

**STAFF HEALTH AND SAFETY**

**Chemical Dependency**

Alcoholism and drug abuse are two of today's major health problems resulting in increased human tragedy and economic loss. MSAD No. 9 recognizes chemical dependency, including alcoholism, as a treatable disease which can be permanently arrested. The social stigma often associated with this disease only increases the suffering of the chemically dependent and their families.

MSAD No. 9 recognizes that this problem is not confined to the District, but is a community problem; therefore, the District will cooperate closely with all effective organizations dealing with chemical dependency.

MSAD No. 9 will engage the Office of Substance Abuse to assist in training personnel in the identification and understanding of the disease. In addition, Tri-County Mental Health offers counseling and referral services for any employee or family member who wants assistance. All contacts with any mental health agency or agent will be on a confidential basis. The confidential nature of the medical records of employees with chemical dependency, including alcoholism, will be preserved in the same manner as all other medical records. The District will assist the employee in establishing and sustaining contact with Tri-County Mental Health or other effective agencies for counseling.

Employees who have symptoms of chemical dependency are urged to seek help through the chemical dependency program; the MSAD No. 9 Board and administration are committed to establishing a helping relationship with those employees who endeavor to recover from this illness or who wish to discuss the possibility that they have a chemical use problem. District employees who are so diagnosed shall receive the same consideration and opportunity for treatment which is extended to employees with other types of illness. While under treatment, employees with the illness of chemical dependency shall qualify for the same employee benefits and group insurance coverage which is provided for other medically certified illnesses with established employee benefit plans and programs. Confidentiality of medical records will be strictly adhered to.

MSAD No. 9 recognizes that the appropriate insurance carrier shall determine the nature and extent of plan coverage.

The District is concerned about the effects of harmful chemical involvement on the employee's job performance and personal health. For the purpose of this policy, harmful involvement occurs when an employee's consumption or use of mood altering chemicals interferes with the employee's job performance or personal health.

As with other diseases, it may be necessary to alter a person's responsibilities because of his/her chemical dependency or in extreme cases terminate the employee. Every effort will be made to equitably accommodate the employee; however, the safety and welfare of students is of paramount importance.

While MSAD No. 9 is committed to helping those employees who wish to help themselves through voluntary participation in the chemical dependency program, it recognizes that employees of the District may choose to engage in the abuse of chemicals and/or alcohol despite the existence of the District's helping attitude. In the event that an employee engages in the use, possession, or sale of illicit chemicals or alcohol at school or during any school functions, or is under the influence of same, initial disciplinary steps will be taken by the administration and/or Board of Directors.

Adopted: Prior to 1988  
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