



Registered Charity 1138775

Newsletter

for Parents



March 2014 Ed6

Dear Parent

At last the evenings are getting longer and the rain has stopped, roll on the Easter holidays!

We mentioned Nekonominate in our last newsletter briefly, but had no idea how this craze would spread like wildfire, we offer you some advice below. We're also pleased to say that drinking among college and university students appears to be decreasing, following the trend among 11-15 year olds, where weekly drinking has halved to 12% from 26% in 2001.

As ever you'll find lots of tips and advice in the [Parents Area](#) of our website. Do send us an email too if we can help with any concerns, via info@alcoholeducationtrust.org

NekNominate Craze

At the beginning of this year, we knew NekNomination as 'Australia's extreme Facebook drinking game' - the speed at which the craze has swept the UK is terrifying, whereby nominees film themselves 'necking' an alcoholic drink and then nominate others to follow suit, posting the video and nominations on social networking sites. NekNomination unites three of our greatest worries: young people, Facebook, and binge-drinking. Speed drinking vast quantities of alcohol is dangerous enough but the desire to outperform the last person is making this game all the more dangerous. And it's not just boys taking part. Girls are also rising to the challenge and both are adding ingredients such as raw eggs, whey protein, washing-up liquid and crushed up cigarettes to their chosen alcoholic beverage - even live goldfish.

The deadly craze has now claimed the lives of two young Irish men, followed by the death of Isaac Richardson, another young man in Cardiff. Rugby player Bradley Eames, 20, was the fifth young person to lose his life; Bradley died four days after filming himself drinking two pints of gin in a NekNominate challenge.

This offers good reason to say to your teens, why would you nominate your pals to take part in such a harmful challenge? An 18 year-old, Jayde Dinsdale, who suffered three heart attacks on her bathroom floor after drinking ten 'Jagerbomb' cocktails, (the combination of alcohol and caffeine caused her heart to stop) is now warning others to avoid the drink. So thank goodness, some of our kids have the confidence to turn this craze around. Others are using a sense of humour and fun in a positive way - RAK nomination, or nice nomination, is where friends are nominated to undertake a 'random act of kindness' a 'RAK'. Videos online include for example, giving flowers, giving lunch to homeless people - take a



look via <http://globalnews.ca/news/1132977/students-say-kindness-an-alternative-to-neknomination-drinking-game/>

Other alternatives have included 'downing' a cup of tea and other harmless responses to challenges from supposed mates. We feel the craze is beginning to pass, but do be aware and talk about this important issue with your kids if appropriate or if you hear of cases locally or at school.

Students Drinking Less and Studying Harder!

As the pressure increases on those of us with children preparing for their GCSE's, AS or A levels after the Easter holidays, it is good to hear that students at universities are socialising less and studying more, with a third abstaining from alcohol in order to save money in the face of £40,000 worth of debts, a recent survey has revealed.



The traditional UK student stereotype has changed thanks to the rise in tuition fees. More students are focused on achieving their desired degree classification and are socialising less and working fewer hours in part-time jobs, according to a survey of over 140 universities and 2,000 students throughout the UK. This is due to changes to

university fees, and the government's decision to triple tuition fees to a maximum of £9,000, changing attitudes towards university life and the value of education received, according to the results of the 2014 Sodexo University Lifestyle Survey.

Almost one in five students in the UK (17%) expects to take on debts in excess of £40,000 compared to 2% previously, while 58% expect at least £20,000 of debt. Over a quarter (26%) of students are consulting their parents in making the choice to go to university - more than double the amount in 2012 (12%).

But the amount of students who report being worried about their debt on graduation decreased by 10% in 10 years - from 14% in 2004 to 4% in 2014 - despite the rising levels of debt observed. Read more at http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2014/03/13/students-socialising-less-studying-more_n_4954504.html

You have the POWER...

We know (because the research tells us) that parents' attitudes to alcohol and their own drinking habits can directly influence their child's future relationship with alcohol.

We have a dedicated '[Parent's Area](#)' on our website where you can find lots of really useful ideas and support. Did you know that we will come to your child's school and meet with parent to support them in a '[Talk about Alcohol](#)' workshop session? Ask at your child's school; all they need to do is contact sandra@alcoholeducationtrust.org to arrange a suitable date. This session can be part of an existing school event, parent's evening, PTA or parent's group – what's more, you don't have to take our word for it as to how useful these sessions are:

"I can recommend inviting Alcohol Education Trust in to deliver a talk to parents. Sandra delivers a fantastic presentation; she is very knowledgeable and engaged all the parents."

[Eston Academy, Middlesbrough: sent to our [Facebook page](#)]

Help Raise Charitable Funds whilst Shopping Online

At the Alcohol Education Trust we want all our resources and support to be free of charge to everyone - but we still need money to be able to do this! We have therefore joined over 6,000 charities and schools on the sales commission website TheGivingMachine.co.uk. Sign up as a Giver, choose up to 4



beneficiaries (AET and your children's school?) who you would like to receive a proportion of the sales commission the hundreds of retailers give the site for directing shoppers to their online shops. It's so easy! Click [here](#) to sign up and start shopping and donating – just remember to have TheGivingMachine.co.uk as a favourite website and always start shopping from their site!

Thank you in advance for your support.

The Medical Reasons why Parents should follow the CMO Guidance and avoid giving Alcohol to Youngsters

Sarah-Hayne Blakemore, Professor in Cognitive Neuroscience at UCL presented good evidence at a conference recently of the physical and medical reasons why parents should avoid giving their teenagers access to alcohol.

Put simply, the brain loses grey matter as it matures, from age 4 until age 21, with a peak of grey matter at puberty, before it declines rapidly in volume - this is called synaptic pruning in adolescence when some synapses are strengthened and some become obsolete. The pre frontal cortex (PFC) is the last



area to develop - this helps explain teenage risk taking as the PFC is responsible for self-control, planning, inhibitions, self-awareness, social attraction and problem solving for example.

There is strengthening evidence that adolescent alcohol use can lead to a smaller brain volume and less grey matter.

You can access the presentation here:

www.drinkaware.co.uk/media/226320/blakemore_drinkaware_2014_final.pdf

Social Media & AET



Over the last few years, social media has quickly become integrated into many aspects of our daily lives; making it easy to keep in touch with family and friends, to join online conversations and to have easy access to lots of useful information. Social media is definitely changing the way we all communicate; in many ways it is for the better as we expand our social circles and explore new horizons through our online connections.



At AET we too are keen to make effective use of these technologies; we have a [Facebook page](#) and a [Twitter account](#). So go on; keep up with the kids and join our virtual communities. Interact and communicate with us and others - let us know your thoughts and opinions and we will provide lots of useful information and advice.

Any questions?



Part of our job is to answer any worries you may have – please either email in confidence to jane@alcoholeducationtrust.org or share your experience, frustrations and also good news stories, by [tweeting](#) Sandra or go to our online forums at [Facebook](#) and [FamilyTalkUK](#). There are also some great chats on YouTube via [YouTube.com/FamilyTalkUK](https://www.youtube.com/FamilyTalkUK)

For further information on any of the above please contact

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