



December 16, 2008

Dear Eckstein Parents/Guardians,

Attached is the second **Eckstein Drug Free Homes Parent Pledge's resource guide**. It includes:

- Why Talking Is Not Enough
- Laws About Serving Alcohol to Minors
- So Your Child Is Giving/Going to a Party . . .
- Tips for Keeping Your Child Drug & Alcohol Free
- Signs of Potential Alcohol or Drug Use Among Youth

The resource guide is part of the Drug Free Homes Pledge & Directory. By signing the Drug Free Homes Pledge, parents/guardians let other Eckstein families know that they intend to supervise their child's social gatherings in their homes to ensure that they are alcohol and drug free. It also indicates that they can be contacted by other parents about parties and get-togethers. This pledge sends a clear message that as parents and as a community we believe that underage drinking and drug use is unacceptable.*

In addition to the pledge, the Northeast Seattle Coalition to Prevent Underage Drinking supports parents by offering *free* Guiding Good Choices parenting workshops in partnership with the University Family YMCA and Children's Hospital. Visit www.PreventionWorksInSeattle.org for information about these workshops that teach parents/guardians how to prevent underage drinking and substance abuse among their children.

For more information about the coalition and its activities, visit www.PreventionWorksInSeattle.org or contact Inga Manskopf at 206-252-5010 or inmanskopf@seattleschools.org.

Sincerely,

Carolyn

Carolyn Bernhard
Pledge Workgroup Chairperson

Inga

Inga Manskopf
Coalition Coordinator

* Only families who signed the pledge receive the directory section. Please note that if a family is not listed in the directory, it does not necessarily mean they do not support the pledge.

*Northeast Seattle Coalition
to Prevent Underage Drinking*

Eckstein Middle School
Drug Free Homes
Parent Pledge & Directory

2008-09



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Introduction

The goal of the **Drug Free Homes Parent Pledge & Directory** is to build a communication network among the parents of Eckstein Middle School students to

- reduce the use of alcohol and other drugs
- and foster a positive social environment for northeast Seattle youth.

As students enter middle school, it is common for parents in a large school like ours not to know their children's friends and their families well. By signing the Drug Free Homes Pledge, parents are letting other Eckstein families know that they intend to supervise social gatherings in their homes to try to make sure youth parties and get-togethers are alcohol and drug free. It also indicates that they can be contacted by other parents.

To the best of our knowledge, all the families listed in this guide have asked to be included because they are committed to not allowing the illegal use of alcohol/drugs in their homes now, even if they have done so in the past.

The Northeast Seattle Coalition to Prevent Underage Drinking can not guarantee this information. Personal telephone calls to the host parents are still vital to confirm social plans. By signing the Drug Free Homes Pledge, parents are indicating that they recognize that communication among parents is essential to the effectiveness of the Drug Free Homes network.

Parent Pledge

By signing the Drug Free Homes Parent Pledge , parents make an effort to uphold the following:

- **I /we will actively supervise all gatherings or parties of youth in our home or on our property, or ask another responsible adult for help to do so.**
- **I /we will not allow the possession or use of alcohol, marijuana, other drugs, or violence by youth in our home or on our property.**
- **I /we will set expectations for my/our child(ren) that I /we know where they are going, whom they are with, what their plans are, and when they are to return home.**

This pledge is NOT a legally binding contract, but rather an agreement between the parents in this network.

FAQ

1. Why should I sign a pledge?

Signing the pledge is a way of letting other parents know that you support the ideas in the pledge and are making efforts to uphold it. The pledge is NOT a legally binding contract. As a parent, you cannot control absolutely everything related to your children, but you can demonstrate your commitment to the pledge ideas and encourage other parents to do so.

2. I've looked at the list and I know there are people on there who have served minors in the past. What does that mean for the network?

The Drug Free Homes parent network welcomes all parents who are committed to making the effort to ensure a safe social environment for local youth. We assume that anyone who signs on is doing so in good faith, with the intention of upholding the pledge now, even if they may have made other decisions in the past.

Survey Says . . .

Throughout this guide, you will notice boxes with results from a community-wide parent survey completed by the NE Seattle Coalition to Prevent Underage Drinking in the spring of 2008.

3. If I sign the pledge and youth drink at my house without my knowledge, will I be removed from this list?

No, the pledge is there to support parents in their efforts, not to punish them. We hope that if something like this happens, you will be able to turn to other network parents for support and to help you in working to ensure that teen social gatherings at your house are substance free.

4. If I sign the pledge, does that mean that I cannot drink at home?

No, this is not the intent of the Drug Free Homes pledge.

It is, however, important for parents to model appropriate behavior (not necessarily abstinence) to their children. This includes showing that adults of legal drinking age may drink moderately, if they choose. Think carefully about how your behavior will be perceived by your children. Make sure you communicate that the drinking age exists to postpone use of alcohol by young people until they reach an age when they are less likely to develop a drinking problem. It is also important to show that excessive drinking is not appropriate at any age.

More FAQ on next page . . .

More FAQ

5. What happens if my child is going to someone's house who is not on the list?

You are encouraged to contact that family anyway. See if your child can get a phone number for you or look in the Eckstein Family Directory. Just because they are not listed does not mean they do not support the pledge.

6. What if young people are at my house socializing and they want to stay up later than I can? Can I go to sleep and let them stay up?

The best solution is for you or another trusted adult to stay up as long as there are young people at your house, especially when you are less familiar with the kids attending. It is important to agree in advance with your child about how late you want friends to stay, and then be awake to stick to it when the time comes. To be able to provide late night supervision, getting some extra rest before the gathering and planning a restful day for yourself afterwards may be helpful.

Most parents in NE Seattle . . .

90% of parents do not think it is okay for teenagers to drink at parties even if they don't get drunk.

Health Consequences

A person who begins drinking before the age of 15 is more than five times more likely to develop alcohol dependency than someone who waits until after age 21 to use alcohol.

Every year after age 15 that a young person delays use of alcohol reduces his/her risk of dependency by 14%.

Teens who drink alcohol are at higher risk for other drug use; damage to property; use of weapons; physical and verbal violence; alcohol poisoning; inappropriate social behavior; and risky sexual contact.

Sexual activity under the influence of alcohol or other drugs is most often unprotected, increasing the risk of unwanted pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.

Youth can suffer an alcohol overdose more easily than adults. Even though a child may have the same blood alcohol content as an adult, the young person is far less likely to feel the effects of intoxication than an adult would. Because they don't feel impaired when intoxicated, they are more likely to keep drinking longer than adults, thereby increasing their risk of overdose.

The Law: Serving Alcohol to Minors

Criminal Liability

In Washington, it is a crime to commit the following:

It is unlawful for any person to sell, give, or otherwise supply liquor to any person under the age of twenty-one years or permit any person under that age to consume liquor on his or her premises or on any premises under his or her control.

It is unlawful for any person under the age of twenty-one years to possess, consume, or otherwise acquire any liquor.

It is unlawful for a person under the age of twenty-one years to be in a public place, or to be in a motor vehicle in a public place, while exhibiting the effects of having consumed liquor.

These offenses are punishable by up to a year in jail and a \$5,000 fine.

Offering youth alcohol . . .

More than 90% of parents say that it is never okay for parents to offer teenagers, other than their own children, alcohol in their home.

Legal consequences . . .

63% of parents agree that courts should give strong consequences to teenagers caught drinking.

In addition, there are numerous potential crimes that may also be associated with alcohol. For instance, if a minor is found driving and has a BAC between .02-.08, the crime is punishable by a maximum 90 days jail and a \$1,000 fine. If over .08, it is punishable up to a year in jail and a \$5,000 fine. Of course, there are also severe licensing consequences, insurance ramifications, and other financial consequences for any DUI offense. Parents or other adults could be held criminally liable for these offenses under a theory of "accomplice liability", even though they were not driving.

Civil Liability

If an adult gives or allows alcohol to be consumed by anyone under 21, including one's own child, and that person causes personal injury or property damages, the adult and minor are both civilly liable for financial damages. Therefore, if there is a party with alcohol in your home, even if you are unaware of it, you are responsible for injuries and damages.

Your child is going to a party?

Call the host

- Make sure the host parents will be home all evening and that no tobacco, alcohol, or drugs will be allowed.
- Let the host parent know your child's transportation plans.

Check party plans beforehand

- Know where your child is going and with whom.
- When taking your child to a party, wait to see that she or he is inside the house.
- If you don't know the host parents, introduce yourself.

In the event that alcohol or other drugs find their way into the party

- Make it easy for your child to leave; pre-arrange for them to call you (or a designated adult) for a ride home.
- Establish a code word with your child in case she or he needs to leave without letting peers know.
- You might have an understanding that there will be no punishment for a call about things getting out of hand.
- Remind your child that friendship includes dissuading friends from drinking and driving.

Be up to greet your child when she/he comes home from the party.

Your child is giving a party?

Plan in advance

- Limit the number of guests by invitation only.
- Know how your guests are getting home

Set a time limit

- Make sure everyone knows clearly what time the party is ending so that they have their rides there on time.

Agree to rules ahead of time, for example:

- No drugs, alcohol, or tobacco
- No leaving the party and returning
- No gate-crashing allowed
- Lights on and doors open
- Some rooms of the house are off limits

Invite another parent over

- Other adults are company for you during a long evening and can help with problems.
- Invite parents who call regarding party plans to stop and introduce themselves that night.
- If parents have driven young people to your house, consider inviting them in to meet you.
- When supervising a youth party, set the example that you can enjoy an evening without drugs and alcohol.
- Circulate through party rooms frequently.

Stay home for the entire party.

Be visible and be aware.

Signs of Potential Alcohol or Drug Use Among Youth

Observations of one or two of these signs during a short period should not cause panic. If several of these signs persist and the young person resists discussing your concerns, this may indicate a problem.

- Significant changes in friends
- Loss of respect for self and others
- Loss of self control
- Negative changes in schoolwork, missing school, or declining grades
- Increased secrecy or lying about possessions or activities
- Use of incense, room deodorant, or perfume to hide smoke or chemical odors
- Subtle changes in conversations with friends, e.g. more secretive, using "coded" language
- Change in clothing choices: new fascination with styles that highlight drug use
- Increased borrowing or stealing of money
- Evidence of drug paraphernalia such as pipes, rolling papers, etc.
- Evidence of use of inhalant products, such as hairsprays, nail polish, correction fluid, common household products – rags and paper bags are sometimes used for this purpose
- Bottle of eye drops, which may be used to disguise bloodshot eyes or dilated pupils

Breaking up parties . . .

96% of parents agree/strongly agree that police should break up teen parties that occur in outdoor locations, such as parks, when youth are drinking alcohol.

- Use of mouthwash or breath mints to cover up the smell of alcohol
- Missing prescription drugs, especially narcotics and mood stabilizers

Tips for Keeping Your Child Drug and Alcohol Free

Most children spend most of their time doing positive, constructive activities. Many young people, however, only get attention when they have done something wrong. Show your child you recognize their positive efforts through words, a note, telling someone else so they can hear you, a special meal, etc.

Even though schedules are busy, work around them to schedule family time. Play a game, watch a movie, talk, or have dinner. This way, if your child needs to talk to you, s(he) will have casual opportunities to do so.

Talk to your child to set rules about using alcohol and drugs that you agree upon and think are fair and reasonable. Let your child know the consequences of breaking the rules, and enforce the rules you set.

Know where your child is and what he/she is doing. Make sure to know where she/he hangs out and that there is appropriate supervision.

Check on your child. Don't rely on cell phones as a way of knowing your child's location. Get the land line number at the house where they are going. Make sure cell phones are on. Learn how to text message. Be sure to tell teens that they can call or text you any time and you will pick them up. Be sure that your child knows the consequences of their actions and how you would feel (sad, scared, disappointed) if he/she was involved in any alcohol or drug related accident. Give examples of scenarios to think about (like if they are drinking and became involved in a serious accident.)

Know your child's friends and their parents. Make sure your they know the rules in your house and ask them about their rules.

Sometimes young people need an excuse to help them stay away from risky situations. Some ideas:

- "I like you but it makes me uncomfortable to be around you when you use alcohol/drugs."
- "My parents promised to _____ if I don't use until after I graduate."
- "I could get kicked off the team if anyone found out."
- "Can't do it. Gotta get home."

Start talking now . . .

More than 80% of parents with children over the age of 9 have specific rules about children not using alcohol.

Need More Information?

Northeast Seattle Coalition to Prevent Underage Drinking

www.PreventionWorksInSeattle.org

- links to parenting & prevention websites
- information on local parenting resources
- information on what you can do to prevent underage drinking in our community

SCHOOL RESOURCES

Prevention-Intervention Specialist

Christine Talianis

cmtalianis@seattleschools.org

206-252-5010

Eckstein Head Guidance Counselor

Reema Ziadeh

raziadeh@seattleschools.org

206-252-5010

PHONE NUMBERS

For Adults

Alcohol/Drug 24 hour hotline: 722-3700

For Teens

Teen Line: 206-722-4222

Teen Link (Crisis Clinic): 206-461-4922

Monitoring youth . . .

91% of parents always ask who their children are going to be with when they go out on the weekend.

Northeast Seattle Coalition to Prevent Underage Drinking

Mission

The mission of the Northeast Seattle Coalition to Prevent underage drinking is to prevent underage drinking, substance use, and associated problems through education, advocacy, and networking with students, families, and the community.

Prevention Programs

Life Skills Training at Eckstein Middle School

Guiding Good Choices parenting workshops in partnership with Children's Hospital; University Family YMCA; and Seattle Public Schools

Drug Free Homes Parent Pledge & Directory

Media Advocacy Campaign

Website

www.PreventionWorksInSeattle.org

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