



Alcohol Policy

Policy number	US029
Applies to	Upper School
Endorsed by	Head Master
Responsibility	Vice Master
Date reviewed	September 2023
Next review	September 2024

Alcohol Policy

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. Pupils found in possession, using or under

the influence of alcohol whilst under the authority of the School can expect serious sanctions, including exclusion.

We encourage sensible decision-making around alcohol and that abstinence is a healthy and respected choice; many pupils at Bedford School make this choice and should be confident that they can do so with no repercussion socially. The school educates pupils about the dangers associated with alcohol, and about responsible behaviour regarding drinking in its Citizenship programme.

We do allow sensible and measured consumption of alcohol as part of our wider social education as pupils grow towards adulthood. Sixth Form, and some Fifth Form pupils, attending school functions on-site at which alcohol is available may consume alcohol if they wish under the strict supervision of staff as outlined in this policy.

There may be school occasions when alcoholic drinks may be consumed but only in the presence of a member of staff and, with their parents' or boarding Housemaster's permission. 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. Any pupil who exploits opportunities to drink on trips may expect punishment at the discretion initially of the tour leader or, as relevant, of the Vice 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 will 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 they should, may similarly expect sanctions.

Guidelines for staff and pupils on the School's Alcohol Policy

- Prior to any event where alcohol is to be served a briefing will take place for pupils and staff about the rules for consumption of alcohol.
- Alcohol will only be given to pupils or poured for them by a member of staff. No pupil can give someone else an alcoholic drink or pour for themselves or others.
- At dinner events there will be a staff member or members clearly allocated for supervising pupils consuming alcohol. In most cases this will be through sitting at the same table as pupils who are allowed to consume alcohol.
- At other social events where alcohol is served, there will be multiple staff members on duty and alcohol will be served at a designated point with a record kept of how many alcoholic drinks a pupil has been given.
- The only time a Fifth Form pupil will be allowed alcohol is when they are a boarder at a boarding event in their house, under close supervision of their Housemaster or another staff member with their Housemaster's permission. In rare circumstances, a Fifth Form pupil will be allowed two alcoholic drinks when they are well spaced apart and there is food being consumed during an event.
- Sixth Formers will only be allowed a maximum of two alcoholic drinks at school functions. There may be boarding house events that last a long period of time where food is served that a Housemaster may offer a further alcoholic drink at their discretion, paying heed to the guidance above.
- At events with day pupils in attendance where alcohol is to be served, parents will be informed.

- Spirits should never be consumed by pupils.
- Boys driving to and from school functions should never drink any alcohol.
- Fourth and Remove Form pupils, and Fifth Form day pupils, can never consume alcohol at school.
- Where there are mixed day and boarding events, the same rules apply for day and boarding pupils and separate staff will be responsible for different groups of pupils when this is required to ensure safe consumption occurs.
- Where pupils from outside Bedford School are present at school events alcohol will generally not be served unless they have a staff member from their own school, or parents who are present and responsible for them.
- Some events, such as the leavers ball, for example, may publish alternative guidelines that have been suitably risk assessed.