
Bristol School of Acting

Drugs and Alcohol Policy

Adopted 31 August 2022

Updated 14 January 2026

Review Date: 1 year

Introduction

1. BSA has a commitment to enhancing the health, safety and wellbeing of students and recognises the risks that may be caused by the misuse of alcohol, drugs and other substances.
2. The taking of, or dealing in 'recreational' or illegal drugs and substances, is forbidden on BSA premises, as is being under the influence of non-prescribed drugs.
3. Consumption of alcohol or being under the influence of alcohol is forbidden during the teaching day, including when this extends into the evening.
4. BSA in no way condones the misuse of drugs or alcohol, and will balance disciplinary action with appropriate support for students who misuse them.
5. The policy aims to facilitate the early identification of such problems and to encourage students to seek advice, help and assistance voluntarily before their studies are adversely affected. BSA will achieve these goals through educational, counselling-based and disciplinary approaches. Staff will provide guidance as to where professional assistance is available
6. BSA recognises that alcohol and drugs will play a part in the lives of some people and will be sympathetic to problems arising from misuse of these substances whilst not condoning such misuse.

The Legal Context

7. The law regulating dangerous and otherwise harmful drugs is the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, which makes it clear that it is an offence for "the management of any premises to knowingly allow the possession, storage, sale, use or misuse of a controlled drug."
8. The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 requires BSA to do what is reasonable to protect the health, safety, and welfare of staff, students, and visitors. Drug and alcohol misuse can have an impact on the health and safety of an individual and also for others, for example students in shared accommodation or staff having to handle illegal substances and drug related items.
9. BSA has a responsibility to uphold the law. Students who contravene the legislation outlined above, may be subject to disciplinary action by the institution and this may include reporting incidents to the Police.

Management

10. Where there is physical evidence of illegal substances having been used on BSA premises, BSA Senior Leadership will remove the evidence for safekeeping. BSA has a legal obligation to report all such cases to the Police and to hand over any evidence.
11. The BSA Student Code of Conduct expects students to behave in a way which contributes positively to the atmosphere of the School, fosters good working relationships with other students and staff, and meets professional standards expected in the workplace. The misuse of alcohol and drugs directly contravenes the Student Code of Conduct.
12. A student must not drink alcohol during working hours or present themselves for training or work having imbibed alcohol.
13. Likewise, a student must not be under the influence of drugs or other stimulants during working hours. Students taking prescription drugs, where they may affect the use of machinery or working at height, must inform their supervisors and/or seek further information.
14. The Student Code of Conduct applies whether a student is on BSA premises or elsewhere, such as a work placement or tour. If a student behaves in a way that contravenes the Student Code of Conduct, then this constitutes misconduct. It is BSA's policy to deal with minor offences of misconduct in an informal way, but it should be noted that a deliberate, repeated or serious case of misconduct may be dealt with under the terms of BSA's disciplinary policy, which in the most serious cases can lead to suspension or withdrawal from the course. BSA also has a Fitness to Train policy which can be used to address situations where students are in breach of the Code of Conduct but it is not necessarily appropriate to take disciplinary action. These two policies can be used in conjunction with one another.
15. BSA occasionally may enable students to hold social events on the premises (beyond the working day), however, excessive use of alcohol, the use of recreational drugs or abusive behaviour towards staff or other students still constitutes misconduct and will not be tolerated and may be subject to disciplinary action.
16. Being under the influence of alcohol or non-medicinal drugs during working hours at BSA constitutes a danger to yourself, to other students, staff and to the reputation of the School.

Help and Advice

17. BSA regards an individual's dependency on either drugs or alcohol as a health problem. If a student reports the matter to their Programme Leader/Course Manager/The Designated Safeguarding Lead and agrees to a programme of rehabilitation, then BSA may allow reasonable absences for advice and/or treatment, providing the student keeps BSA informed of their progress and it is clear that they are attempting to resolve any difficulties they may have.
18. For those wishing to discuss problems related to the use of drugs or alcohol and to seek further independent advice, they should speak to their Programme Leader/The Designated Safeguarding Lead in the first instance
19. If a student believes that someone has difficulty controlling their use of alcohol or drugs they should encourage them to seek support. If there is concern that a student is a danger to themselves or others it is recommended that a senior member of staff, usually the Designated Safeguarding Lead, be informed.

Helpful contacts

www.drinkaware.co.uk

<https://www.talktofrank.com>

www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk

20. Staff will not provide direct advice on substance misuse but will provide guidance as to where professional assistance is available.

Conclusion

21. BSA has responsibilities to its students and staff and recognises the importance of providing a safe place to work and study
22. BSA will ensure that appropriate support and advice is available to students but will also take disciplinary action, where illegal activities are taking place and particularly when they endanger the individual student or other members of the School