

Alcohol and drugs policy statement for students

ALCOHOL

Homerton College encourages everyone who chooses to drink alcohol to do so responsibly, and not to abuse it. If you choose not to drink you should not be expected to do so. It is both irresponsible and dangerous to encourage others to drink alcohol more than they ought or wish by forcing them to participate in competitive drinking games or in forms of initiation to student societies.

During the last few years, over-consumption has resulted in some serious incidents requiring hospitalisation. Drinking to excess is dangerous: it may contribute to serious accidents, particularly traffic accidents and drownings, it increases vulnerability to crimes such as robbery and assault, and can create long-term problems with health, including psychological problems. Binge drinking can lead to alcohol poisoning resulting in hypothermia, respiratory arrest, severe dehydration, seizures and possible asphyxiation on vomit, to name but a few. Alcohol is a powerful depressant and can mimic or exacerbate existing or undiagnosed conditions, people that fear they have depression in some cases can alleviate all the symptoms by moderating or cutting out Alcohol completely without further treatment or consequences.

Homerton College follows a harm-prevention strategy in relation to alcohol misuse. In line with this approach, we would encourage students who are concerned about their alcohol intake to seek support from the College Health Advisor, the Wellbeing team or their Tutor.

Students who have required the use of the emergency services including attendance at hospital will be expected to see the College Health Advisor or Wellbeing Lead. Students who repeatedly struggle with substance misuse will be asked to see their Tutor, Deputy Senior Tutor or the Senior Tutor to identify any underlying problems and discuss solutions, perhaps in consultation with a health or wellbeing specialist.

The Dean will see any student(s) whose behaviour is so affected by alcohol that others feel threatened. If appropriate, the Dean would also meet with a student who requires the involvement of the emergency services, including Addenbrooke's A+E department, as a result of alcohol consumption. Students should note that drinking games are not permitted at any College dinner or event. Failure to comply with this Policy will result in disciplinary action such as the suspension of dining privileges.

The College will normally expect individuals concerned to take personal responsibility and to pay any bills arising from their actions whilst intoxicated. Students who need a taxi back from Addenbrooke's Hospital or the city centre to College following intoxication with alcohol (or illegal drugs) will be billed for the taxi fare, plus the cost of any necessary cleaning, which can frequently be around £100. Students will also be charged for any damage to college property and for additional cleaning required on site. These types of incidents may also result in a college charge of at least £50, so the total financial consequences may be very significant.

DRUGS

All members of the College are reminded that:

- It can be dangerous to take any drugs other than under medical direction, and the possession or use of many drugs is also against the law.

The Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 covers three categories of drugs:

- Class A drugs include: heroin (diamorphine), cocaine (including crack), methadone, ecstasy (MDMA), LSD, magic mushrooms and synthetic opioids.
- Class B drugs include: amphetamines, barbiturates, codeine, cannabis, cathinones (including mephedrone) and synthetic cannabinoids.
- Class C drugs include: benzodiazepines (tranquillisers), GHB/GBL, ketamine, anabolic steroids and benzylpiperazines (BZP).

The Psychoactive Substances Act 2016 covers all drugs previously referred to as “legal highs” which are not Class A, B or C drugs under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 but are also now illegal.

“The Act makes it an offence to produce, supply, offer to supply, possess with intent to supply, import or export psychoactive substances; that is, any substance intended for human consumption that is capable of producing a psychoactive effect.”

The unauthorised possession, use and supply of these drugs are criminal offences.

Homerton College follows a harm-prevention strategy in relation to drug misuse. In line with this approach, we would encourage students to seek support and advice with any concerns relating to the use of drugs. They may approach the College Community Health Adviser, the Wellbeing team or their Tutor. Alternative support is listed at the bottom of this policy, under HELP AVAILABLE.

Persistent misuse of drugs is regarded as very serious matter by the College, and any student involved may be asked to find alternative accommodation outside College; or temporarily or permanently expelled (‘sent down’) from the College.

This applies particularly to any student found to be using, dealing or in possession of any Class A Drug. It also applies to any student found to be dealing or repeatedly in possession of any of the Classes of Drugs, or Psychoactive Substances. This approach is in line with the current policy of the Police.

The College's Policy is also to co-operate fully with the Police in any investigation. Students should also be aware that if the College were knowingly to permit drug offences to take place on its premises, it would itself be liable under both Acts.

HELP AVAILABLE

Where individuals find themselves in a situation where they **cannot** stop using/drinking, suddenly stopping can be very dangerous if not medically supervised. It is safer to seek help before attempting to detox.

The College wishes to offer all possible support to students seeking medical and/or counselling help regarding drug taking or alcohol use. Those aware of being at risk of drug, alcohol or other substance abuse are encouraged to seek advice from the College Health Advisor (nurse@homerton.cam.ac.uk), the Wellbeing Team (wellbeing@homerton.cam.ac.uk), their Tutor, the Deputy Senior Tutor, their GP or the University Counselling Service.

Any student concerned about another student's dependence on alcohol or drugs should encourage them to seek advice from one of the sources listed above or the outside agencies listed below.

Any member of the College concerned about illegal drug use should refer the matter to the Senior Tutor, the Deputy Senior Tutor or to any Tutor.

Further sources of advice and support:

- Change Grow Live Cambridgeshire: free and confidential drug and alcohol service for adults, family members, carers and affected others: <https://www.changegrowlive.org/content/change-grow-live-cambridgeshire-cambridge>.
- Frank - Friendly, confidential drugs advice - 0300 123 6600 (Helpline -24hrs day) SMS 82111, Live chat 2pm - 6pm (UK) on any day of the week. Excellent website: <https://www.talktofrank.com/>.
- Alcoholics Anonymous Great Britain (alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk) there are 18 meetings a week in Cambridge city alone, hundreds nationwide, they are free to attend and no waiting list.