

Read the summary below of the laws that apply to young people about drinking and buying alcohol in the UK

- It is illegal to give alcohol to under 5s. Children who are 5 years-old or over can drink at home if supervised by an adult.
- Under 14? It is at the Landlord's discretion as to whether children are allowed anywhere in a pub. They cannot of course buy or drink alcohol on the premises.
- Under 18? Adults are not allowed to buy alcohol on behalf of under 18s in a licensed premise. The only exception is for 16 or 17 year-olds who are allowed to drink beer, wine or cider with a meal if with an adult (but they may not by the alcohol themselves).
- The restrictions apply to purchasing (i.e. you can't buy alcohol if you are under 18) and location (i.e. you can't drink in a licensed premises or in a public place if you are under 18).
- Police have the powers to confiscate alcohol from under 18s drinking in public spaces (e.g. on the street or in parks). They also have the power to stop someone over 18 knowingly buying alcohol for someone under age (buying by proxy).

Drinking and driving: it's against the law for an adult to drive with more than 80 mg (milligrams) alcohol per 100 ml (millilitres) of their blood (or 50 mg of alcohol per 100 ml of blood in Scotland). They could face a fine of over £5,000, six months in prison and having their licence taken away for at least a year. Causing death through drink-driving can result in a maximum prison sentence of 14 years and a two-year driving ban.

It is illegal to buy alcohol for someone who is drunk. It is also illegal to serve alcohol to someone who is drunk.

### ACTIVITY ONE

Answer the following questions.

1. Why might a parent allow their child to taste some alcohol even if they aren't allowed to buy it themselves until they're 18?
2. Why do you think the law says that people under 18 can't buy alcohol from shops, off-licences and supermarkets?
3. Would it cause problems if children and young people were allowed to buy alcohol? If so, what would they be? And who would it be a problem for?
4. Look at the laws above. Would you charge any of them or add new laws? Explain your answer.

## ACTIVITY TWO

### Simon's 'big' night out

David and Simon are 14 years-old and are old friends. They've been in the same class since they were six. They supported the same football team and share the same group of friends. Simon's parents arrange to go away for the weekend and Simon goes to stay with David. But Simon has a key to his house, and on Saturday night he invites a few mates back there to hang out in the empty house.

They soon find the cupboard containing a few bottles of alcohol and the boys have a glass each. Simon is nervous and drinks his glass very quickly, the David pours him another one. Before long, Simon is completely drunk. He gets very excited and rushes out into the street shouting his head off and charges off down the road. He knocks over some rubbish bins, starts yelling at his mates who have chased after him and gets into a scuffle with David. The police soon turn up and take Simon and David to the police station.

**Read the case study above, and then discuss these questions.**

1. Have any laws been broken?
2. Why do you think Simon behaved in the way he did? Why did David chase after him?
3. How do you think the police will react to their behaviour?
4. Will Simon's and David's parents get involved?
5. What do you think should happen next?

## ACTIVITY THREE

### Girls' night out

Antonia and Sara are both aged 14, but people say they look 18 when they go out. Antonia and Sara meet a couple of 18-year old boys on their way into town and they go into a pub with them. Antonia and Sara both decide to have an alcoholic drink.

The two girls are enjoying talking to the boys and soon agree to another drink. Then Sara starts to feel the effects of the alcohol - her head is beginning to spin and she feels a bit sick. She tells Antonia she wants to go home, but Antonia is furious because she wants to stay with the boys and doesn't want to leave.

Sara doesn't know what to do next. Should she go home on her own? Or should she accept a lift from the boy she's only just met, and who's had a couple of drinks too?

**Read the case study above, and then discuss these questions.**

1. Have any laws been broken?
2. Why is Sara in a risky situation?
3. Is Antonia in a risky situation? Explain your answer
4. What do you think Antonia should do next? And what should Sara do?
5. If a young person is drunk, do you think they are more at risk than an adult who is drunk? Explain your answer.