

Alcohol Policy and Guidelines

Selwyn College is concerned to tackle what is a widespread national problem, that of alcohol abuse. Excessive consumption can lead to offensive behaviour – vandalism, physical and verbal abuse and sexual harassment. In recent years it has led, directly or indirectly, to several deaths in Cambridge.

We do not wish to restrict individual freedom, and we recognize that alcohol consumption is a pleasurable activity in moderation and important socially, and that individuals have to learn from experience. We do have to discourage, however, excessive consumption that upsets other members of the community. The College authorities have to deal with offenders, to protect the rest of the community.

We want to create an environment where members of our society can enjoy themselves, adopting sensible behaviour voluntarily – where disciplinary action is unnecessary. We seek only to draw attention to the problems and dangers involved, and to request a change in emphasis, in particular, at the start of an undergraduate's time here, when, in recent years, activities have focussed on excessive consumption of alcohol and the idea that getting drunk is 'the done thing'. The converse is true in most other European countries, and we hope that peer pressures as to what is socially acceptable will change rapidly in view of the dangers to health and property.

There is no wish to restrict individual freedoms, but the following Guidelines for behaviour at social gatherings, which are encompassed within the Licensing Act 2003 and its mandatory conditions, are suggested, to help avoid problems:

Organizers

1. Think carefully about the types and quantities of drinks to be served.
2. Ensure that non-alcoholic drinks are freely available.
3. Ensure that drinks are served in appropriately sized glasses and strengths.
4. Ensure that the identity and strength of drinks are clearly shown.
5. Do not refill drinks too rapidly – let the guests decide when they want more.
6. Consider providing, or arrange for, food to go with drinks.
7. Discourage individuals who are drinking excessively and upsetting others; seek help when necessary.

Guests

1. Try not to drink on an empty stomach.
2. Consume sensible quantities of drink and do not risk getting into a state that could lead to offensive behaviour.
3. Do not incite others to consume more than they would wish; in particular, do not participate in 'games' with this consequence.
4. Assist the organizers in dealing with those who have drunk too much and are upsetting others, especially when this develops away from the party.

Those who upset others, at a party or elsewhere in the College, as a consequence of their anti-

social behaviour will be disciplined. Fines may relate to cleaning up anti-social mess. For these reasons, drinking with the aim of getting drunk is to be discouraged, for the welfare of the whole community. If there can be a healthier attitude to social gatherings, then offenders can be more clearly identified and dealt with.