

GENERAL PERSONNEL CHEMICAL DEPENDENCY

The following are the administrative regulations for the General Personnel Chemical Dependency policy.

1. Identification: Early identification is of benefit to the employee, to the students, and to the school district. Those responsible for identification should do whatever is necessary to document the problem and, when satisfied a chemical dependency problem exists, bring it to the attention of the employee involved.
2. Referral: Once the employer determines the need for requesting referral, the employee will be encouraged to seek professional assistance. Participating in the corrective program is completely voluntary, and self-referral is considered the first positive step toward a good recovery program.

Referral for treatment will be based upon unsatisfactory job performance, performing duties while under the influence of a chemical, and/or other significant indications of chemical dependency.

3. It should be noted that the use of a chemical, as referred to in this policy, on school property is prohibited.
4. Should the employee
 - a. choose not to seek help,
 - b. not respond to treatment or fail to carry out the treatment plan,
 - c. continue to use a chemical while on duty,
 - d. continue to demonstrate poor job performance,
 - e. and/or not work cooperatively with others for the good of students and/or the district,

the case will be treated as any other employee discipline case.

5. In all cases, the safety and welfare of the students is paramount.

It is incumbent upon the administration to act responsibly in all cases dealing with chemical dependency. It is important that the best interests of the employee and the students be protected.

It is also important that fellow employees become involved in procedures of identification, referral and follow-up. It is imperative that fellow employees cooperate with the administration for the same reason -- the best interest of the employee and the students.

There are many behavioral problems and identification may or may not be an easy task. However, there are some identifiable signs either occurring alone or in groups of two or more. Some of the signs to look for are as follows:

- Unauthorized absences from the job,
- Excessive sick leave,

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- Monday, Friday absences,
- Repeated absences of two to four days or more,
- Repeated tardiness,
- Not feeling well and leaving work early,
- Improbable excuses for absences and/or tardiness,
- Away from the job during the day for short periods of time,
- Missing deadlines,
- Forgetting,
- Making bad decisions,
- Overreacting to real or imagined criticism,
- Continued complaints from co-workers, parents and students,
- Avoiding association with fellow workers and people in general,
- Spasmodic work patterns, and
- Being critical of any type of supervision.

These patterns of behavior will vary from person to person, and in some cases will not indicate a chemical problem but possibly some other problem. Also, the patterns listed above in no way exhaust the possible patterns which might occur.

In view of the above, and in view of the fact that chemical dependency is considered a health problem, the following steps should be taken in the identification of a problem and the recommendation of solutions.

1. Observe.
2. Document. Be specific – be positive – stick to facts which are observed.
3. Confront. Do not delay or beat around the bush – present facts – be consistent – insist upon improvement – follow through.
 - a. Set performance standards and document reactions of the employee. Establish follow-up procedure with the employee.
 - b. Request the employee seek professional assistance. Do not try to treat problems you know little about. Recommend professional help centers if necessary.
 - c. If the situation does not change, then ultimatums must be issued; document the reactions of the employee. Set the time-span within which corrections must take place and set the time for a follow-up conference with the employee.
 - d. If problems persist, consult the employee's counselor, if there is one who is known to the administrator.
 - e. As a last resort, consider termination.
 - f. Throughout, observe as much confidentiality as possible.

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Once the employee has returned to the job:

1. Both the employee and employer might feel apprehensive.
2. Expect improvement from previous conditions, be it immediate or slow.
3. Work toward an "out front" relationship, do not pass over poor performance because of sympathy; encourage and reinforce.
4. If old problems return, this does not necessarily mean failure. Discuss the problem openly, act to get the problem resolved, and follow up to assure the employee seeks guidance again. Encourage long-term supportive help.
5. Determine prospects for improvement:
 - a. Is the employee following the prescribed treatment program?
 - b. Are the actions which attributed to loss of job effectiveness no longer evident?
 - c. Consult with the counselor if loss of effectiveness is still evident.
 - d. Involve other staff members in follow-up procedures, perhaps one-on-one or with a peer helper group.
 - e. If no cooperation on the part of the employee is evident, treat as any other case for termination.

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