

Drug & Alcohol Policy



1. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to explain the Tunbridge Wells Baptist Church (TWBC) policy on the use of alcohol and the taking of drugs whilst in the church, on church related business or leading / taking part in any church related activity. *(For the purposes of this policy all references to drugs relate to illegal drugs or the misuse of drugs).*

It applies whether on church premises, hired premises or visiting at another location.

Illegal drug taking and irresponsible alcohol consumption in society is a cause for genuine concern. In this policy, TWBC outlines its commitment to a positive handling of those found to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol, whilst staying within the bounds of the law. TWBC is committed to protecting and safeguarding:

- All staff, church members, regular attendees and visitors
- All children and young people connected with the church
- Our neighbours and other users of the church

For clarification on any part of this document, please contact the Church Secretary or a member of the leadership team.

2. Biblical Principles

The Biblical teaching about alcohol is limited. The Bible is clear that drunkenness is to be avoided but gives no definite indication about the moderate use of alcohol.

There is no direct Biblical teaching about tobacco or any other drug except alcohol. General principles that apply to excessive alcohol use and all drug use, legal or illegal, include:

- The need to care for God's creation and acknowledge that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit.
- The need for clarity of mind.
- The need to care for others, including by example.
- Helping those who are hurting.
- Obeying the law of the land.
- Being in the world but not of it.

3. Alcohol Policy

Whilst TWBC does not call for abstinence it recognises the effect excessive drinking and the taking of illegal substances can have on an individual's relationship with God, their health, work and personal relationships.

TWBC respects an individual's right to drink alcohol in a sociable and measured way, whilst staying within one's own limits, the confines of the law and being able to conduct oneself in a positive and worthy manner. However the following stipulations do apply:

- Alcoholic drinks will not be allowed at any event on the church premises unless agreed beforehand by the Leadership.
- As standard practice, we would encourage the use of a range of attractive alcohol-free options.
- We will continue to use non-alcoholic wine for Communion on church premises.
- We will offer support and information on relevant organisations in order to be able to provide pastoral care to those who may need it.

In order to be consistent, we will ensure that TWBC events outside the premises follow the same principles. Offsite events carry the following stipulations:

- Anyone representing TWBC at functions or conferences, either within or outside of normal working hours, have a duty of care to act appropriately. Therefore they are expected to be moderate in drinking alcohol and to take specific action to ensure they are well within the legal limits if they are driving themselves or others.
- Where 'church events' are held in people's homes, organisers should consider carefully the situations, ages and attitudes of those present and take appropriate action.
- Anyone looking after young people under the age of 18 and / or children on behalf of TWBC must not drink alcohol whilst on duty, take young people or children to an establishment whose sole purpose is to sell alcohol, buy alcohol for young people, or encourage the consumption of alcohol.
- Staff and volunteers should take every opportunity to offer a good role model of Christian discipleship within the 'freedom' given to us. (1 Corinthians 10:23).

4. Drugs Policy

TWBC are committed to providing support and pastoral care to those who are affected by the misuse of drugs. However, TWBC does not condone the use of illegal substances or the misuse of legal drugs.

- The taking or supplying of illegal substances whilst on church property is not allowed at any time.
- The taking or supplying of illegal substances at any time or place is not appropriate for Church staff, Elders, Deacons and Leadership Team members.
- A breach of these provisions is a disciplinary offence for employees and will be dealt with in accordance with the TWBC'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.
- For any lay personnel, volunteers, church members or persons connected with TWBC found to be under the influence of an illegal substance while on church premises or attending a church event appropriate action will be taken (see below).
- We will offer support and information on relevant organisations in order to be able to provide pastoral care to those who may need it.

- We will be aware of drug issues that arise in the community and be prepared to comment on or have an input into them.

5. Appropriate Action

Staff, leaders and volunteers **MUST** take appropriate action if they find anyone:

- Supplying or attempting to supply illegal drugs on the church premises.
- Using illegal drugs on the premises.
- Consuming alcohol or bringing alcohol onto the premises with the intent to drink it and without prior permission

Appropriate action could be

1. Providing coffee and 1-2-1 support keeping the person involved in a safe place away from vulnerable visitors.
2. Informing the parents of any young people involved
3. Asking those involved to leave
4. Not allowing access to the building (especially where there aren't adequate leaders/helpers on site)
5. Keeping alcohol/drugs out of sight until the person leaves the premises.
6. Calling the police

Any incidents should be reported to one of the Leadership Team as soon as possible and documented in an email.

6. Advice and Counselling

- We will seek to help those who suffer from the use of alcohol or other drugs, supporting them and/or referring them to other appropriate organisations.
- We will try and ensure that should a drug or alcohol related situation arise, there will be someone appropriate available to deal with it and that a list of useful phone numbers will be available in the church office, the worship area and on the lower ground floor.
- We encourage anyone with an alcohol or drug related problem to seek appropriate help immediately. The church will not sit in judgement, but rather aim to provide love, care and support.
- We will aim to deal constructively and sympathetically with an employee or volunteer's alcohol or drug related problem whenever possible, as long as the care and safety of church users is not compromised in any way.

- We will offer prayer and support to those affected by the misuse of alcohol and drugs

7. Children and Young People

Young people are at particular risk of experimenting and then regularly using various substances.

- We will ensure that those who work with young people have the knowledge to provide both information and support.
- We will ensure that there are common procedures to be followed if illegal drugs are found on the premises or used at or near a youth event (see above).
- Our Child Protection policy will be applied as appropriate where, for example, a young person needs counselling.

8. Knowledge and Information

The first step is to ensure a good level of knowledge therefore sufficient training events will be set up for all leaders and volunteers and re-run as necessary.

Appropriate topical knowledge and policy awareness will be disseminated. This will form part of the leadership team's accountabilities. The Trustees will review this policy annually.

Details of how to handle someone using or carrying drugs or who is under the influence of alcohol, in a safe and sensitive way will be included in the afore mentioned training events.

Version dated Jun19

Reference: Tunbridge Wells Baptist Church

Approved by the Leadership June 2019