

A photograph of a middle-aged man with grey hair and a young man with brown hair sitting at a wooden desk. The man is wearing a light blue sweater and the young man is wearing a maroon t-shirt. They are both looking down at a laptop and some papers on the desk. The man is pointing at the laptop screen with his right hand. The young man is holding a pencil over a piece of paper. The background is a blurred indoor setting with a window showing greenery outside.

# PARENT ENGAGEMENT KIT FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Working with parents to reduce alcohol-related harm among young people

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## BACKGROUND

This kit has been developed by the Drug, Alcohol and Prevention Services Division (DAPSD) of the Mental Health Commission in consultation with School Drug Education and Road Aware (SDERA).

Drinking alcohol is widely accepted as being part of Australian culture. Experts report that when young people are exposed to alcohol use the message sent is that alcohol is an important, necessary part of everyday life. This 'cultural ease' around alcohol encourages young people to drink, drink at an earlier age and want to be part of the drinking culture they see around them, which in many instances is one of harmful drinking.

There are a number of strategies currently underway to reduce alcohol-related harm that challenge the existing drinking culture in Western Australia. This includes mass reach campaigns, school alcohol education, enforcing alcohol legislation and local community action.

Programs that help inform parents about alcohol-related harm and the influence they can have on their child's drinking intentions or behaviours should be part of a comprehensive approach to preventing and reducing alcohol-related harm. Clear drinking guidelines for young people, which recommend no alcohol is the safest choice for people under 18 years of age, helps parents/guardians in the decision not to provide alcohol to their children.

Evidence shows that what parents do, how they communicate their expectations, and whether they supply alcohol, can influence their child's choices about alcohol.

### PURPOSE OF THE KIT

This kit has been developed to assist school communities to deliver key information about alcohol to parents/guardians of 12 to 17 year olds, and to encourage parents/guardians to continue educating and talking with their children about alcohol.

**FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE UNDER 18 YEARS OF AGE,  
NOT DRINKING ALCOHOL IS THE SAFEST OPTION.**

### WHO IS THIS KIT FOR?

The kit is for use by secondary school:

- Teaching staff
- Support staff such as the Student Services, Head of Learning Areas, School Nurse, School Psychologist, School Chaplain and Youth Worker
- The P&C/P&F and School Board
- Health Professionals and Prevention Officers who support school staff.

### HOW TO USE THIS KIT

The kit includes resources, templates, a letter and digital images along with an explanation of how to use them. These materials are in formats that are easy to use and can be downloaded from the *Alcohol. Think Again* website. There is a 'How schools can engage parents in alcohol education' page located in the 'Alcohol and Community' section of the website.

**Click here to access the page.**

### ABOUT THE MESSAGE

This kit supports the *Alcohol. Think Again* Parents, Young People and Alcohol Campaign message, 'No one should provide alcohol to under 18s'. The campaign aims to increase parents' awareness of the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Alcohol Guideline to reduce alcohol-related harms for young people under 18 years of age.

- Parents/guardians should be advised that children under 15 years of age are at the greatest risk of harm from drinking and that for this age group, not drinking alcohol is especially important.
- For young people aged 15 to 17 years, the safest option is to delay the initiation of drinking for as long as possible.

# WHAT CAN SCHOOL COMMUNITIES DO?

# **IMPLEMENT CAMPAIGN MATERIALS**

**INFOGRAPHIC**

**IMAGES**

**EMAIL SIGNATURE**

**FLYER - TIPS FOR PARENTS**

There are a number of activities and resources for school communities' to use to inform and engage parents/guardians, of 12 to 17 year olds, to continue educating their children about alcohol at home.

Consistent messages about alcohol at school and at home can help to reduce alcohol-related harm among young people in school communities.

These activities can be conducted any time of the year, and a sample calendar of events is included, which can be adapted for your school.

Each of the resources in this kit has instructions on how they can be used.

This kit includes:

- A calendar of events.
- An infographic for use in print and digital media.
- A flyer that provides tips for parents.
- A suite of *Alcohol. Think Again* images for use in digital media.
- Email 'signature insert' instructions.
- A school ball parent agreement letter template.
- An article for use in newsletters.
- Ideas on how to raise funds other than using alcohol.
- Frequently asked questions and answers.

## WHEN IS THE BEST TIME TO RUN MATERIALS IN MY SCHOOL?

This calendar highlights some times of the year where school events occur that may be associated with alcohol use by young people. These events provide an opportunity for schools to use the materials in this kit to promote key messages to parents about alcohol and young people, and are often a good prompt for parents to discuss alcohol with their children at a relevant time.

MONTH	KEY DATES
JAN	NEW YEARS EVE AUSTRALIA DAY
FEB	
MAR	SCHOOL BALLS TERM 1 BREAK
APR	RIVER CRUISE
MAY	SCHOOL CAMPS
JUN	
JUL	TERM 2 BREAK
AUG	
SEP	
OCT	TERM 3 BREAK
NOV	YEAR 12 DINNER LEAVERS CELEBRATIONS
DEC	TERM 4 BREAK CHRISTMAS

Ask parents to sign an agreement not to give alcohol to their children or their children's friends on the night of the school ball. Use template on page 14.

When sending out information about school events such as a river cruise, school camp or Year 12 dinner, include one of the *Alcohol. Think Again* images on pages 8 and 9.

In the lead up the Leavers' celebrations, place the TIPS FOR PARENTS' on page 11 of this kit, on school or P&C/P&F websites and in newsletters. More information for parents on supporting their children through Leavers' celebrations can be found on the 'Your Child and Leavers' page on the *Alcohol. Think Again* website.

# INFOGRAPHIC

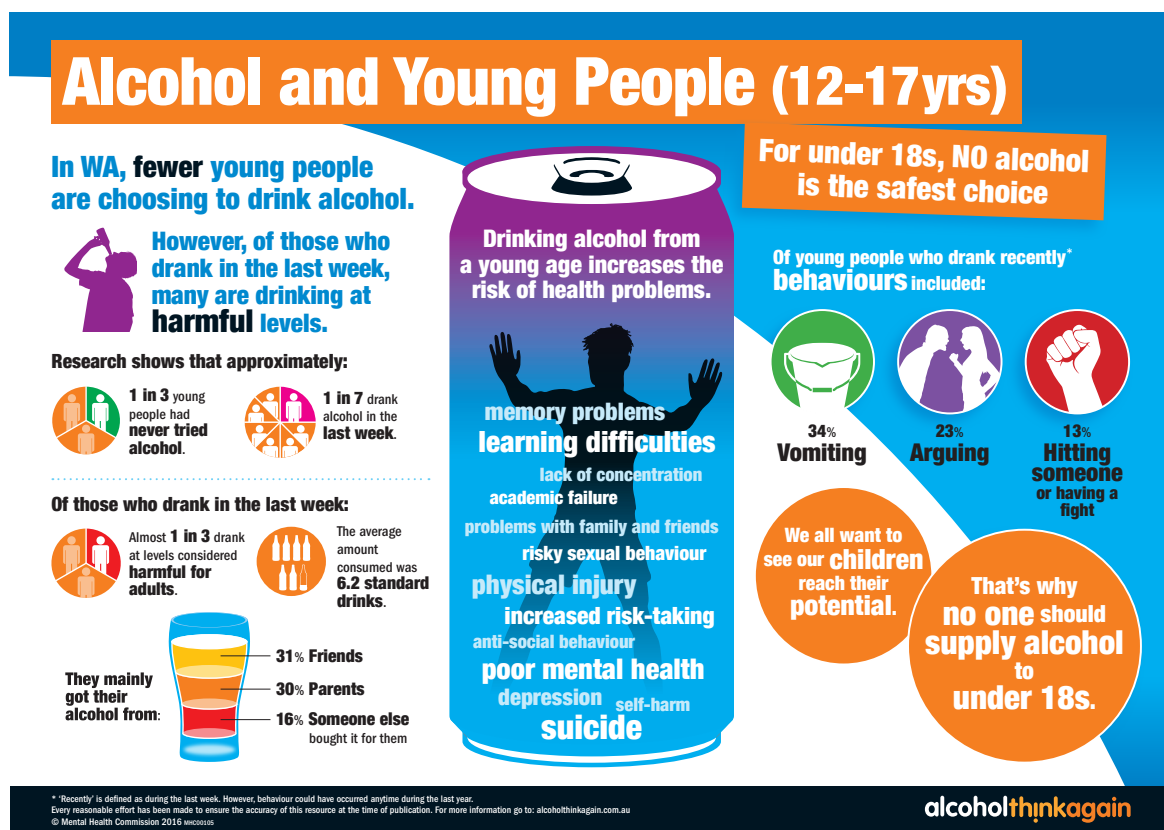
## PURPOSE

This infographic can be used in a variety of ways, to highlight important statistics and information about alcohol and young people.

## WHERE CAN YOU USE THE INFOGRAPHIC?

Place on school and P&C/P&F websites, Facebook pages and/or in newsletters.

- Display on school notice boards.
- Display at school events, particularly those which parents are likely to attend.



# IMAGES

## PURPOSE

The images of the following 10 key messages are aimed at parents of children aged 12 to 17 years.

## WHERE CAN YOU USE THE IMAGES?

- Place on school and P&C/P&F websites, Facebook pages, newsletters and/or on letters to parents.
- Display at school events, particularly those which parents are likely to attend.
- Insert under your email signature and change periodically to deliver a new message. Instructions on how to do this are on page 10.

**CLICK HERE TO  
ACCESS JPEG  
FILES OF ALL 10  
IMAGES**

**For under 18s,  
NO alcohol  
is the  
safest choice.**

alcohol**thinkagain**

**To help children reach  
their full potential,  
no one should supply  
alcohol to under 18s.**

alcohol**thinkagain**

**Alcohol contributes  
to young people  
making poor  
decisions.**

alcohol**thinkagain**

**Alcohol  
affects the  
developing  
brain.**

alcohol**thinkagain**

**Talk to your  
child about your  
expectations  
regarding alcohol.**

alcohol**thinkagain**

## IMAGES

**To help children reach their full potential,  
no one should supply alcohol to under 18s.**

**alcohol**thinkagain

**Alcohol contributes to young  
people making poor decisions.**

**alcohol**thinkagain

**Alcohol affects  
the developing brain.**

**alcohol**thinkagain

**Talk to your child about your  
expectations regarding alcohol.**

**alcohol**thinkagain

**For under 18s, NO alcohol  
is the safest choice.**

**alcohol**thinkagain

# EMAIL SIGNATURE

## PURPOSE

Remind people of the message everytime you email.

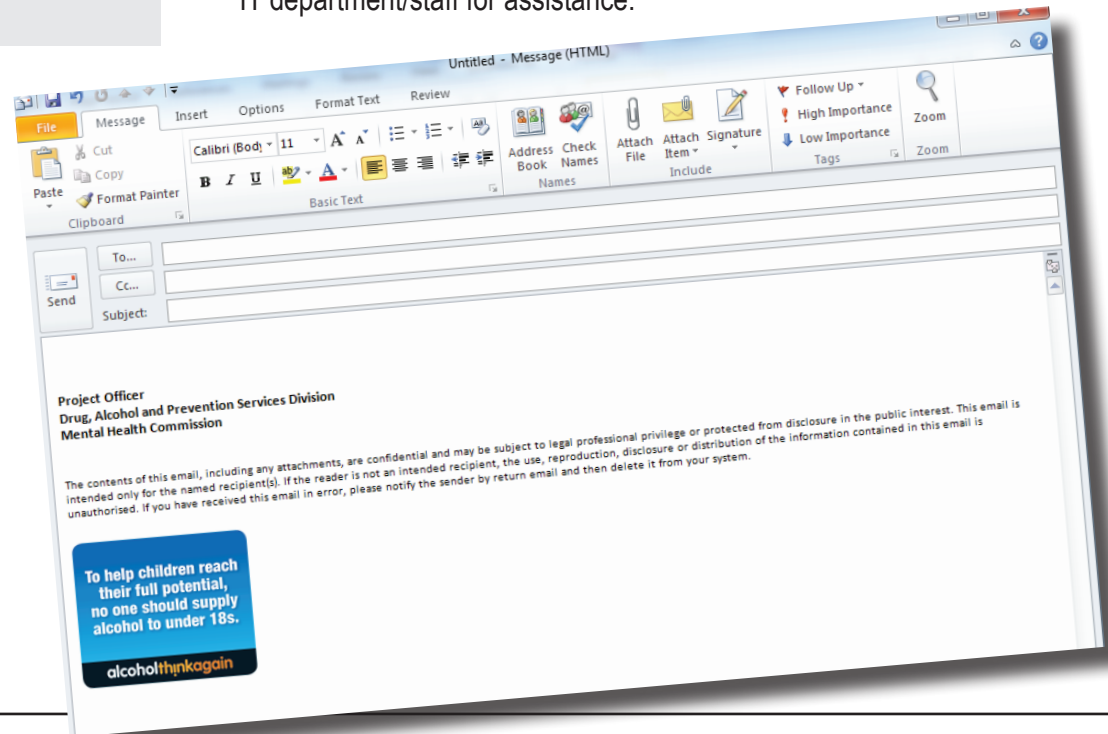
## WHERE CAN YOU USE THE EMAIL SIGNATURE?

- Place images found on pages 8 and 9 within the footer of staff emails.
- Encourage parents to place on the base of their emails.
- These images can be rotated periodically to deliver varying key messages to parents.

**CLICK HERE  
TO ACCESS  
IMAGES  
TO USE IN  
THE EMAIL  
SIGNATURE**

## HOW TO INSERT IMAGE INTO A MICROSOFT OUTLOOK EMAIL SIGNATURE

1. Open a new message.
2. Select 'Signatures' under the 'Message' tab (in the 'Include' area on the toolbar).
3. From the drop down menu, select 'Signatures'.
4. Click on the image then 'COPY' and 'PASTE' it into the desired section of your signature.
5. Click 'OK'.
6. If you do not use Microsoft Outlook as your email provider, please contact your IT department/staff for assistance.



# FLYER - TIPS FOR PARENTS

## PURPOSE

This flyer provides parents with tips to support them to delay their child's alcohol use and can be distributed or utilised in a variety of ways.

## WHERE CAN YOU USE THE FACT SHEET?

- Place on school and P&C/P&F websites, Facebook pages and/or in newsletters.
- Display on school notice boards and/or send out with other correspondence to parents where appropriate.
- Display at school events, particularly those that parents are likely to attend.

CLICK HERE  
TO ACCESS  
PDF FILE  
OF FLYER

### Alcohol and Young People: Tips for parents of 12-17 year olds

Evidence tells us that what you do as a parent affects your child's choices about alcohol.

#### What can parents do?

- 1 Avoid providing alcohol to your children**  
Drinking from an early age can lead to:
  - Young people drinking more regularly and in greater quantities.
  - Increased likelihood of alcohol-related problems later in life.Children who are supplied alcohol by their parents for use without parental supervision are four times more likely to drink in a harmful way.
- 2 Educate your child**  
Inform them of the harms associated with drinking alcohol. These include:
  - Harm to the developing brain that can lead to memory problems and learning difficulties.
  - Blackouts.
  - Physical injury.
  - Violence.
  - Risky sexual behaviour.
- 3 Clarify your expectations**  
Talk to your child about your expectations of them regarding alcohol use.
  - If your expectation is no alcohol, explain why.
  - Discuss how you expect them to behave in environments where alcohol is present.
  - If they attend a social event be sure your child understands that they need to keep in touch with you about where they are, and remind them of your expectations about alcohol.
  - Reach an agreement based upon your expectations about alcohol and what will happen if the agreement isn't kept.
- 4 Talk with other parents**  
Talk to other parents and let them know that you do not want them to provide alcohol to your child under any circumstances.

To help our children reach their full potential, no one should supply alcohol to under 18s.

alcoholthinkagain

For more information go to: [alcoholthinkagain.com.au](http://alcoholthinkagain.com.au)  
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# **IMPLEMENT NON- CAMPAIGN MATERIALS**

**ALTERNATIVES TO USING ALCOHOL WHEN FUNDRAISING**

**SCHOOL BALL PARENT LETTER TEMPLATE**

**NEWSLETTER ARTICLE**

# ALTERNATIVES TO USING ALCOHOL TO RAISE FUNDS OR AS PRIZES

## PURPOSE

Find ways to raise funds other than using alcohol. Using alcohol as a drawcard to raise funds or as prizes can send a message to young people that alcohol is a commodity valued by adults and further normalises its use.

## WHEN CAN THIS BE INTRODUCED?

- Find alternatives to using wine sales as a fundraiser.
- Make quiz nights that might involve students or other children, alcohol-free, no sales and no alcohol prizes.
- Make events such as film nights or BBQs alcohol-free.
- Don't conclude P&C meetings with alcoholic drinks.

School communities can reduce young people's exposure to alcohol by making any school-based events alcohol-free and not using alcohol in fundraising activities or as prizes. This will also help change Australia's current alcohol culture.

When alcohol is consumed and promoted at places where young people play and socialise and where adults socialise accompanied by their children, it can re-enforce to young people that alcohol is a normal part of their environments and everyday life (otherwise known as 'normalisation'). Experts advise that this normalisation of alcohol sends a message that alcohol is not harmful, which can encourage favourable attitudes towards alcohol use.

There are many alternative fundraising activities and for ideas on what you can do, the 'Healthy Choices Healthy Futures' website has two publications that provide a range of activities and ideas for prizes:

- **Healthier Fundraising: A Guide**  
[http://hchf.com.au/system/resources/resource\\_assets/000/000/021/original/0398\\_HCHF\\_Fundraising\\_Guide.pdf?1396837401](http://hchf.com.au/system/resources/resource_assets/000/000/021/original/0398_HCHF_Fundraising_Guide.pdf?1396837401)
- **Healthier Gifts & Rewards: Alternatives to Wine & Chocolate**  
[http://hchf.com.au/system/resources/resource\\_assets/000/000/022/original/0398\\_HCHF\\_Gifts\\_and\\_Rewards.pdf?1396837336](http://hchf.com.au/system/resources/resource_assets/000/000/022/original/0398_HCHF_Gifts_and_Rewards.pdf?1396837336)

# SCHOOL BALL PARENT LETTER TEMPLATE

## PURPOSE

Many parents don't want to give their child alcohol on the night of the school ball but feel pressured by their child and the perception of what other parents are doing.

## HOW TO USE THE PARENT LETTER?

To assist them to keep their child safe before, during and after the school ball, ask parents to:

- Sign an agreement not to supply alcohol to their child or their child's friends on the night of the school ball using the template letter.
- Collect this letter in person or alternately ring a designated person to request the agreement be emailed to them. This can help prevent student's forging their parent's or guardian's signature.
- Advise parents that any students without a signed agreement will not be allowed to attend the school ball. Signing this agreement gives parents a reason to say 'no' when their children asks them to supply alcohol.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Thank you to Ocean Reef Senior High School for allowing us to promote their successful school ball strategy, where written agreement was obtained from Year 12 parents not to supply alcohol to their child and their friends on the night of the school ball.

CLICK HERE TO  
ACCESS WORD  
FILE OF THIS  
LETTER

Dear Parents/Guardian,

As you may be aware, the Year \_\_\_ ball is fast approaching. This is an event where students can celebrate and have fun together with their peers in a safe and welcoming environment.

While there is a lot of excitement and anticipation for this event amongst the students, it's important as a parent to be aware of possible negative outcomes that may occur on the night of the ball.

There are often pre and post ball parties/gatherings taking place on this night, which can be perfectly harmless although this is not always the case. Alcohol consumption at these parties can result in negative outcomes for your child and/or other students.

Alcohol consumption among young people can result in accidental and violent injury, risky sexual behaviours, antisocial and/or embarrassing behaviour.

Drinking alcohol can affect a young person's problem solving skills and performance at school, as well as potentially affecting their body, mood and mental health. For these reasons the national health guideline for children and young people under 18 years of age, states not drinking alcohol is the safest option. More recently, a new law was introduced making it illegal for anyone to supply under 18's with alcohol in a private setting without parental permission.

To ensure that the night of the Year \_\_\_ ball is a safe one we would like to encourage you to sign an agreement to not supply alcohol to your child or their friends on the night of the school ball.

Kind regards  
(Insert name here)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Please complete the below agreement and return to \_\_\_\_\_ (name) by \_\_\_\_\_ (date)

I \_\_\_\_\_, parent(s) of \_\_\_\_\_ agree to the following:

- I will not supply nor will I allow anyone under the age of 18 to consume alcohol in my home or on my property as part of a pre and/or post ball party/gathering or event.
- I will not supply my child or anyone under 18 with alcohol for consumption at any school ball pre/post party, gathering or event.
- I will discuss this agreement with my child.

Parent(s) signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# NEWSLETTER ARTICLE

## PURPOSE

This article provides parents with some understanding of the context in which young people choose to drink alcohol. The way young people view alcohol can be a reflection of beliefs and behaviour of the broader Australian community.

## WHERE CAN YOU USE THE NEWSLETTER ARTICLE?

- On school and P&C/P&F websites.
- On the school's Facebook page.
- In school and P&C/P&F newsletters.

**CLICK HERE TO  
ACCESS WORD  
FILE OF THIS  
NEWSLETTER  
ARTICLE**

### **Alcohol Education: At school and at home.**

Alcohol use in the Australian culture is often considered normal. Over the past two decades, it has become available more hours of the day, with greater product varieties and in more places than ever before. Alcohol is promoted more prolifically, especially with the introduction of social media, and is cheaper and more affordable than ever before.

Experts report that even with responsible drinking by adults, the message sent to young people through exposure to alcohol use, is that alcohol is an important, necessary part of everyday life. This 'cultural ease' around alcohol can encourage young people to drink, drink at an earlier age and to want to be part of the drinking culture they see around them, which in many instances is one of harmful drinking.

Teaching about alcohol at school is an important part of a comprehensive approach to enable young people to make informed healthy choices. Education by parents at home is also important. Evidence shows that what parent's do, how they communicate their expectations and whether they supply alcohol can affect their child's choices about alcohol.

To assist your children in making informed healthy decisions about alcohol, visit the 'Young Peoples Relationship with Alcohol' page on the *Alcohol.Think Again* website for information and tips on talking to young people about alcohol.

# ORDERING THESE RESOURCES

## ELECTRONICALLY

Digital copies of all the following materials are available electronically from the *Alcohol.Think Again* website. There is a 'How schools can engage parents in alcohol education' page located in the 'Alcohol and Community' section of the website.

- Infographic
- 10 digital images
- Flyer - tips for parents
- School ball parent letter template
- Newsletter article

## HARD COPIES

Hard copies can be ordered from our Resource Order Form which can be found on the following two pages.

If any other digital formats are required, please contact the Community Programs team of the Drug, Alcohol and Prevention Services Division at the Mental Health Commission via [Communityprograms@mhc.wa.gov.au](mailto:Communityprograms@mhc.wa.gov.au) or phone (08) 9370 0333.

CLICK HERE  
TO ACCESS  
RESOURCE  
ORDER  
FORM

**SCHOOL KIT RESOURCE ORDER FORM**

These materials have been developed for a Western Australian (WA) audience and many contain WA-specific information including laws.

- Hard copy resources may be ordered for use in WA only.
- Please note there is no cost involved with ordering these resources.
- PDF copies of resources can be downloaded from <http://www.dao.health.wa.gov.au/informationandresources/Publicationsandresources.aspx>

Image	Booklets / Factsheets / Information Cards / Pamphlets	Maximum Quantity	Order Quantity
	Alcohol and Young People (12-17 yrs) – For under 18s, NO alcohol is the safest choice – Infographic A3 poster – DAO 00105	5	
	Alcohol and Young People: Tips for Parents of 12-17 year olds – Flyer A4 poster – DAO 00109	5	
	Alcohol and Your Health Infographic A3 poster – DAO 00098	5	
	Leavers – what parents should know - infographic A3 poster – DAO 00106	5	
	Parents, Young People and Alcohol A3 poster – DAO 00110	5	
	Young People and Alcohol (male) – Under 18. No Alcohol. The Safest Choice – A3 poster. A child's brain continues to develop until their early 20s. Alcohol can affect the developing brain.	5	
	Young People and Alcohol (female) – Under 18. No Alcohol. The Safest Choice – A3 poster. A child's brain continues to develop until their early 20s. Alcohol can affect the developing brain.	5	
	Hosting a Party for Teenagers: Factors to Consider booklet – DAO 00095	10	

Out of print. Are available online.

☐ Miss ☐ Dr ☐ Other.....









Drug, Alcohol and Prevention Services Division  
Mental Health Commission  
Box 126, Mt Lawley WA 6029  
(08) 9404 1100  
[communityprograms@mhc.wa.gov.au](mailto:communityprograms@mhc.wa.gov.au)

Resources are not stored on site, so please allow a minimum of 14 days for delivery.



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	Alcohol and Young People: Tips for Parents of 12-17 year olds – Flyer A4 poster – DAO 00109	5	
	Alcohol and Your Health Infographic A3 poster – DAO 00098 Alcohol consumption is not just someone else's problem.	5	
	Leavers – what parents should know - infographic A3 poster – DAO 00106	5	
	Parents, Young People and Alcohol A3 poster – DAO 00110	5	
	Young People and Alcohol (male) – Under 18. No Alcohol. The Safest Choice – A3 poster A child's brain continues to develop until their early 20s. Alcohol can affect the developing brain.	5	
	Young People and Alcohol (female) – Under 18. No Alcohol. The Safest Choice – A3 poster A child's brain continues to develop until their early 20s. Alcohol can affect the developing brain.	5	
	Hosting a Party for Teenagers: Factors to Consider booklet – DAO 00095  Designed to assist parents in planning and hosting responsible parties with teenagers under 18 years of age. It provides tips about communicating with teenagers and factors you might consider before allowing teenagers to host a party or attend parties elsewhere.	10	Out of print. Are available online.

**ORDER DETAILS:**

<b>Title</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Mr <input type="checkbox"/> Mrs <input type="checkbox"/> Ms <input type="checkbox"/> Miss <input type="checkbox"/> Dr <input type="checkbox"/> Other.....
<b>Name:</b>	
<b>Occupation:</b>	
<b>Organisation:</b>	
<b>Address:</b>	
<b>Telephone:</b>	
<b>Email:</b>	

**Please return your form to:** Laura Moniodis  
Drug, Alcohol and Prevention Services Division  
Mental Health Commission

**Mail:** PO Box 126, Mt Lawley WA 6929  
**Phone:** 9471 0404  
**Email:** laura.moniodis@mhcc.wa.gov.au

**PLEASE NOTE:** Resources are not stored on site, so please allow a minimum of 14 days for delivery.

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

This information can be displayed within the school environment for example as part of a staffed poster display on parent/teacher nights as a conversation starter. They can also be used as inserts in school P&C/P&F newsletters and shown on school P&C/P&F websites and Facebook pages. You don't need to use all these questions at once; you could deliver them a segment at a time as a series e.g. one per week/month.

**Digital copies of all the following questions are available electronically from the *Alcohol.Think Again* website in word documents. [Click here to access.](#)**

# ALCOHOL GUIDELINES

## WHAT ARE THE GUIDELINES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE REGARDING ALCOHOL?

The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) recommend the following guidelines to reduce alcohol-related health harms: for children and young people under 18 years of age:

- For children and young people under 18 years of age, not drinking alcohol is the safest option.
- Parents/guardians should be advised that children under 15 years of age are at the greatest risk of harm from drinking and that for this age group, not drinking alcohol is especially important.
- For young people aged 15 to 17 years, the safest option is to delay the initiation of drinking for as long as possible.

## WHY HAVE ALCOHOL GUIDELINES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE BEEN INTRODUCED?

The Guidelines provide guidance for parents, as well as for young people themselves, about the safest option to prevent alcohol-related harm for children and young people up to 18 years of age.

The Guidelines are based on an assessment of the potential harms of alcohol for this age group, as well as the evidence that alcohol may adversely affect brain development and be linked to alcohol-related problems later in life.

It is also based on evidence showing that:

- The risk of accidents, injuries, violence and self-harm are high among drinkers aged under 18 years.
- Drinkers under 15 years of age are much more likely than older drinkers to experience risky or anti-social behaviour.

Early initiation of drinking is associated with a higher frequency and quantity of alcohol consumption. This contributes to the development of alcohol-related harms in adolescence and adulthood.

# ALCOHOL LAWS - LICENSED PREMISES/PRIVATE SETTINGS

## WHAT ARE THE LAWS IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA ABOUT ALCOHOL AND YOUNG PEOPLE?

The laws are different in each State or Territory regarding alcohol use by people under the age of 18. In Western Australia:

- It is an offence for anyone under the age of 18 years to enter or remain on licensed premises without a legal guardian or responsible adult except under specific circumstances outlined in the Liquor Control Act 1988.
- It is against the law to sell or supply alcohol to anyone under the age of 18 years on licensed premises or regulated premises (such as a community hall holding an 18th birthday).
- It is an offence for anyone under the age of 18 years to consume alcohol or be in the possession of alcohol on licensed or regulated premises and it is an offence to allow that to occur.
- It is an offence for anyone under the age of 18 to purchase or obtain, or attempt to purchase or obtain alcohol from any other person on licensed or regulated premises.
- It is an offence for persons of any age to drink in public, such as on the street, park or beach. Opened liquor can be confiscated and destroyed by the Police.
- It is an offence for anyone under the age of 18 to be in possession of alcohol (open or un-open) in a public place. Police have powers to seize and dispose of the liquor under those circumstances.



# ALCOHOL LAWS – PRIVATE SETTINGS

The following questions and answers are about new laws on the secondary supply of alcohol. The Department of Racing, Gaming and Liquor WA are responsible for these laws and if you require more information about these laws please go to [www.rgl.wa.gov.au](http://www.rgl.wa.gov.au)

## **ARE THERE LAWS ABOUT YOUNG PEOPLE DRINKING ALCOHOL AT HOME?**

On 20 November 2015, new laws came into effect regarding the secondary supply of alcohol. Under this law, it is an offence for anyone to supply under 18s with alcohol in a private setting without parental or guardian permission. This offence carries a penalty of up to \$10,000.

Alcohol causes harm to young people. It can increase their risk of injury, mental health problems, and cause permanent damage to their developing brain. For these reasons the national health guideline for children and young people under 18 years of age, states that not drinking alcohol is the safest option.

Parents not wanting their children to drink alcohol are now able to stand firm in their decision to not provide young people with alcohol, as it is now illegal for other adults to provide alcohol to their children, at a private setting, without their permission.

## **DO OTHER ADULTS NEED VERBAL PERMISSION FROM ME TO GIVE MY CHILD ALCOHOL OR DO THEY NEED TO HAVE MY PERMISSION IN WRITING?**

Permission can be in any format; however, it is preferable to be in writing.

When deciding whether or not to give someone permission to provide alcohol to your child alcohol, you may find it helpful to consider the harm alcohol causes to young people. It can increase their risk of injury, mental health problems and permanent damage their developing brain. For these reasons, the national health guideline for children and young people under 18 years of age recommend no alcohol is the safest choice and that is why no one should supply alcohol to under 18s.

## **I AM HAVING A PARTY AT HOME FOR MY SON'S 18TH BIRTHDAY AND SOME OF THE PEOPLE ATTENDING WILL BE UNDER 18 YEARS OF AGE. IS IT OKAY FOR ME TO GIVE THEM ALCOHOL IF THEY HAVE A NOTE FROM ONE OF THEIR PARENTS GIVING PERMISSION?**

Yes, provided you are satisfied that the note has been written by the juvenile's parent or guardian and not another person (for example a sibling).

Also the law now requires that if you are supplying alcohol to an under 18 year old in your home you must observe responsible supervision practices at all times. This includes making sure these young people don't get drunk (or you do not get drunk yourself) and that you are able to supervise their consumption of alcohol at all times.

Be aware that alcohol causes harm to young people. It can increase their risk of injury, mental health problems and permanent damage their developing brain. For these reasons, the national health guideline for children and young people under 18 years of age recommend no alcohol is the safest choice and that is why no one should supply alcohol to under 18s.

# ALCOHOL LAWS - PRIVATE SETTINGS

**I AM HAVING A SMALL GATHERING AT MY HOME FOR MY DAUGHTER'S 18TH BIRTHDAY. A FEW OF HER FRIENDS HAVEN'T TURNED 18 YET; IS IT OKAY FOR ME TO SERVE THEM ALCOHOL IF THEIR PARENTS RING ME AND GIVE THEIR PERMISSION OVER THE PHONE OR PROVIDE PERMISSION BY TEXT?**

Yes, provided you are satisfied that the person you have spoken to is the juvenile's parent or guardian and that they are not drunk when they give their consent.

The law now requires that if you are supplying alcohol to an under 18 year old in your home you must observe responsible supervision practices at all times. This includes making sure these young people don't get drunk (or you do not get drunk yourself) and that you are able to supervise their consumption of alcohol at all times.

Be aware that alcohol causes harm to young people. It can increase their risk of injury, mental health problems and permanent damage their developing brain. For these reasons, the national health guideline for children and young people under 18 years of age recommend no alcohol is the safest choice and that is why no one should supply alcohol to under 18s.

**MY SON, WHO IS 17, WAS GIVEN ALCOHOL BY HIS 17 YEAR OLD FRIEND WHILE VISITING HIS HOUSE. DOES HIS FRIEND NEED TO GET MY PERMISSION BEFORE HE CAN DO THAT?**

Yes. It is an offence for a person to supply alcohol to a juvenile irrespective of the age of the person supplying it. Juveniles who breach the secondary supply laws will be subject to the provisions of the *Young Offenders Act 1994*, and may be dealt with through alternative measures such as a caution or referred to a juvenile justice team.

**IF A YOUNG PERSON WHO IS NOT YET 18 YEARS OF AGE BRINGS THEIR OWN ALCOHOL TO MY HOUSE, IS THIS AN OFFENCE UNDER THE NEW SECONDARY SUPPLY OF ALCOHOL LAW?**

The new law centres around supplying alcohol to juveniles. Should a parent lodge a complaint with the police (irrespective of who supplied the alcohol) it will be a matter for them or the courts to determine the issue of supply.

Nevertheless, as a parent faced with this particular situation, you may wish to call the child's parents to check the circumstances and make a record of it. Otherwise, it is preferable that you do not permit the juvenile to bring the alcohol onto your property.

# ALCOHOL LAWS – PRIVATE SETTINGS

**MY DAUGHTER IS HAVING HER 18TH BIRTHDAY PARTY AT HOME. ONE OF HER 17 YEAR OLD FRIENDS TOLD ME THAT HER MOTHER HAD GIVEN HER PERMISSION TO DRINK ALCOHOL. IS IT OKAY FOR ME TO GIVE HER A DRINK IN MY HOUSE?**

No. You must obtain the permission from her parent or guardian, preferably in writing. Without their permission, you are liable for a penalty of up to \$10,000.

The law now requires that if you are supplying alcohol to an under 18 year old in your home you must observe responsible supervision practices at all times. This includes making sure these young people don't get drunk (or you do not get drunk yourself) and that you are able to supervise their consumption of alcohol at all times.

Be aware that alcohol causes harm to young people. It can increase their risk of injury, mental health problems and permanent damage their developing brain. For these reasons, the national health guideline for children and young people under 18 years of age recommend no alcohol is the safest choice and that is why no one should supply alcohol to under 18s.

**I AM TAKING MY DAUGHTER AND A FEW OF HER FRIENDS OUT TO DINNER FOR HER 18TH BIRTHDAY. ONE GIRL IS NOT 18 YET. IF SHE HAS, HER PARENTS' PERMISSION IS IT OKAY FOR ME TO GIVE HER ALCOHOL AT THE RESTAURANT?**

No, if the restaurant is a licensed premise it is an offence. In addition, if the restaurant is unlicensed but allows BYO, then it is considered a regulated premise and therefore it is an offence for a juvenile to be provided or consume alcohol.

**IS IT OKAY FOR OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS TO GIVE MY CHILD SIPS OF ALCOHOL AT A FAMILY GATHERING, WITHOUT MY PERMISSION, IF IT'S IN A PRIVATE HOME?**

No, it is an offence for anyone to supply your child with alcohol, even a sip, if they are under 18 years of age, without your permission. This offence carries a penalty of up to \$10,000.

Research shows that children of parents, who give permission to drink alcohol at home and provide alcohol, are associated with greater levels of adolescent alcohol use, heavy use, drunkenness, and intentions to drink. Children who have had sips of alcohol by age 10 (compared to those who have not sipped) are clearly associated with later alcohol use. Children who had sipped and then asked parents for a sip of their alcohol showed elevated alcohol use.

Alcohol causes harm to young people. It can increase their risk of injury, mental health problems, and cause permanent damage to their developing brain. For these reasons the national health guideline for children and young people under 18 years of age, states not drinking alcohol is the safest option.

# ALCOHOL LAWS - PRIVATE SETTINGS

**MY 17 YEAR OLD DAUGHTER IS GOING OUT WITH AN 18 YEAR OLD AND I DON'T WANT HER TO DRINK. HOW DO I MAKE THIS CLEAR TO HER BOYFRIEND?**

Explain to your daughter's boyfriend that you do not want your daughter to drink alcohol, there is a new law about secondary supply of alcohol to under 18's, and it is against the law for him to give alcohol to your daughter in a private setting such as a home without your permission. Let him know that there is a penalty of up to \$10,000 for breaking this law.

Parents not wanting their children to drink alcohol are now able to stand firm in their decision to not provide young people with alcohol, as it is now illegal for other adults to provide alcohol to their children, at a private setting, without their permission.

**MY 18 YEAR OLD SON IS HAVING SOME FRIENDS OVER TO OUR HOUSE FOR A FEW DRINKS WHILE WE ARE NOT AT HOME. SOME OF MY SON'S FRIENDS ARE NOT 18 YET. IS IT OKAY FOR HIM TO GIVE THEM ALCOHOL?**

No, unless your son has been given permission by his friends' parents or guardians. Without their consent, he is liable for a penalty of up to \$10,000. The law now requires that if your son has permission to supply alcohol to his under 18 year old friends, in your home, he must observe responsible supervision practices at all times. This includes making sure his friends who are under 18 years of age don't get drunk (or he does not get drunk himself) and that he is able to supervise their consumption of alcohol at all times.

*This question is a good one to discuss with your Year 12 student, particularly those who have already turned 18 years of age.*

# ALCOHOL HARMS

## WHAT ARE THE SHORT AND LONG-TERM HARMS OF ALCOHOL FOR YOUNG PEOPLE?

There are a range of social, economic and legal problems that can result from alcohol consumption by young people.

### Short-term harms

In general, younger people are less tolerant to alcohol, and have less experience of drinking and its effects. The immediate harms can include:

- Reduced inhibitions and poor judgement.
- Poor coordination.
- Mood changes.
- Nausea and vomiting.
- Losing consciousness.

These effects along with behaviours driven by the still developing brain can lead to short term harms such as:

- Increased risk-taking (may make decisions without thinking about consequences).
- Unprotected or unwanted sexual encounters.
- Antisocial behaviour, violence, fights, abuse and associated crime.
- Injuries such as road crashes, pedestrian accidents, drowning, alcohol poisoning, suicide and homicide.
- Death due to suffocation from inhaling vomit.

### The long-term harms

- Damage to the developing brain (decreased memory ability, lack of problem solving skills and decreased visual and spatial skills).
- Health problems later in life (cancer, liver disease, heart disease, stroke, dependence and mental health problems).

## WHAT ARE THE IMPACTS OF ALCOHOL ON THE DEVELOPING BRAIN?

There is growing evidence that drinking alcohol is harmful to the developing brain in young people. Two areas of the brain that may be particularly vulnerable to the effects of alcohol consumption during the teenage years are:

1. The hippocampus – responsible for memory and learning.
2. Prefrontal lobe – important for planning, judgement, decision-making, impulse control and language.

Damage to these parts of the brain during its development can result in irreversible brain changes that can impact decision-making, personality, memory and learning.

While research tells us alcohol can damage the developing brain, it is not clear how much alcohol it takes to do this. For these reasons, it is recommended that for under 18s no alcohol is the safest choice and initiation to drinking is delayed as long as possible

## WHAT HARMFUL BEHAVIOURS CAN OCCUR WHEN YOUNG PEOPLE DRINK ALCOHOL?

Harmful behaviours can include:

- Increased risk of accidental and violent injury. The occurrence of risk-taking behaviours increases in adolescence and the possibility of injury increases even more when alcohol is also involved.
- Alcohol consumption in young adults is associated with risky sexual behaviour, adverse behavioural patterns and academic failure.
- Adolescents are also more likely to be involved in a fight when they drink alcohol; compared to if they were sober.

Mental health problems including depression, self-harm and suicide.

- Alcohol use increases the risk for a range of mental health and social problems in young adults.
- Alcohol use may also contribute to poor mental health.
- Young people with poor mental health are more likely to initiate alcohol use in adolescence, and report drinking frequently. They are also more likely to drink with the intent to get drunk.
- Surveys show that heavier alcohol use among teens is associated with an increased probability of a suicide attempt.

# QUESTIONS COMMONLY ASKED BY PARENTS

## **I'M CONCERNED ABOUT SENDING MY CHILD TO PARTIES WHERE ALCOHOL MAY BE AVAILABLE. WHAT CAN I DO?**

While many parents strive to help young people make decisions to avoid drinking, the evidence shows that limiting access to alcohol can be a key factor in whether young people drink or not, how much they drink, and the related harm.

If you do choose to let your child go to a party there are some important things you can do to help keep your child safe.

- Contact the parents of the child holding the party to make sure there is going to be adult supervision and to make them aware that you do not want your child to be served alcohol.
- Explain to your child that you expect them not to drink alcohol, the reasons why and the consequences for them if they do choose to drink.
- Don't give your child alcohol to take with them.
- If you are unable to drop them off and pick them up, be aware of how they are getting to the party and who they are going with.
- Make an agreement about what time they need to be home and let them know they can contact you at any time if they get into difficulties or are feeling uncomfortable.

## **DON'T MOST PARENTS GIVE THEIR CHILDREN ALCOHOL? I WANT TO HELP MY TEENAGER FIT IN, SO I DON'T WANT THEM TO BE THE ONLY ONE AT A PARTY WHO IS NOT DRINKING.**

### **Many parents do not give alcohol to their children.**

Research conducted in Western Australia in 2011 with school students aged 12 to 17 who drank alcohol in the last week found that only 28% of parents supplied them their last alcoholic drink.

Sometimes parents feel pressure from their children or other parents to provide alcohol to their child. If you decide to delay your child's alcohol use, you will not be alone, as many other parents have made the same decision.

Talking openly with other parents about the importance of delaying young people's alcohol use will help to raise awareness and stimulate important discussions. You may be surprised how many other parents feel the same way!

Ongoing discussion with your child about alcohol is how you communicate your beliefs about alcohol and helps ensure they understand your expectations of their behaviour in relation to alcohol.

# QUESTIONS COMMONLY ASKED BY PARENTS

## **I DRANK ALCOHOL WHEN I WAS YOUNG AND I'M OKAY. SO WHY IS IT DIFFERENT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE NOW?**

We know a lot more about the harms associated with alcohol use than ever before, such as its impact on the developing brain and that alcohol is carcinogenic (causes cancer). It is important for parents to be aware of these risks so that they can discuss these with their children as they grow up.

We now know:

- The developing brain is particularly vulnerable to alcohol and can affect a young person's ability to learn, remember, think rationally, and regulate their emotions.
- Alcohol is classified as a Group 1 Carcinogen, the same as Asbestos and Tobacco.
- In the past two decades, alcohol has become more readily available. It comes in an increasing variety of forms, with some products tasting remarkably like soft drinks.
- Alcohol is cheaper and more affordable and with the arrival of social media is more prolifically promoted than in the past.
- Young people living in Australia now live in a culture in which many people have very relaxed views towards alcohol. Alcohol plays a part in many aspects of the Australian lifestyle such as socialising, celebrating, relaxing and commiserating. Alcohol is so much part of everyday life it is often not viewed as harmful, and this can encourage young people to drink at an earlier age to be part of the general drinking culture they see around them.

# QUESTIONS COMMONLY ASKED BY PARENTS

THE NEXT THREE QUESTIONS HAS THREE DIFFERENT ANSWERS.

## HOW CAN PARENTS INFLUENCE THE BEHAVIOUR AND CHOICES THAT THEIR CHILDREN MAKE ABOUT ALCOHOL?

### ANSWER 1

**Avoid providing alcohol to your children at home or to take to parties.**

- Children who are supplied alcohol by their parents for use without parental supervision are four times more likely to drink in a harmful way.
- If you are feeling pressured by your child or other parents, the NHMRC alcohol guidelines provide a clear message that for under 18s, no alcohol is the safest choice.

### ANSWER 2

**Discuss alcohol with your children from an early age and explain your expectations about alcohol.**

- If possible, start conversations about alcohol early in your child's life. This sets you up for easier discussions during teenage years and means they should already be aware of what your attitudes and expectations are about alcohol.
- Talk about the way alcohol is portrayed in the media and advertisements. Point out alcohol advertising and ask your child who they think the ad is targeting and why. Ask them what parts of the ad made them think it was aimed at the group they identified.
- Help them to think about the context the product (alcohol) is being portrayed in, and how this might make it appealing or desirable to them, or a particular age group.
- Explain the evidence about the harmful effects of alcohol on the body, particularly the effects on the developing brain.
- Discuss how other people's drinking might affect them and help them to develop responses, such as how to cope with pressure to drink, how to defuse aggression and how to avoid getting in a car with someone who has been drinking.

### ANSWER 3

**Be aware of places and situations where your children may be exposed to people drinking alcohol.**

- Research shows that children who are poorly monitored tend to drink more. Young people, who take up drinking at an earlier age, tend to drink more and are likely to develop harmful drinking patterns.
- Be sure that your child understands that they need to keep in touch with you about where they are, and to seek your permission to be there. Also, reach an agreement on what time they need to come home and what will happen if they break the rules.
- Talk to other parents and let them know that you do not want them to provide alcohol to your child under any circumstances. This is especially relevant when teenagers are going to friends' houses for parties.

# QUESTIONS COMMONLY ASKED BY PARENTS

## **MY CHILDREN ARE GOING TO START DRINKING SOONER OR LATER. ISN'T IT BETTER TO LET THEM DRINK AT HOME WHILE I SUPERVISE THEM?**

**There is no evidence to support parents introducing young people to alcohol in the home as a method of teaching responsible drinking.**

- In fact, starting drinking at an early age has been shown to increase the likelihood of alcohol-related problems later in life, as well as more regular consumption of alcohol and in greater quantities.
- Research shows that children of parents, who give permission to drink alcohol at home and provide alcohol, are associated with greater levels of adolescent alcohol use, heavy use, drunkenness, and intentions to drink. Children who have had sips of alcohol by age 11 (compared to those who have not sipped) are clearly associated with later alcohol use. Those who had sipped and then asked parents for a sip of their alcohol showed elevated alcohol use.
- The good news is that the number of young people who don't drink has increased. However, those who do drink are drinking at more harmful levels.
- There is strong evidence to support parents in delaying their child's alcohol use for as long as possible.
- The longer young people delay drinking, the less likely they are to develop problems with alcohol later on in life.

# USEFUL CONTACTS

# USEFUL CONTACTS

## **ALCOHOL.THINK AGAIN WEBSITE**

[www.alcoholthinkagain.com.au](http://www.alcoholthinkagain.com.au)

## **DRUG, ALCOHOL AND PREVENTION SERVICES DIVISION**

Mental Health Commission

7 Field Street

Mount Lawley WA 6050

Telephone: (08) 9370 0333

Fax: (08) 9272 6605

Website: [dao.health.wa.gov.au](http://dao.health.wa.gov.au)

## **SCHOOL DRUG EDUCATION AND ROAD AWARE (SDERA)**

33 Giles Street

Padbury WA 6026

Telephone: (08) 9402 6267

Fax: (08) 9402 6399

Email: [sdera.co@education.wa.edu.au](mailto:sdera.co@education.wa.edu.au)

Website: <http://www.det.wa.edu.au/sdera/detcms/portal/>

## **DEPARTMENT OF RACING, GAMING AND LIQUOR**

Level 1, 87 Adelaide Terrace

East Perth WA 6004

Telephone: (08) 9425 1888

Fax: (08) 9325 1041

Email: [rgl@rgl.wa.gov.au](mailto:rgl@rgl.wa.gov.au)

Website: <http://www.rgl.wa.gov.au/>

## **ALCOHOL AND DRUG SUPPORT LINE**

For anyone concerned about their own or another person's alcohol use or drug use. A 24-hour, state-wide, confidential telephone service.

Telephone: (08) 9442 5000

Toll free (country callers only): 1800 198 024

Email: [alcoholdrugsupport@mhc.wa.gov.au](mailto:alcoholdrugsupport@mhc.wa.gov.au)

## **PARENT AND FAMILY DRUG SUPPORT LINE**

For anyone concerned about a loved one's alcohol or drug use. A 24-hour, state-wide, confidential telephone service.

Telephone: (08) 9442 5050

Toll free (country callers only): 1800 653 203

Email: [alcoholdrugsupport@mhc.wa.gov.au](mailto:alcoholdrugsupport@mhc.wa.gov.au)

## **WORKING AWAY ALCOHOL & DRUG SUPPORT LINE**

Supporting the health and wellbeing of working away from home communities.

A 24-hour, state-wide, confidential telephone service.

Telephone: 1800 721 997

Email: [workingaway@mhc.wa.gov.au](mailto:workingaway@mhc.wa.gov.au)

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