offence and will be dealt with in accordance with the Company’s disciplinary procedure. Depending on the seriousness of the offence, it may amount to gross misconduct and could result in the employee’s summary dismissal. The Nursery reserves the right in any of these circumstances to arrange for the employee to be escorted from the Company’s premises immediately and sent home without pay for the rest of their shift. The Nursery also reserves the right to suspend the employee while carrying out an investigation.

Alcohol and drug testing

On the grounds of protecting health and safety and only where necessary to achieve a legitimate business aim, the Nursery reserves the right to carry out random alcohol and drug screening tests on those employees in the workplace whose activities and job duties have a significant impact on the health and safety of others. If an employee receives a positive test result, this will be viewed as a potential gross misconduct offence and renders the employee liable to summary dismissal in accordance with the Company’s disciplinary procedure. Unreasonable refusal to submit to an alcohol or drug-screening test will also be dealt with through the disciplinary procedure.

Please also refer to other relevant policies including:

* Disciplinary Policy