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# STUDENT BEHAVIORAL POLICIES

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*2023-2024*

## **ALCOHOL, ILLEGAL DRUGS AND TOBACCO**

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### **BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL VIEW OF ALCOHOL**

From a biblical and theological standpoint the use of alcohol is a complex issue for which there is not a simple or straightforward ethical response. The biblical and theological stance on alcohol can best be summarized this way: Alcohol comes from a natural process in God's good creation, but because of its potential misuse and damage to humans and society, decisions about alcohol should be made in relationship to the needs, perspectives, and particular issues of a given community, and any consumption should be characterized by self-control.

In the Bible, wine is not viewed as inherently evil, but rather is seen as having both positive and negative uses. Because it comes from the natural creation process it can be viewed as a good gift of God. Thus, Isaac in a blessing to his son prays that God will give him "the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of grain and wine" (Gen. 27:28). Jesus' first miracle, at a wedding feast, is to turn water into wine to meet the needs of the guests and, as the son of God, to show his blessings upon the common, good things of life (Jn. 2:1-11). Moreover, both the Proverbs (Prov. 31:6) and the apostle Paul commended wine for medicinal purposes (I Tim. 5:23).

However, the Bible clearly recognizes that because alcohol can cause loss of personal inhibitions and even loss of consciousness, there must be significant limits upon its use. Drunkenness is clearly forbidden in the scriptures, for it leads to uncontrolled behavior which is contrary to the control of God's Spirit (Eph. 5:23), godliness, and moral virtue (Gal. 5:21). One Proverb, recognizing its enticing lure and its potentially devastating blow to human life, states: "Do not look at wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup and goes down smoothly. At the last it bites like a serpent, and stings like an adder. Your eyes will see strange things, and your mind utter perverse things" (Prov. 23:31-33).

Because of the potential damage to individuals, communities, and whole societies, any use of alcohol must always be characterized by self-control, one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:23). Christians are to "make every effort to support [their] faith with goodness, and goodness with knowledge, and knowledge with self control" (2 Pet. 1:5-6). A criterion for leaders in the church is "not indulging in much wine" (I Tim. 3:8). The decision of whether and when a Christian should use alcohol must always be discerned in relationship to the communities of which they are a part,

and for which they bear responsibility. In discussions about controversial matters in which there is not a clear right and wrong, the apostle Paul notes that "all things are lawful, but not all things are beneficial. All things are lawful, but not all things build up" (I Cor. 10:23). We therefore have a responsibility on matters like alcohol to think not just about our own interests, but the interests of other people and the community of which we are a part. Though wine and meat offered to idols are not in themselves evil, Romans 14:20-22 encourages us to refrain if it causes harm to a brother or sister in Christ. Thus, the biblical story invites us to view matters like alcohol consumption with discernment, self-control and in relation to the needs, perspectives and issues of the community, while understanding that alcohol is also a good gift of God when used appropriately.

## **POLICY**

Messiah University is an alcohol, illegal drugs, and tobacco free campus. The University complies with the Drug Free Schools and Campuses Act and its implementing regulations (34 CFR Part 86). Students cannot for any reason illegally manufacture, distribute, dispense, possess, or use any controlled substance. Possession means having the substances or being in the presence of these substances. This includes, but is not limited to, residences, vehicles, or in another location on or off campus.

Any student who is convicted of violating a criminal drug statute is required to notify the University, including the Financial Aid Office, within five days of the conviction (including pleas of guilty or nolo contendere). For students who have a drug- or alcohol-related problem that may be alleviated through counseling, the University will deal with those students through the counseling process, rather than through disciplinary processes, if the student comes for help voluntarily.

It is expected that while students are enrolled in course work, including breaks during the academic year (e.g., Thanksgiving, Fall and Spring Breaks), they will not use alcohol or illegal drugs or tobacco both on and off campus.

### **EXCEPTIONS:**

Students who are legally of-age may responsibly consume alcohol:

1. When they are with their parents or guardians.
2. When the occasion is consistent with celebrations, rituals, or religious traditions (i.e., toasting at weddings, taking communion (underage students may partake in communion as part of their religious tradition)) associated with family or a host family or under the direct guidance and observation of a Messiah

University educator as part of an approved cross-cultural course or service/outreach educational experience.

3. When students are living away from campus during summer and Christmas breaks and the academic year is not in session.

*If you have questions concerning the alcohol policy and/or its application to certain situations, you are encouraged to contact the Dean of Students Office.*

Violation of this policy may result in sanctions ranging from a letter of reprimand to expulsion. As noted in the Student Handbook, a record of disciplinary sanctions is kept on file in the Student Success and Engagement Office while the student is at Messiah. University officials, as well as parents, will be involved or notified when appropriate. The Department of Safety may conduct a Breathalyzer test to determine alcohol consumption. Any individual's refusal to cooperate and submit to this test will be considered a violation of this policy.

The University will also involve local law enforcement officials when appropriate. Illegal possession, use, or distribution of illicit drugs, or illegal use or possession of alcohol is punishable under applicable local, state, and federal law. Punishments include stringent fines, loss of driver's license, loss of possessions obtained through the profits of or used in the sale or distribution of illegal drugs, and/or imprisonment.

### **MEDICAL AMNESTY**

Students, regardless of age, will be granted immunity from university disciplinary proceedings for the possession or consumption of alcohol if the Department of Safety, Residence Life staff, or other University official, becomes aware of the possession or consumption solely because the individual was seeking medical assistance for someone else. The person seeking assistance must reasonably believe he or she is the first to call for assistance, must use his/her own name with authorities, and must stay with the individual needing medical assistance until help arrives. Students will be immune from student disciplinary proceedings for consumption or possession of alcohol if she/he can establish the following:

1. The only way University officials became aware of the person's violation is because the person placed a 911 call, or a call to Dispatch/ Department of Safety, police or emergency services, in good faith based on a reasonable belief that another person was in need of immediate medical attention to prevent death or serious injury.

2. The student reasonably believed she/he was the first person to make a 911 call, or a call to Dispatch/Department of Safety, police or emergency services, and report that a person needed immediate medical attention to prevent death or serious injury.
3. The student provided his/her own name to the 911 operator or equivalent campus safety, police or emergency officer.
4. The student remained with the person needing medical assistance until emergency health care providers arrived and the need for his/her presence had ended.

The health risks associated with the use of illegal drugs and the abuse of alcohol are significant. Alcohol and other drugs affect brain functioning, result in direct injury to body tissue, are the cause of several thousand traffic fatalities each year, lead to addiction in some individuals, and can alter moods in a potentially harmful way.

The University desires and is prepared to help students and employees who have a drug- or alcohol-related problem. Students who ask for help will be treated through the Counseling Center rather than through the disciplinary process, in most circumstances. Similarly, employees seeking assistance will be provided with access to substance abuse programs, community resources for assessment and treatment, and counseling. Confidential assistance is available through Counseling Services. The University will also refer students to off-campus treatment centers if requested or if the issues being addressed warrant such referral.

For additional information on resources available, students should contact the Engle Center.

### **MEDICAL MARIJUANA**

In April of 2016, Pennsylvania became the latest state to legalize the use of medical marijuana. However, because the Federal government has not legalized marijuana, it remains a banned substance under federal law. Messiah University receives federal funding through such things as student financial aid. To avoid losing federal funding, Messiah University must prohibit all marijuana use, including medical marijuana. Therefore, if you are prescribed medical marijuana, it is important that you promptly disclose that information so that we can discuss how to proceed. Students with a medical marijuana prescription must first meet with the Office of Academic Accessibility and provide documentation of medical conditions as well as prescription information to discuss possible accommodations. A list of guidelines will be provided to the student as a part of this discussion. Please be assured that your medical information is protected

by FERPA and kept as confidential. Further, marijuana use while on campus, either with or without a prescription, is prohibited under any circumstances. Students found in possession, and/or using, and or distributing marijuana while on campus, even with a medical marijuana prescription card, will be subject to student disciplinary action and may have additional legal consequences.

## **TOBACCO**

The use of tobacco and tobacco-like products, including but not limited to, cigarettes, cigars, chewing tobacco, hookahs, vaping, and e-cigarettes are prohibited at Messiah University during the tenure of a student's active enrollment.

## **GAMBLING**

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The University prohibits gambling because we seek to be wise stewards of the resources provided to us by God. Gambling includes, but is not limited to, on-line games, betting on sporting events, horseracing, etc. Questions about this community standard may be directed to the Dean of Students.

## **HAZING STATEMENT**

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Messiah University and Pennsylvania Law prohibit hazing in any form. Hazing is defined by the Pennsylvania Hazing Law as “any action or situation which recklessly or intentionally endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a student or which willfully destroys or removes public or private property for the purpose of initiation or admission into or affiliation with, or as a condition for continued membership in, any organization operating under the sanction of or recognized as an organization by an institution of higher education. The term shall include, but not be limited to, any brutality of a physical nature, such as whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the elements, forced consumption of any food, liquor, drug or other substance, or any other forced physical activity which could adversely affect the physical health and safety of the individual, and shall include any activity which would subject the individual to extreme mental stress, such as sleep deprivation, forced exclusion from social contact, forced conduct which could result in extreme embarrassment, or any other forced activity which could adversely affect the mental health or dignity of the individual, or any willful destruction or removal of public or private property. For purposes of this definition, any activity as described in this definition upon which the initiation or admission into or affiliation with or continued membership in an organization is directly or indirectly

conditioned shall be presumed to be "forced" activity, the willingness of an individual to participate in such activity notwithstanding."

Hazing is considered a misdemeanor of the third degree if the conduct results in, or creates a reasonable likelihood of, bodily injury. When the hazing results in serious bodily injury or death and (1) the actor acts with reckless indifference to the health or safety of the victim or (2) the actor causes, coerces or forces the victim to consume alcohol or drugs, this will be considered aggravated hazing and will be a felony offense. Protection from criminal prosecution will be provided to an individual who makes an immediate report of hazing in order to obtain medical attention for the victim.

All initiation activities are subject to the approval of the Director of Student Engagement (student organizations), the Athletics Director (intercollegiate teams) or the Director of Residence Life (residence life groups). This regulation governs on and off-campus initiation activities including privately owned facilities and/or property. Student organizations, athletic teams and residence life groups are responsible for any activity in violation of this policy by any individual or group affiliated with the organization, unless it is proven that the group or individual activity was independent of, and occurred without the knowledge or consent of, the recognized organization, team, or residence life group. Such responsibility will apply equally to situations in which one or more members knew or should have known of the activity and failed to make every reasonable attempt to prevent or stop it. Consent of those hazed will not be accepted as a defense for hazing activities.

The Dean of Students in accordance with Messiah University student disciplinary procedures will conduct investigations and if warranted, administrative hearings of alleged violations of this policy. Violations of this policy may result in sanctions for the students involved as well as the entire student organization, athletic team, or residence life group. The severity of the sanctions for a hazing offense will be determined in proportion to the hazing activity. In addition to Messiah University's Anti-Hazing Policy, student organizations, athletic teams, residence life groups and/or individuals may be held responsible for criminal misconduct in violation of the Pennsylvania Hazing Law, a third-degree misdemeanor punishable by up to a year's imprisonment. Click here for more information about [Pennsylvania's Hazing Law](#).

## **NUDITY POLICY**

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Messiah University adheres to the Pennsylvania Crimes Code prohibiting public indecency, indecent exposure, and open lewdness (Title 18: Chapter 31, Section 3127 and Chapter 59, Section 5901). Therefore, it is Messiah University policy that nudity outside of the student's bedroom, restroom, or locker room, is considered public nudity and will not be tolerated. Any student engaging in public nudity will be subject to disciplinary action.

## **OFF-LIMIT AREAS/ACTIVITIES**

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For purposes of safety, some areas of the university campus and some activities are off-limits. The following locations are off-limits between the hours of midnight and dawn: the pit parking lots; the east side of the creek (Starry); the woods/fields from the pit to the water treatment plant (including the back 40 and the fit trail); the inside of any vehicle (personal or otherwise); and the Grantham Cemetery. The following activities are prohibited at all times: climbing on, repelling from, or being on the roof of any building/structure owned by the university or by the Grantham Church; being in hammocks that are higher than six feet from the ground or that are hanging from bridges/structures; being on the railroad tracks (except in areas marked for crossing); climbing on/being inside dumpsters; being within any designated construction zone or vehicle; being on the water tower or within its security fence; being in elevator shafts; riding atop or hanging from any moving vehicle (except seated in a truck bed while in compliance with the campus speed limit); camping (including sleeping in tents or vehicles). The Department of Safety reserves the right to prohibit being in other areas and/or engaging in other activities, if deemed to be unsafe given the immediate circumstances.

## **PROPERTY DAMAGE**

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Damage to University property that is a result of vandalism, tampering, or other intentional destruction, will result in an assessment for labor and materials costs for replacement and/or repair of the property, and referral to the Dean of Students Office.

## **RESPECT FOR THE RIGHTS OF OTHERS**

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Our right to free expression is limited not only by general community concerns, but also by individual needs and biblical standards. Sensitivity to the rights, needs, and concerns of others should be evident across



campus including but not limited to the library, classrooms, residences, athletics areas, lounges, dining room, and campus grounds, as well as in campus publications and online social media. Out of respect for the rights of others, the following are prohibited: harassment, including physical or verbal attack upon or interference with a person that prevents that person from conducting his or her customary affairs, puts that person in fear for his or her safety, or causes actual physical injury, or conduct less than a physical attack which does the same; a willful interruption or disturbance of the day-to-day conduct of the business of the University; failure to comply with directives of University officials carrying out their assigned duties; possession of hazardous materials; false reports of fire or other dangerous conditions; creation of a fire hazard or other dangerous condition; or other activities which interfere with campus safety, civility, or environmental health.

## **UNAUTHORIZED USE OF UNIVERSITY PROPERTY AND/OR SERVICES**

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The University provides a number of services for students that are meant to help them while attending Messiah, including but not limited to cable television, computer access, telephone services, and utilities. Any unauthorized use of these services or tampering with University property may result in fines imposed, disciplinary action taken, and/or the involvement of the local police. Examples of situations that fall in this category include, but are not limited to, changing or using someone else's computer password; unauthorized alteration of or connection to the cable, computer, or electrical hookups or systems on campus; or attempting to adjust hot water heaters or laundry equipment.