

Haileybury Turnford

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Issue No.10

Dear Parent/Carer

Keeping Safe

Your child and alcohol

It is not uncommon for teenagers to drink alcohol in their teenage years. For some they may experiment and make the positive choice not to participate, but there are also those who become dependent on alcohol.

Underage Drinking

Medical guidance, is that an alcohol free childhood until at least the age of 15 is advised, and this is for very good reasons, as teenagers' brains and livers are not fully developed, so they cannot break down alcohol. Alcohol has more of an effect so the risk of accidents and injury to themselves or others is high, and perhaps most importantly exam predictions suffer, falling by 20 points among those who drink weekly, that's the difference between an A* and a C. Underage drinking has halved in England over the last decade, with 62% of 11 -15 year olds saying they haven't even tried alcohol and the number of 15 year olds drinking weekly has fallen to 10%. Even among 16 -24 year olds just 18% binge drink regularly, contrary to what the media tell us, so teenagers are much better behaved than in our day! The key thing to remember as parents or carers however, is the more relaxed we are about alcohol in the home, the more likely our kids are to drink outside of it, at parties and in public places, and that's where risk taking is most likely to happen.

As parents and carers, the longer you can delay the age of drinking outside of the home, the more likely our kids are to escape the risks around drinking.

Tips to help delay teenage drinking

- Encourage sports, hobbies, clubs and social activities that keep your kids active and fulfilled. Teenagers cite boredom and hanging around with nothing to do as one reason for drinking.
- Establish routines, like mealtimes, that mean you can spend some time together and to talk to each other. This helps your child to feel they can come to you if they have a problem.
- Make sure you know the facts and laws about alcohol and can talk in a balanced and constructive way about the pros and cons of drinking. Talk and listen to your teenager. It is important that they hear your views and that you hear theirs.
- Use everyday opportunities, for example a storyline in a TV programme, as a prompt. Make sure the ground rules are clear, discuss them with all family members, and be clear about what is allowed and not allowed.
- Have consequences for breaking rules and enforce them such as stopping their allowance or grounding them.
- If your teenager is going to a party, drop them off and pick them up or book a taxi. Agree the time they will be leaving the party. Your kids will hate it, but always check sleepover and party plans – ring other parents and check who's in charge.
- Check where they're going and who they're with, and always make sure they've got a fully charged mobile with them.
- Be careful where you leave alcohol in the house. Know how much you have and check it regularly. If you are away for the night it is unfair to your teenagers to leave them in a situation where they have access to a large supply of drink.
- Be careful how invitations and photos are posted on social media sites and ensure that there is adult supervision of parties in friends' homes.



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Registered office: Haileybury Academy Trust, London Road, Hertford Heath, Hertford, Hertfordshire, SG13 7NU

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Helping your child to make sensible choices with alcohol.

Bearing in mind that the key place where teenagers drink is at parties, so think seriously before agreeing to host a party (especially for those under 16) for your teenager yourself. If you do feel happy, then these tips will help it go well.

- Agree the list of invites with your teenager. Don't make the timing of the party too long. Have a definite agreed and reasonable finish time to end the party
- Warn your teen about how they invite their friends – i.e. never offer open invitations to the party on social media
- Agree the house rules
- You might have to stay out of sight but be nearby and available to be contacted in an emergency
- Provide plenty of food – not salty snacks, especially food containing carbohydrates
- Teenagers do sneak in alcohol in water bottles, mixed with soft drinks etc., so be prepared and work out how you'll handle this
- Have lots of soft drinks and iced water available
- If anyone is sick or ill, contact their parents and never leave them unattended
- Try and avoid big sleepovers, as the kids won't get much sleep (or you probably) and you won't know what's going on once you're in bed
- Finally, make sure you've warned your neighbours and have a reasonable finish time, allowing parents to pick up and get to bed too

For more parenting advice and information about how you can support your child and give the right message at the right time visit the following website:

<https://alcoholeducationtrust.org/parent-area/the-right-message-for-the-right-age/>

If you have any concerns or queries relating to any of the above information please do not hesitate to contact your child's Year Achievement Coordinator.

Mrs M Goodes

Vice Principal



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