

# Romford

## BAPTIST CHURCH

### **DRUG & ALCOHOL POLICY**

#### **1. Purpose**

The purpose of this document is to explain the Romford Baptist Church (RBC) 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. It applies whether on church premises, hired premises or visiting another location.

Illegal drug taking and the increasing level of alcohol consumption in society, in particular with young people, is a cause of genuine concern. In this policy, RBC 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. RBC is committed to protecting and safeguarding:

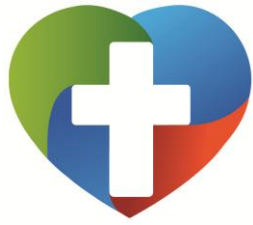
- Pastoral staff, administrators, support workers
- Church Deacons, Leadership Team members, Youth and Children's workers, visiting speakers and preachers
- Church members, regular attendees, friends and neighbours
- Other users of the church, attendees of church functions and visitors from overseas.

For clarification on any part of this document, please contact 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. It is likely that the Jewish culture and relatively weak wines of Bible times resulted in a low level of alcohol related harm, particularly when compared to the situation today.

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:



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- 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**

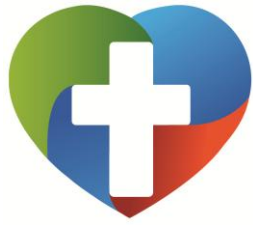
Whilst RBC does not call for abstinence (in the case of alcohol) it recognises the effect consistent drinking and the taking of illegal substances can have on an individual's relationship with God, their health, work and personal relationships. RBC recognises these dangers.

RBC 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 or off the premises unless agreed beforehand by one of the ministry team
- As standard practice, we would encourage the use of a wide range of alcohol-free alternatives and only agree to the use of alcohol by exception
- We will continue to use non-alcoholic wine for Communion
- We will foster links with support 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 events run or attended by a delegate linked to the church and are outside the premises follow the same principles. Offsite events carry the following stipulations:

- Anyone representing RBC 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 carefully consider the situations, ages and attitudes of those present and take appropriate action.



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- Anyone looking after young people and / or children on behalf of RBC must not drink alcohol whilst on duty, take young people or children to an establishment whose sole purposes 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**

RBC does not condone the use of illegal substances. The use of illegal substances, 'Party Drugs',

'Legal Highs', solvents and the misuse of prescription drugs is not permitted.

- The taking or supplying of illegal substances whilst at church or in one's own social time is not appropriate for Deacons, Leadership Team members, staff, church members or anyone connected with RBC
- A breach of these provisions is a disciplinary offence for employees and will be dealt with in accordance with RBC's disciplinary procedures. 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 RBC found to be under the influence of an illegal substance, a consultation will take place in accordance with Biblical procedures laid down in the RBC constitution.

In addition to the above, RBC are committed to providing support and pastoral care to those who have been / are affected by the use of illegal substances.

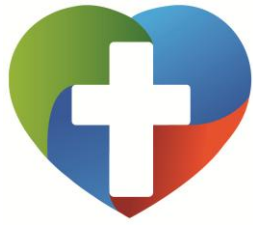
Therefore:

- We will foster relationships with specialist support organisations outside of the church
- We will be aware of drug issues that arise in the community and should be prepared to comment on or have an input into them, if approached by the media. All enquiries should be directed to the Minister – Team Leader in the first instance, or in their absence one of the church officers.

#### **5. Positive Action**

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

- Supplying or attempting to supply illegal drugs on the premises that they are responsible for
- Using illegal drugs on the premises for which they are responsible



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- Consuming alcohol, having alcohol on their person, or bringing alcohol onto the premises without prior permission (failure to take action to stop any of the above could result in prosecution)
- You must inform one of the church officers of any incident within 12 hours and document it in the form of a report
- Positive action may also include calling the police.

On coming across, or suspecting someone to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs the following decisions should be considered before taking further action:

- Is the individual, or could the individual, endanger themselves or others?
- Are there adequate leaders / helpers to deal with this situation and create a safe environment for the other members?
- Is the team confident in handling the situation?

### **6. Advice and Counselling**

- We will seek to help those who suffer from the use of alcohol or other drugs, supporting them 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 available to deal with it and that a list of useful phone numbers will be kept in the office
- 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 staff, volunteers and members is not compromised in any way
- We will offer prayer and support to those affected by the misuse of alcohol and drugs.

### **7. 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
- We will consider what should happen if a young person comes to an event under the influence of any substance



- Our Child Protection policy, within the Joint 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. This will include on how to safely and sensitively handle those who may be carrying or using drugs or under the influence of alcohol.

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 every 2 years.

Signed: Revd Ian Bunce (electronically)

Dated: 13 September 2021

Policy review date: December 2026

Version Control

1 – new policy

2 – reviewed policy December 2024.