

Dear fellow Waldorf Parents and Guardians,

This letter is to ask your assistance in fostering the greatest health and development of our children, by helping them to avoid using alcohol and drugs.

The research into the effects of alcohol and drugs on young people is clear. The National Institutes of Health has found that people who start drinking early in life are more likely to show later signs of alcohol dependence, and potential cognitive or learning problems, since young people's brains continue to develop until well into their 20s. Young people under the influence of alcohol or drugs are more likely to carry out or be the victim of physical and sexual assault, and to make poorer decisions about behavior like drinking and driving, and sexual activity (including unprotected sex). Teens who use marijuana regularly tend to do worse in school and are more prone to have difficulty with learning and problem-solving later in life. And alcohol is a factor in more than 4,300 deaths of people under age 21 each year, according to the Centers for Disease Control.

It is your right and responsibility to make sure your children know your values, and to guide them toward healthy decision-making, especially in relationship to drugs and alcohol. Conversely, it is your responsibility to respect the decisions that other families have made, as well as to respect the law. Whatever those decisions might be, it remains illegal in California for people under the age of 21 to consume alcohol or marijuana. Parents or legal guardians who knowingly permit minors to drink alcohol or use drugs in their homes can be charged with a misdemeanor, and serving alcohol to people under 21 can result in civil and criminal liabilities.

The following guidelines are meant to help parents navigate this terrain. They were created by the parents at the San Francisco Waldorf High School, for the parents at the San Francisco Waldorf High School, and are not the result of official school policy. They focus on social gatherings, not on individual parenting decisions, and are intended to provide a framework in which students can have fun together and parents can feel secure that their teens are well taken care and supported by the school community of parents.

**Be clear with yourselves and your children about your values as they concern alcohol and drugs. Be clear about your boundaries, and be clear about the consequences of ignoring or crossing those boundaries. The more your teens know and understand your values, the more likely they are to respect them.**

**Don't permit those under 21 to use alcohol or drugs at your home, or at other social gatherings you may be hosting. This is not only illegal, but can leave you exposed to criminal and civil liabilities as well.**

**Act assertively to keep teenagers from driving while under the influence of alcohol or drugs, call their parents, and do what you can to assist them in getting home safely.**

**Contact parents if you observe that their child is impaired by the use of drugs or alcohol, and be receptive to reports from other parents about your child .**

**Contact parents if you learn there's a social gathering taking place at their home when no parent will be present, and at which alcohol and drugs will be available.**

**Be open to discussing social gatherings taking place at your home or elsewhere, at which parents are concerned that alcohol or drugs may be available.**

**Treat all parent-to-parent conversations on these topics as confidential, and do not share them with your children.**

For more information:

<https://www.cdc.gov/alcohol/fact-sheets/underage-drinking.htm>

<https://www.cdc.gov/marijuana/factsheets/teens.htm>

[https://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/underagedrinking/Underage\\_Fact.pdf](https://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/underagedrinking/Underage_Fact.pdf)