

Those of us with older kids can breathe a sigh of relief as GCSEs, AS and A levels are over! But all that free time brings challenges of their own, with post exam parties, long light evenings, festivals, holidays in the sun and days spent in the park or on the beach - especially as it's harder to get them to listen to you as they get older, so this edition is largely dedicated to older teenagers! We have a special focus on festivals as we're asked so many questions around these at our parent talks. We are also often asked about legal highs (NPS), but we're not qualified to answer questions on those!



For those of you with younger ones, trying to fill the long summer holidays with interesting things to prevent boredom, can be challenging. One of the key reasons that youngsters give for drinking or taking risks, is hanging around with nothing to do, so check out your leisure centre, sports clubs, school and youth clubs for holiday clubs and activities. Try and link up with other parents and carers to plan things with each other's kids - it lightens your load, too. Giving your kids a bit of structure with a holiday job or volunteering can be really helpful – it can be dog walking or gardening for friends or relations (or you, if you're brave enough!).

Take a look at our website www.alcoholeducationtrust.org/parent-area/ for more hints and tips.

First Festival?

The number of Festivals that have sprung up over the UK is extraordinary – and naturally many teenagers are keen to go.

Often the first festival will be a 'family friendly' one like Bestival and you may be taking your own kids, or allowing your kids to go with parents or friends. Festivals are a strange hybrid as it feels like one big party where you know and can trust everyone – whereas, of course, you can't. Your youngsters may end up in groups with complete strangers or over 18s, and many of the horror stories we hear from parents often occurred when they're at the same event and didn't know what was going on! This is true at big family celebrations too, where you're so busy looking after your guests, you don't notice the teenagers sneaking booze and disappearing off to the end of the garden! so we've drawn up a few tips:



Kids going with parents, carers or other adults

If you're going to the festival as a family and the kids want to go and do their own thing, make sure they're always with a sibling or friend and have regular meet up times during the day and evening. Walkie talkies are good for keeping in touch and allow you to stay in contact easily without worrying about a phone. Otherwise, make sure the kids have cheap pay as you go phones and it's worth investing in a solar or wind up charger too.

If your kids are going with a friend's parents don't shy away from asking questions around how they'll be monitored and about booze and other substances. Their values might be different from yours, so it's important they know what is important to you.

You /they will be keen on having a good time too and may lose track of the time or where the kids are once it's late. Set a plan that you stick to and don't think, just because you've asked the kids to go back

to the tent and go to sleep while you're still raving, that this will happen! Check up on them regularly or ideally, an adult should stay behind with them.

Load up with as much light nutritious food as you can, like cereal bars, dried fruit and nuts – take frozen milk, cereal, bread, things like tinned tuna and ham and frozen soft drinks to save on high food and drink costs on site.

If they're going with friends and no parents/carers, a few things to insist on:

- Don't let them take any valuable devices. Invest in cheap pay as you go phones - the battery will last longer and it's worth having a wind up or solar charger too – no excuses then about running out of juice and being in contact with you regularly.
- Take plenty of sun cream, hats, wellies and a waterproof.
- We know lugging heavy things to a camping spot can be a real pain, but food and soft drinks are really expensive, so take light things like cereal bars, dried fruit, frozen water and milk (keeps your stuff cool for a while).
- If it's hot, drinking alcohol is dehydrating, and if they're drinking they're more likely to forget sun protection. A combination of heat/sunstroke/sunburn and dehydration will ruin their fun.
- They're just as likely to get sun burnt if it's overcast too, so try and find a trendy hat that they'll wear!
- Just because they're in a party atmosphere, remind them not to trust people they don't know well or be tempted to try things offered by 'new friends'.
- Finally, if you know other people - whether older young people or your own friends, who are going to the festival, ask if they'd mind if you give their number to your child and ask if they'd mind keeping an occasional eye out for you! Just your youngsters knowing someone is looking out for them can moderate behaviour, or knowing they can meet up for some nourishing food might be welcome.



Sun, Sea and Summer Holidays



Teens going away with friends on their own for the first time? If your kids have finished their exams and are going away for sun, sea and a fun time, it can be very nerve racking as parents. Simple pacing strategies if they plan to drink will help to ensure that they have a fantastic holiday such as:

- drink lots of water
- avoid shots and rounds
- keep an eye out for friends
- be aware of local laws and customs
- remember that foreign measures are often much larger and stronger than those at home.
- finally, remind them that alcohol isn't part of everyone's holiday plans, so they should respect the wishes of friends who don't or may not want to drink.

Top tips for you and them

- If travelling by air, especially on long flights, don't be tempted to drink too much, even if it is free! Water and soft drinks are a better choice as both alcohol and altitude dehydrate you. Many airlines won't let you fly if you appear drunk or unruly at check in.
- Once on holiday, alcohol dehydrates you, and the heat of the sun makes it worse. Take regular breaks, slap on plenty of sun cream and drink at least a litre of water a day.
- Bars abroad often serve larger measures of spirits than at home so just two vodkas could be the same as four or five in the UK.

- Alcohol can make you feel relaxed and less careful about sun cream, falling asleep in the sun or on a lilo in the pool. Scarily, malignant skin cancer has increased by 56% among men and 38% among women since 2002 in the UK.
- Don't let too much drink lead them into risky situations, with strangers, swimming pools or unknown places. Watch out for passports, credit cards, phones, tablets or ipods that can be easily lost or stolen if they're worse for wear - it may be better to leave them somewhere secure and just keep enough cash with them when out.
- Mixing drink with sports, from volleyball to rock climbing, can lead to injuries. So play it safe. Likewise, midnight swimming and drinking is never advisable. Insurance may be invalid if drunk at the time of the incident.



Driving abroad?

Nearly all countries have lower drink drive limits than the UK and some, such as the US don't allow any alcohol at all for those under 21. You can look at the permitted levels around the world via www.drinkingandyou.com/site/uk/drive.htm. Decide before going out who is the designated driver who won't drink. It's their job to make sure everyone gets home safely.

We're including the whole of our top tips for staying safe for you to share with your teenager – you can also download it via: www.alcoholeducationtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/StaySafe.pdf

Call my lot – who will be telling the truth?



On the 1st October the AET has a big fund raising event, being hosted by Paul Atterbury of The Antiques Road Show, where three antiques specialists will be talking about some favourite objects – Just one will be telling the truth, however! It will be held here, in our home town of Dorchester. If you would like to attend, please contact kate@alcoholeducationtrust.org. We are looking for a few really lovely items to auction on the night - if you would like to donate something in aid of The Alcohol Education Trust, we would be so grateful. We need to raise £30,000 this year to completely overhaul our kids website for 12-14 year-olds with digital games, quizzes and interactive 'what if' scenarios. You may have skills to offer us instead. If you look at www.talkaboutalcohol.com, you will see what we mean by needing to start from scratch!

In the media

Was the paracetamol challenge real?

We were warned that the new craze after necknominatate was the paracetamol challenge, where kids challenged each other to take high doses of both liver and kidney damaging paracetamol. There were features on ITV and in The Guardian in May, but we're pretty sure the whole thing was a social media hoax. But just in case, be aware, and let's hope who ever's stupid ideas this was, it doesn't come into a reality.

Another media story this month suggested that children of pushy parents are more likely to binge drink later in life and have low self-worth. This research, admittedly from the US, found that the children of pushy or 'helicopter' parents are more likely to engage in risky behaviour such as binge drinking in later life. Professor Larry Nelson, of Brigham Young University said "From our past work, we thought there might be something positive about helicopter parenting under certain conditions, but we're just not finding it". The research involved 438 students. We'll leave you to make your own judgement – the article is here

www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-3107384/Children-pushy-parents-likely-binge-drink-later-life-low-self-worth.html?ITO=1490&ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490

AET resources comprise of www.alcoholeducationtrust.org and www.talkaboutalcohol.com, a Teacher Workbook, booklets 'Alcohol and You' for 15yrs+ and 'Talking to Your Kids About Alcohol' parent and carer guide. We offer teacher CPD workshops and parent information talks.

For further information on any of the above please contact

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