CatholicCare
DIOCESE OF BROKEN BAY

Agency

Staff Alcohol, Drugs and Medications

Policy

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Introduction

CatholicCare Diocese of Broken Bay (CatholicCare) is committed to providing a safe, healthy and secure environment for all our staff, our clients and all those affected by our services and activities. *Work Health and Safety legislation* and regulations require CatholicCare to identify risks and eliminate or control them. Alcohol and many drugs, even in very low doses, can affect the capacity of an employee to carry out their duties safely.

CatholicCare will ensure all staff are fit for work and to eliminate, insofar as is reasonably practicable, the risks inherent in the use or abuse of drugs, alcohol or other substances in the workplace. The critical nature of the work that staff perform with young and/or vulnerable clients requires them to always perform at their optimum to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all.

Scope

This policy applies to all CatholicCare staff, contractors, volunteers and/or student placements ("staff"). The policy applies to staff in all CatholicCare controlled workplaces and locations, including tele-commuting, working from home, work-endorsed events, work social functions and whilst operating vehicles or machinery on CatholicCare business.

Policy Statement

Everyone in the workplace has a responsibility for maintaining a safe working environment. Under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* , CatholicCare has a primary duty of care towards staff and others who may be present at the workplace, including contractors, other service providers, volunteers, clients and visitors. CatholicCare is responsible for:

- Providing a safe workplace and safe systems of work to minimise the risk of staff and others in the workplace being exposed to hazards or risks to their health and safety;
- Providing information, instruction, training and supervision to enable staff to work in a safe manner.

Staff are responsible for their own physical health. They must:

- Be fit enough to do their job;
- Be well enough to do their job; and
- Not be under the influence of alcohol or drugs or use alcohol and or illegal drugs while at work.

This includes the misuse of medicines prescribed by a doctor or available from a pharmacy.

In order to meet our duty of care, CatholicCare provides guiding principles in relation to alcohol, drugs and medication.

Guiding Principles

Alcohol

During work hours CatholicCare maintains a zero-tolerance approach toward alcohol consumption. As such, staff are not permitted to consume alcohol while on duty at work or work while under the influence of alcohol.

Staff rostered to be On-Call after hours are also not permitted to be under the influence of alcohol.

In addition, staff must not:

- Consume alcohol at any CatholicCare premises or workplace or work-related event (including during meal breaks), without the express permission of the Executive Director or relevant member of the Senior Leadership Team other than as provided for in *Alcohol at After Hours Social Functions and External Work Endorsed Events*.
- Present for work in a state where they are unable to perform their duties to an acceptable standard or in a safe manner due to the influence of alcohol. This includes the recognition of the potential negative effects and performance impacts associated with a 'hangover' after alcohol consumption.
- Supply alcohol, cigarettes or unprescribed drugs (beyond what is set out in the medication management practice guidelines or an individual client's care plan) to any client without the explicit endorsement of your manager or a relevant member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Illegal/Prohibited Drugs

Staff must not:

- Possess, sell, consume or administer illegal/prohibited drugs on CatholicCare premises or workplaces, or whilst on CatholicCare business, at any time.
- Present for work in a state where they are unable to perform their duties to an acceptable standard or in a safe manner due to the influence of drugs. This includes the recognition of the potential negative effects and performance impacts associated with a 'coming down' effects after the use of some drugs.

Medication

Staff must not:

- Consume over the counter and/or prescription drugs prior to commencing work or while working if their on-the-job performance could be affected or their ability to provide care for clients and/or safety of others could be adversely impacted. (See Staff Responsibilities regarding notifying your supervisor about medication).
- Operate vehicles or machinery on CatholicCare business when under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs/medication.

Smoking

Smoking (including the use of e-cigarettes) is not permitted in any enclosed area of the workplace or within CatholicCare premises. For full details see our *No Smoking Policy*.

Responsibilities

All Staff

All staff have a responsibility to read, understand and adhere to this policy. Any questions about the policy should be clarified by the staff member with their manager. Staff must take reasonable care for their own health and safety at work and ensure their acts or omissions do not adversely affect the health and safety of other workers in the workplace.

Notifying your Supervisor about medication

Staff who are taking prescription or over-the-counter drugs that have specific warnings on them that are relevant to their workplace duties; or if staff are concerned the medication may impact their work duties; they must bring the matter to the attention of their manager prior to commencing work.

The Manager will then work with the Work Health & Safety Team to conduct a *Risk Assessment* to determine what risks are involved if the staff member takes the medication or is under the influence of the medication while at work. The *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* protects staff who make disclosures from discrimination, harassment and victimisation. Reasonable adjustments, either temporary or permanent, may be required while staff are adjusting to new medications.

Sleepovers & medication

Staff rostered for a sleepover shift who are on medication which is deemed by their manager to be low risk and therefore permissible; must lock the medication securely in the sleepover premises and ensure that no other person will be able to access it.

Managers and Supervisors

As well as having the same responsibilities as outlined in *All Staff*; Managers and Supervisors must also proactively manage the work performance and conduct of their staff and are required to take appropriate action if unacceptable work performance or conduct issues arise. This may include directing a staff member to cease work if there is a reasonable concern for their immediate or imminent health or safety, and/or the health and safety of others.

Manager and Supervisors are responsible for:

- The safety of the affected staff and others;
- Fair and reasonable treatment of the affected staff with respect for privacy, dignity and confidentiality; and
- Follow-up support and referral for counselling and/or treatment for the affected staff as required.

If a staff member discloses they are taking a medication which could impair their ability to work, or they appear impaired while at work and say it is due to being on a prescribed medication; the manager can work with the Work Health Safety team to request written confirmation from their treating medical practitioner certifying the worker's ability to work while taking the medication. Contact the Work Health & Safety Team for further information.

After Hours Alcohol at Social Functions and External Work Endorsed Events

CatholicCare will not usually provide alcoholic beverages at CatholicCare functions, e.g. staff Christmas party, etc. Where the function is held at a licensed premises staff may purchase alcohol but are expected to act responsibility and professionally as follows:

- Staff must consume alcohol responsibly;
- Staff must not become inebriated;
- Staff behaviour must be within the provision of the *Code of Conduct and Ethics Framework*;
- Staff should arrange a safe means of transport to and from such functions. This includes not driving while under the influence of alcohol in accordance with policy and road transport laws.

The above also applies when staff are representing CatholicCare at after hours external social events where alcohol is provided.

In limited circumstances some CatholicCare events will be authorised by the Executive Director or relevant member of the Senior Leadership Team for CatholicCare to provide an appropriate amount of alcohol. On these occasions, responsible service of alcohol practices will be observed and will include but are not limited to:

- Appropriate serving sizes;
- Choice of non-alcoholic drinks;
- Availability of food; and
- Safe transport options.

Reporting alcohol or drug use in the workplace

If staff are concerned that a co-worker is intoxicated or under the influence of drugs while at work, it is important to report this to the manager (or with on-call when such support is in place after hours) as soon as possible. Alternately staff may also report this to a Whistleblower Officer through the *Whistleblowing Policy*.

The manager/on-call will make a decision on whether the staff member is capable, at that time, of performing their work in a safe manner. Next steps might include:

- Asking the impaired staff to leave the work area if health and safety is being put at risk;
- Making suitable arrangements to ensure the staff member gets home or to a medical facility safely (e.g. by taxi);
- Making a record of the incident in line with the *Incident Management Policy* and *Managing Incident Practice Guidelines*;
- Providing support to the staff member, referring them to the Employee Assistance Program; and
- Addressing any ongoing work performance issues.

If urgent medical attention is required for a person whose observed behaviour and work performance appears to be adversely affected by alcohol or other drugs, any staff member may call an ambulance or seek the assistance of a designated First Aid Officer where one is present.

Disciplinary Action

Being in possession of illegal drugs or consuming alcohol during working hours will be regarded as serious misconduct. Staff who contravene this policy may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of their employment or, in the case of non-employees, termination of their contract or other working relationship.

Where a staff member has been encouraged to seek assistance for an alcohol or other drug-related problem but fails to do so and their actions or inaction affect the safety of the individuals, other staff or people we support disciplinary action may be taken. See: *Managing Unsatisfactory Performance and Misconduct Policy*.

Related documents

Agency policies

- *Code of Conduct and Ethics Framework*
- *Incident Management Policy*
- *Managing Incidents Practice Guidelines*
- *Managing Unsatisfactory Performance and Misconduct Policy*
- *No Smoking Policy*
- *Risk Management Policy*
- *Risk Management Practice Guidelines*
- *Whistleblowing Policy*
- *Work Health Safety Policy*

External resources

- *Crimes Act 1900 (NSW)*
- *Drug Misuse and Trafficking Act 1985 (NSW)*
- *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*
- *Privacy Act 1988*
- *SafeWork: Alcohol and other drugs*

Sign off and review

This document remains valid until it is either superseded by a new version or officially revoked.

CatholicCare values your input and welcomes feedback on this Policy. Your suggestions help us improve and better support your work. Please send any feedback to policy.updates@catholiccaredbb.org.au.

Version	Authorised by	Approved date	Review cycle	Review due
1.0	CatholicCare Executive	11 September 2017	2 years	September 2019
2.0	CatholicCare Executive Director	2 October 2019	2 years	October 2021
3.0	Executive Manager People & Culture	28 September 2021	2 years	September 2023
4.0	Executive Manager People & Culture	15 August 2022	2 years	August 2024
5.0	Executive Manager People & Culture	7 January 2026	3 years	January 2029

Revision history

Version	Description	Author	Amendment date
1.0	Policy and Procedure	Policy Specialist	16 August 2017
2.0	Policy	Executive Manager People and Culture	1 July 2019
3.0	Policy	Policy Specialist	28 September 2021
4.0	Policy	Policy Specialist	15 August 2022
4.1	Policy	Policy & Document Support Officer	20 December 2023
5.0	Minor changes	WHS Specialist	19 December 2025