

### Acknowledgements

This booklet has been prepared by students and staff of St Andrew's College for the benefit of the College community.

Some of the information in this booklet has been taken from the publication "Alcohol Facts & Effects", published by our sister institution Knox College, University of Otago, Dunedin, Aotearoa-NZ.

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# St Andrew's College

ESTABLISHED 1867

# ALCOHOL POLICY

# ALCOHOL AT ST ANDREW'S COLLEGE

After caffeine, alcohol is the most widely used drug in our society. It is a part of many of our social rituals. Alcohol is used frequently as a gesture of hospitality. It is often a part of family gatherings, parties, twenty-first birthdays, weddings and even funerals. For many residents, it plays a significant role in College life.

Alcohol is both a popular drink and a powerful drug, and so it needs careful handling. This booklet is designed to help you make sensible choices about your own alcohol use.

## What is Alcohol?

There are three main types of alcoholic drink – beer, wine and spirits. Beer is the main alcoholic beverage drunk and usually has less than 5% alcohol. Wine has approximately 12% alcohol, and fortified wine, such as sherry and port, about 18%. Spirits, such as whisky, gin, vodka and brandy, have about 40% alcohol. RTDs (spirit-based 'ready-to-drink' mixes) are usually around 5%.

Alcohol is a poor source of carbohydrates compared with some foods, but it has a lot of calories packed into it. The calorie content of each standard drink (containing 12 mls or 10 grams of pure alcohol) may range between 60 – 200.

## Some Facts

Having 6 or more drinks on one occasion (4 for women) is internationally recognised as hazardous. This is often called "binge drinking".

Students who binge drink suffer a higher rate of educational, social, and health problems in comparison with their non-drinking or moderate-drinking peers.

## The Drug

When people start drinking they initially feel relaxation and pleasure. As the blood alcohol level rises, it slows down the body's reaction. People can get into difficulties when they drink a lot of alcohol very quickly. This may even result in alcohol poisoning from which people can, and do, die.

When alcohol is swallowed, it passes more or less unchanged into the blood stream through the walls of the stomach and the small intestine. Only minutes after drinking, the circulation system begins distributing the alcohol to every part of the body. From the stomach to the intestine, the alcohol travels to the liver

where it is ultimately broken down by enzymes into other products such as water and carbon dioxide.

The liver does this job at a slow, reasonably constant rate. It typically takes 1 – 2 hours to process one standard drink. So, when people drink alcohol faster than the liver breaks it down, alcohol concentration increases in the blood.

As the alcohol travels around the body via the bloodstream, it starts to slow down the operation of various sorts of cells. This causes the familiar symptoms of different stages of intoxication and drunkenness – relaxation, slurred speech, inability to walk straight and dangerous driving.

The rate of intoxication also depends on other factors such as gender and blood volume. Women are usually affected more rapidly than men, because of their generally lower volume of blood.

## **Alcohol Policy at St Andrew's College**

College residents are adults. As a result of this, the College's rules and regulations relating to the harbouring and consumption of alcoholic beverages are reasonably relaxed and emphasise personal responsibility and conformity with the law.

The College adheres to the following Alcohol Policy:

1. In keeping with its policy of providing 'education for life' (i.e., education beyond the lecture theatre in social, cultural, spiritual, athletic and leadership skills to enrich the whole of life), the College should play an active role in encouraging the moderate drinking for enjoyment and conviviality by those who choose to drink.
2. The College respects the rights of those who choose not to consume alcohol.
3. All service of alcohol within the College should comply with the law, including the principles of 'responsible service of alcohol' and 'harm minimisation'. Alcohol will not be served to those aged under 18.
4. The College recognises that some members of College will, from time to time, experiment with excessive intake of alcohol.
5. The College does not condone or encourage excessive drinking. In contrast to responsible alcohol consumption, excessive drinking increases the chances of harm to property, to the reputation of the College, to other people and to the individual involved.

## Cancer

Studies show that drinking alcohol can increase the risk of breast cancer, especially for women with a family history. For many other types of cancer, your cancer risk is increased in proportion to your alcohol consumption.

## Reproductive Function

Alcohol affects sexual performance by inhibiting the physical responses of the sexual organs. In the long term, it inhibits sexual drive, can cause testicular shrinkage, irregular menstruation and premature menopause. Maternal alcohol consumption is extremely harmful to unborn children.

## Tips for Safer Drinking

- Quench your thirst with a non-alcoholic drink.
- Eat before you drink, especially if you plan to party.
- Drink alcohol slowly.
- Alternate alcohol with non-alcoholic drinks (especially water) if you wish to avoid a hangover.
- Learn to identify when you've had enough and how to refuse drinks.
- Listen to your friends when they say you've had enough to drink. Tell them when they need to switch to non-alcoholic drinks.
- Do something else as well as drinking. Don't just drink. Don't get involved in drinking games.
- Drink for the taste. Choose drinks you enjoy and savour the taste.
- Dilute spirits.
- Arrange safe transport home.
- Never mix alcohol with other drugs such as sleeping pills, tranquillisers or cannabis, as this can be a lethal combination.
- Look after your friends.
- Reduce or eliminate alcohol if you are in serious training (e.g. for Rawson Cup or Rosebowl sports). Alcohol reduces many of the beneficial effects of exercise.
- Respect the needs of other residents of College and the surrounding community to study and to sleep.

## Help with Alcohol

If you feel that you or one of your friends has a problem with alcohol (or other drugs) use, please come to see the Principal or the university health and counselling staff. In both cases, the response will be pastoral, not punitive.

6. Members of College are at all times responsible for the behaviour of their visitors and guests.
7. The College has a duty:
  - a. to minimise the harm associated with the use of alcohol,
  - b. to discourage excessive drinking and thereby reduce its incidence and severity,
  - c. to avoid actively creating conditions in which excessive drinking takes place.
8. In the event that a member of College does drink to excess:
  - a. the College has a right to apply sanctions if, and only if, the person causes harm to other persons, to the reputation of College or to College or non-College property,
  - b. the College has a duty to provide appropriate pastoral care should a member of the College appear to be habitually intoxicated and there is a reasonable prospect of harm to the individual.
9. The College recognises that there are benefits inherent in the moderate consumption of alcohol.
10. The College has responsibility to create situations where members of College can learn to enjoy the positive aspects of moderate alcohol consumption, if they so choose.

## The Highlander

The College bar, the Highlander, is situated on the ground floor of the College, within the Junior Common Room. The Highlander is open for business at various times during the week.

The Highlander is a place where all members of College may drink with their friends in peaceful and civilised surroundings. Non-alcoholic drinks are served as well as alcoholic beverages. It is the College's policy to encourage residents from time to time to participate in the social atmosphere of the Highlander and, if they chose, to consume alcohol in moderate quantities.

## The Dining Hall

Wine and other alcoholic drinks may be taken into the Dining Hall and consumed with meals. Wine glasses may be collected from the servery.

## **Student Functions**

At all functions within the College where alcoholic beverages are served, non-alcoholic drinks will be available. Never be afraid to ask for a soft drink or for water.

During Orientation Week, and through the year, a number of events involve activities where alcohol is served. If you do not drink, or do not feel like drinking on that occasion, all you have to say is, “No thanks. May I have a soft drink, please?” Your request will be respected and no fuss will be made. You certainly will not be the only one in that situation and you will not be forced to drink alcohol. If you do feel pressured, speak to your mentor or to a member of the Student House Committee.

Particularly at the beginning of the academic year, it may appear that a lot of people drink a lot of alcohol a lot of the time. Orientation Week is a week of high-jinx and carefree behaviour. At the end of Orientation Week everything returns to normal. It is a mistake during Orientation Week for freshers either to become afraid that University seems to be frighteningly too social or to feel that they have arrived in heaven and intend to live it up to the same extent for the next thirty-three weeks.

You do not have to keep up with anyone else. Research has shown that there is a strong tendency for students to over-estimate the amount their peers drink. There is a lot of bravado exhibited when students are drinking. Some people pretend and say that they drink a lot more than they do. You will discover for yourself the appropriate amount for you to drink on any occasion. Don't let yourself be persuaded to drink more than you want.

## **Costs**

The costs are of two kinds – problems caused by drunkenness that occur soon after drinking and those that occur as a result of heavy drinking over a long period of time. Both these types of problems can affect not only the individual but also other people and organisations, such as families, friends, local residents, hospitals and police.

## **Reputation**

In a college environment, reputations can be gained and lost very quickly. The morning after a social event, students often enjoy sitting around and chatting

about the night before. It is often particularly entertaining for them if someone has made a drunken mistake or behaved in a regrettable way because their judgements were affected by alcohol. If you cannot control your actions because of intoxication, you should be prepared for the consequences. Inappropriate behaviour the night before could become highly embarrassing for you the following day and greatly diminish your college experience.

## **Road Trauma**

At St Andrew's, it is the tradition that absolutely no one drives after drinking. The College is at the edge of the campus and it is not far to walk to other colleges, student pubs, flats on campus, takeaway outlets, etc. If four people share a taxi, or a greater number order a taxi minibus, it is inexpensive to get a ride into the city or elsewhere. That is a lot cheaper and much less traumatic than losing your licence and/or receiving a hefty fine in court, being involved in an accident, or killing yourself or someone else.

St Andrew's has lost students in fatal pedestrian crashes on the busy roads that surround the University. There are several memorials in the College to these students. Our whole community would be devastated to have such a traumatic loss occur again. Please exercise particular care crossing roads after consuming alcohol and look after your friends in these situations. Be aware that alcohol increases your confidence, while reducing your ability to make sound judgements.

## **Work Performance**

Poor study habits, late essays and non-attendance at lectures and tutorials are all symptoms of the effects of too much drinking. Too much drinking is the recipe for academic failure. Students at St Andrew's College are expected to pass all of their subjects. Failure to do so could result in expulsion.

## **Sexual Responsibility**

A frequent consequence of intoxication is an irresponsible engagement in sexual activity, often ending in trauma. If sexual relationships develop between students, a willingness by both parties concerned and a mature and genuine approach is essential. Engagement in sexual activity when intoxicated often leads to unsafe sex or bungled contraceptive use, thus leading to pregnancy or catching STDs. It may end up in a sexual situation you are not happy about. Non-consensual sex, and even rape, may also be the consequence of intimacy when one or both parties are drunk.

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