

Dear Parent

Not long until the end of term now! GCSE's, AS and A levels are over, the June sun means we can plan BBQ's and days on the beach – quite a change from last year and lets hope it lasts for the holidays! In this edition, due to popular request, we've got a feature on festivals. Please send us feedback and any tips you might have to sandra@alcoholeducationtrust.org, Facebook: [Alcohol Education Trust](#), Twitter: [@AETparenthelp](#)

Do you mind being challenged if you're buying alcohol and your children are with you?



A report on the effect of Challenge 25 has found that supermarket staff are often threatened and abused when asking for ID. Most Mum's and Dad's find it quite flattering to be asked for their ID by vigilant checkout staff if buying alcohol, but staff are now trained to spot parents who may be buying alcohol on behalf of their teenagers, or older friends buying for those under age. This is called buying by proxy and it's on the increase – and it's important that your kids know that they're asking friends to commit an offence subject to an on the spot hefty fine.

For parents it's confusing as it's not against the law for your child to drink alcohol if over 5, we're advised by The Chief Medical Officer however, that an alcohol free childhood is the best option before the age of 15. This is for several reasons – our kids' livers lack the enzyme which breaks down the toxins in alcohol and their brains are not fully developed. There is increasing evidence that alcohol effects teenage brain development, so it's not worth the risk. We also know that teenagers who drink weekly before the age of 15 have GCSE predictions that are 20 points lower – that's the difference between an A* and a C in one subject, so it can affect long term job and college prospects too.

www.theguardian.com/society/2014/jun/15/supermarket-staff-abused-underage-drinkers-alcohol

Once 18?

Being repeatedly challenged when over 18 means you need ID with you when going out – which might mean taking a driving licence or a passport, our most precious documents. Why not encourage them to apply for a PASS card? There are currently five national schemes (plus Young Scot) and ten local schemes that are licensed to issue cards bearing the PASS hologram. 5 million cards have been issued and the PASS hologram is widely recognised and accepted in both the on and off trade. Home office Minister Norman Baker says "The new PASS cards will lead to fewer people losing their passport on a night out, which in turn will reduce offences such as identity theft and fraud."



www.pass-scheme.org.uk

Post exam parties ?

A survey from Drinkaware suggests parents are allowing their 14 – 17 year olds up to 9 units of alcohol to celebrate end of exams – that's three times the daily guidelines for girls and twice the guidelines for boys ([See here for details of government guidelines](#)). Do think about how much is sensible – a glass of bubbly after end of GCSEs and then a nice meal? Or if you're planning a party, especially during these light evenings, don't make it too long, have loads of food and iced soft drinks to hand. [See here for party tips](#).

Festival fun

There seems to be a festival every week over the summer – Glastonbury, Bestival, Blissfields, Reading, Secret Garden party and we're often asked by parents for advice around alcohol. Although the usual need is for wellies, this year it seems to be sunscreen! If your youngsters and friends are off, then here are some tips that will help keep them safe. Happily, most festivals won't allow unaccompanied under 16's now, and do think very seriously about letting your teenagers go and be careful about who they are going with.

Food and drink are very expensive

Give them lots of light (to carry) substantial food, such as dried fruit, cereal bars, bread rolls and nuts to keep them going. Pack empty and sturdy bottles – as there should be free drinking water available and plenty of juice or hydrating drinks in tetrapack. Be aware that your teen may mix alcohol in with soft drinks – festival staff will be very wise to this and will search rucksacks and check containers.

Sun cream and stay hydrated

There's no better way to spoil the fun than having heatstroke or severe sun burn. Make sure high factor sun cream is packed and a hat. Baby wipes are a good tip too as washing is not easy. Alcohol is dehydrating and drinking, especially during the day in hot weather is not good news, particularly if they are short on sleep. It might seem that they're not listening when you give them advice, but they will take it on board.

Safety

Only let them take a cheap phone and disposable camera. Perhaps the advice to keep pushing most is to stay with their mates and never go off with new friends, or try things offered by these new friends either. Stick together.

Getting home safely after the festival

By this time they'll probably be exhausted, sweaty and dirty and desperate to get home. If at all possible avoid them, or one of their friends driving home – the combination of lack of sleep and drink from the day before is not a good mix. Take a look at www.morning-after.org to see how long alcohol stays in the system – it takes an hour for the liver to break down one unit of alcohol (that's one shot, half a pint of beer) and there's nothing they can do to speed this up. Water and food will help them feel better, but the alcohol will still be in their system if they've drunk heavily the night before.

Can you help us raise £20,000 this summer?

We're very proud to say we've been selected by The Childhood Trust as one of their 25 charities to support via the Big Give. They have challenged us to raise £20,000 this Summer – which they will then quadruple to help a hundred schools across London tackle underage drinking and risky behaviours. So £10 will turn into £40 – that pays for a workbook and email and phone support for one school for a year. Our programme is shown to significantly delay the uptake of drinking by youngsters – that means better school results, less likelihood of taking up smoking or cannabis too – so. If you are happy to pledge £10 or more, please log on to the Big Give. https://secure.thebiggive.org.uk/charity/view/10465/the-alcohol-education-trust-%28aet%29_talk-about-alcohol

Fostering Outcomes



Earlier this year the Alcohol Education Trust received a very warm welcome by Fostering Outcomes. The organization, which itself provides on-going support to foster parents, approached us to attend one of their network support sessions. Sandra (our Parent Outreach Coordinator) received the request from Ruth Napier (Supervising social worker) and the input was arranged.

Over the course of the session there was a quiz to assess existing knowledge of alcohol related issues and this facilitated a great

deal of enthusiastic discussion and debate. This fabulous group of caring adults benefitted greatly from the session and sharing their own experiences of managing alcohol with youngsters. They also learned some new skills and ideas to support and help them to be a positive role model,

which is so influential in shaping the future values, attitudes and behaviour choices of the children in their care. As this group of adults are parents to their own children as well as foster children, it means that a significant number of youngsters from across the region benefitted from the session.

A big thank you from Sandra to Fostering Outcomes as this session was a pleasure and a privilege to be involved with.



For further information on any of the above please contact

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