

# The Alcohol Education Trust - Parent Newsletter



**Spring Term Mar 2016 Ed 18**

Nearly Easter - the clocks will be springing forward for Spring and at last it is sunny! As ever, we've had a very busy first three months of the year and are breathing a sigh of relief that it's nearly time for the Easter break! We know some of you will have exam stress at home as GCSE and A levels draw closer. Time to stock up the fridge with good brain food, and tempting rewards if they're studying hard.



Our AET Director, Helena has been taking exams too - a CPD course in Personal Social and Health Education. It's quite a shock to be on the receiving end of assessments and evaluations for change! It has been very valuable to understand the whole subject and all the topics covered by teachers though, to help ensure our children learn how to reduce risk and learn the life skills to keep safe in society.



Test your knowledge on young people's drinking in the UK

Question 1 of 5

How many 11-15 year-olds say they haven't tried alcohol? (i.e. consumed a whole alcoholic drink)

- A) 71%
- B) 62%
- C) 43%
- D) 34%

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## Short quiz on alcohol and young people

We're so pleased some of you have had a go at our quiz on how much young people are drinking - Go on, test your knowledge, you may be surprised!

It's only five questions, so we do hope you'll have a go. Not many have got the answers right yet!

[Click here to take the quiz](#)

**Parent talks for your school,  
Governing body or PTA**

We have 26 parent talks booked across England so far this year – from Hartlepool to Manchester, from Cornwall to London. Kathryn is based in the North West, Sandra in the North East, Helen in London and the South East and Helena in the Midlands and South West.



All of us are parents ourselves and love coming to schools – or more informal settings to talk about your worries about teenagers, issues around hosting or going to parties, the new alcohol guidelines and questions around alcohol and the law. From drop in sessions, to formal presentations – or a table at an



existing school event – The feedback we have from our advice and support is wonderful. Do encourage your school or Governors to host one. Contact Kate via [kate@alcoholeducationtrust.org](mailto:kate@alcoholeducationtrust.org) to arrange.

## In the news

There have been some interesting pieces of research this half term – including news that sociable teenagers are 'less likely to binge drink or smoke cigarettes and cannabis' – which may seem surprising! It is around the fact that sociable and secure teenagers feel more confident in themselves and so feel less of a need to experiment. Their parents are more likely to keep tabs on them and know their friends too. The team from the University of Dundee researched 1,000 teenagers aged 13 and 17. The study showed that having strong connections with those three key groups - family, classmates and friends - lowered the likelihood of a teenager falling victim to substance use – halving the likelihood of binge drinking for example from 40% to 20%. Study author Kristy Miller, a PhD candidate, said: 'This illustrates the importance of teenagers strongly identifying with as many social groups as possible in order to protect against mental health problems and negative health behaviours.'

[Read more](#)

The importance of parents and carers knowing where their children are and who they are with has been shown in another study from Glasgow and Queens University Belfast with a lack of parental control linked to heaviest teen drinkers – not surprising news – but interestingly it was secretive

teenagers who were drinking the most heavily – and it was not affected by how good the child's relationship was with their family or carers. What affected level of drinking was if boundaries and rules were in place. More than 4,900 young people took part and were followed between 2000 and 2011. Study author Dr McCann said the study suggested that the determining factor was not so much the quality of the relationship between parent and child, but the level of control exercised by parents.

“Why that should be is a bit of a puzzle. However, we are hypothesising that while emotional support and closeness are important for ensuring mental wellbeing, when it comes to health behaviours like alcohol use, parental rules may have more of an influence over factors outside the home such as peer influences and social media,” He added: “Given that adolescence is often a critical period for the beginning of alcohol use, and that alcohol harms are not confined to children from so-called ‘problem’ families, support for adolescent parenting – rather than alcohol awareness for parents – may be a more beneficial target for public policy aimed at young people’s health behaviour.”

Source: Assessing elements of a family approach to reduce adolescent drinking frequency: parent-adolescent relationship, knowledge management, and keeping secrets.



## **16 - 24 year olds the most sober for generations**

The ONS released statistics this month that suggest only half of 16 – 24 year olds now drink alcohol on a weekly basis and that 20% consider themselves to be teetotal. Various reasons have been given for this,

including student debt, a desire to achieve, health considerations and a change in social lives. Only 2 in 10 regularly drink to excess contrary to media images of ladettes and Friday nights out. Smoking levels, teenage pregnancy and drug use are all on the decline too.

[Read more](#)

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AET resources comprise of [www.alcholeducationtrust.org](http://www.alcholeducationtrust.org) and [www.talkaboutalcohol.com](http://www.talkaboutalcohol.com) a Teacher Workbook, booklets ‘Alcohol and You’ for 15yrs+ and ‘Talking to Your Kids About Alcohol’ parent and carer guide.

We also offer teacher CPD workshops and parent information talks.

For further information on any of the above please contact  
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