

## Alcohol abuse by adolescents can be prevented by:

1. Clear and consistent expectations from parents.
2. A healthy life style, such as regular exercise and love of sport.
3. Role modelling of sensible drinking habits by the adults in their lives.
4. Education on the link between drinking and dangerous behaviour.
5. Parental supervision and vigilance.

## Adolescents and Parties

Attending and hosting parties are part of an adolescent's social life. These occasions can bring parents into conflict with their children if expectations differ. Situations become difficult to manage for all involved when the numbers swell, when uninvited guests arrive and when parental involvement is inadequate. As the parent, you must be comfortable with the arrangements. Parents have a duty of care to adolescents under their supervision. Adults should be aware of the ramifications of allowing inebriated adolescents to leave their premises and the associated risk of injury and risk-taking behaviour.

## Concerns about a Party can be reduced by:

1. Knowing your children's friends.
2. Talking to other parents about expectations and standards.
3. Confirming the invitation and details with the parents of the host.
4. Organising definite transportation arrangements to and from the party.
5. Saying 'No' to your child if the arrangements are not to your satisfaction.



## Arrangements for hosting a Party

1. Decide on the format, number of guests, start and finish times.
2. Draw up a list of names and phone numbers.
3. Plan food, drink and entertainment.
4. Establish the 'no alcohol or drugs' rule. Familiarise yourself with the legal implications arising from provision and serving of alcohol on your property to minors (under 18).
5. Issue invitations according to guest list. Insist on RSVP.
6. Engage appropriate security / register the party with the Police.
7. Plan appropriate supervision. Suggested ratio is one adult to ten guests.
8. Notify the neighbours.
9. Establish the points of entry and exit.
10. Collect bags and coats at the door and keep in secured area.

### References:

[www.drinkwise.com.au](http://www.drinkwise.com.au)  
[www.druginfo.adf.org.au](http://www.druginfo.adf.org.au)  
The Trinity Parents' Alcohol & Drug Resource Book

### Disclaimer:

These guidelines are not intended to reflect all strategies for dealing with the challenges of preventing alcohol use among adolescents, but are designed to serve as a resource for parents, students and school. The information contained herein is not intended to replace professional advice, whether medical, legal or other. Each individual situation is different. St Kevin's College, Toorak disclaims liability of any kind resulting from the use of these ideas.



# Alcohol & Party Guide for Parents



## Introduction

The issues relating to the use of alcohol have been the focus of discussion in schools for many decades. Alcohol is tolerated as a socially acceptable drug yet it is responsible for most drug-related deaths in the teenage population. It is associated with a variety of serious health issues. Educating young people about these matters, however, is not only the domain of the School, but is also the responsibility of the home. When families and teachers work together, with the same understanding and emphasis, the outcomes in relation to young people, and their attitudes towards the way they deal with alcohol, are likely to be positive.

Please read this pamphlet and use it as a catalyst for communication among yourselves and with your children.



## Key Concepts

- Parents have a direct influence on the behaviour of their children and by instilling values and building trusting relationships, parents affirm their role and authority. It is vital that parents let their children know their values and principles.
- Parents want to minimize the risks teenagers take whilst at the same time, allowing them the opportunity to develop inner strengths and resilience as they achieve independence. Paradoxically, it is the setting of boundaries that provides adolescents with the freedom to grow, enabling them to respond to the limits placed around them rather than leaving them to flounder without any sense of a 'safety net'.
- Parents understand that there are times when they have to say 'no' to their children. This creates an opportunity for children to learn to deal with frustration, disappointment and impulse control. Talking through these situations in a calm and reasoned tone, aids in the development of emotional intelligence and resilience. Being your child's friend should not be a parent's role at this time.

- Parents accept that despite their 'best efforts', there will be times when the problems of your adolescents seem overwhelming. They may be experiencing a more serious problem. If your child expresses a lack of self-worth and is persistently sad for two weeks or longer, professional help should be sought. ([www.beyondblue.com.au](http://www.beyondblue.com.au))

## Adolescent Brain Development & Alcohol

The seven years immediately after a child reaches puberty mark a developmental crunch time, when the brain is both extremely susceptible to damage from drugs and alcohol and six times more likely than an adult's to develop an addiction.

It is now understood that the completion of the development, whereby nerve cell connections are 'pruned' as a result of learning and experiencing, does not happen until as late as 22-25 years of age and may be prolonged in young men. A relative lack of impulse control leads to perceived risk-taking behaviours and poor decision-making. Injury to the brain during this period of development, when it is more sensitive to specific insults, may have long-lasting consequences.

In 2009 'The Australian guidelines to reduce health risks from drinking alcohol' were released by the National Health and Medical Research Council. They

are significantly different from the previous guidelines which they now replace and are based on the concept that the risk of harm increases progressively with the amount of alcohol consumed.

Guideline 3 is a specific guideline for young people. It reads –

***"For children and young people under 18 years of age, not drinking alcohol is the safest option.***

***A: Parents and carers should be advised that children under 15 years of age are at greatest risk of harm from drinking and that for this group, not drinking alcohol is especially important.***

***B: For young people aged 15-17 years, the safest option is to delay the initiation of drinking for as long as possible."***

This guideline is based on evidence indicating that the risk of harm from accidents, injuries and self-harm is high among drinkers under 18 years of age and that drinkers under 15 years of age experience even greater likelihood of risky or anti-social behaviour. It also takes into account research indicating that consumption of alcohol has implications for brain development and can cause alcohol-related problems later in life. ***The drinking patterns of adolescents in the final years of secondary schooling is predictive of their drinking habits in the subsequent early adult years.*** Research shows that the earlier a child begins to drink, the more likely the child will drink heavily later in adolescence, be a problem drinker and have health and social problems later on (Toumbourou et al 2004).

The longer the human brain can avoid alcohol, the better chance it has to develop its full potential. It is no longer advisable that parents introduce supervised drinking by young people as a strategy to assist them to become 'responsible adult drinkers'.