

WACONIA SCHOOL DISTRICT 110



PARENT TOOLKIT

**Useful tools to help parents and
caring adults keep teenagers healthy,
safe and substance abuse free**

Sponsored by the Waconia HERO Coalition
in collaboration with Waconia School District 110

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PREFACE

It is our sincere hope that using the tools in this booklet will make a positive impact on all children in our community. The issue of chemical use by students is a shared responsibility of family, school and community. Our goal in creating this booklet is to give parents and caring adults of teenagers some concrete tools and information that can be used to help keep our kids healthy, safe, and free from substance abuse.

Every child and family is unique. We realize that a tool that works for one child may not necessarily be appropriate for another. Choose tools that work with your family and will support the goals you are trying to accomplish.

Together we can make a difference!



WHY ADOLESCENT SUBSTANCE ABUSE IS SO DANGEROUS

While we may not have realized it 30 years ago, adolescent substance abuse is associated with serious health consequences. According to recent research, teens who choose to use illegal substances may face:

Brain Damage

- The brain goes through dynamic change during adolescence, and alcohol can seriously damage long- and short-term growth processes. Frontal lobe development and the refinement of pathways and connections continue through the late teens or early twenties. Damage from alcohol at this time can be long-term and irreversible. In addition, short-term or moderate drinking impairs learning and memory far more in youth than in adults. (American Medical Association website)
- The feelings and impaired behavior that signal intoxication in the adult brain are delayed in the adolescent brain. This can lead to overconsumption and even alcohol poisoning, which is potentially fatal.
- An adolescent brain that is exposed to alcohol and other chemicals is more susceptible to depression and other mental illnesses.

Alcohol/Drug-Related Teen Deaths

- Alcohol/drug use is associated with the leading causes of death among young people, including car crashes, suicide, homicide, alcohol poisoning and drug overdoses.
- A 16-year-old is more likely to die from an alcohol-related incident than from any other cause.

Increased Risk for Sexual Violence, Sexually-Transmitted Diseases and Unintended Pregnancy

- Alcohol/drug use (by perpetrator, victim, or both) is heavily implicated in cases of date rape and sexual assault among teens and college students.

- Adolescents (ages 15 and older) who consume alcohol are seven times more likely to have sexual intercourse and twice as likely to have four or more sexual partners than non-drinking teens. Research shows they are also more likely to have unprotected sex, risking sexually-transmitted diseases and pregnancy.

Increased Risk for Alcoholism and Drug Addiction

- A study by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism offers scientific validation that young people who began drinking before age 15 are four times more likely to develop alcoholism than those who began drinking at age 21 or later.
- Current research explains that areas of an adolescent's brain that control impulsive behavior are not fully developed, yet circuits that reinforce the effect of chemical use are already operating in high gear. This puts young people who experiment even briefly with alcohol, drugs, and tobacco at greater risk of becoming addicted.



Every day that teenagers choose to not use illegal substances improves their chances of avoiding alcohol, drug, or tobacco addiction and helps to prevent many irreversible consequences of abusing chemical substances.

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS OF TEEN SUBSTANCE ABUSE?

Physical Signs

- Smell of alcohol, marijuana, or tobacco
- Slurred speech, impaired coordination, disorientation
- Red, glassy eyes or dilated pupils
- Vomiting or shakes
- Extremely difficult to awaken
- Respiratory or digestive problems
- Physical injuries
- Marked change in weight and/or appetite
- Excessive yawning and sleepiness, change in sleep patterns
- Memory lapses and/or concentration difficulties

Behavioral Signs

- Curfew violations and/or constant defiance of rules
- Excessive or last-minute requests to sleep at a friend's house
- Frequent use of eye drops and breath mints
- Withdrawal from family and/or friends
- Pronounced mood swings; increased irritability and/or hostile outbursts
- Changes in friends and/or extracurricular activities
- Tardiness, truancy at school
- Decreased academic performance
- Changes in personal appearance (e.g., dress, hygiene, grooming)
- Overly preoccupied with privacy or secrecy; lying
- Suspected of vandalism and/or stealing
- Talks positively about alcohol or drug use
- Unexplained cash supply or expensive items, which could indicate dealing/selling

Other Indicators

- Alcohol, medications, money or valuables missing
- Alcohol or drug paraphernalia stashed in pockets, drawers, etc. (e.g., a medicine bottle prescribed to another person; empty alcohol containers, baggies, light bulbs, aerosol cans; tweezers, matches and lighters)
- Over-the-counter medications in adolescent's possession (e.g., Robitussin, Nyquil)

Parents, if you have suspicion or evidence that something is wrong, it probably is. You don't need "proof" to take action. Trust your instincts! Please contact the WHS Chemical Health Specialist in the guidance office (952-442-0676) for a consultation to discuss options and get advice. This is a confidential conversation. Refer to page 21 for more resources.



WHAT ARE THE SIGNS OF TEEN DEPRESSION?

It is estimated that 65–75% of teens who abuse substances have coexisting depression, anxiety disorders or other mental illnesses.

Signs That May Be Associated with Depression in Adolescents

Although it is common for teens to experience frequent mood swings, your teen may be experiencing a form of depression, especially if the following clusters of thoughts, feelings and behaviors persist for two weeks or longer. Prompt identification and treatment of depression can reduce its duration and severity.

- Sadness that won't go away
- Sullen, silent, withdrawn behavior
- Persistent “boredom”
- Frequent vague, non-specific physical complaints such as headaches, muscle aches, stomachaches or tiredness
- Frequent absences from school or poor performance in school
- Talk of or efforts to run away from home
- Outbursts of shouting, complaining, or crying
- Unexplained irritability, anger, hostility; reckless or rebellious behavior
- Alcohol or substance abuse
- Extreme sensitivity to rejection or failure
- Feelings of hopelessness/worthlessness
- Changes in eating or sleeping habits
- Lack of interest in hanging out with friends, loss of interest in activities
- Social isolation, poor communication, difficulty with relationships
- Recurring thoughts of death or suicide

Adapted from U.S. Department of Health and Human Services publication

WHS/LEGAL CONSEQUENCES FOR STUDENT CHEMICAL SUBSTANCE ABUSE

The following section is intended to give parents an overview of policies/procedures regarding chemical substance violations. You may contact the WHS Activities Director (952-442-0683) for further clarification of the Minnesota State High School League Policy on consequences for chemical substance use. Contact your local sheriff/police department for clarification on law enforcement policy and procedures.

General Policy

All students in the Waconia School District are strictly prohibited from possessing, using or distributing chemical substances and/or related paraphernalia, including the misuse of prescription drugs and non-prescription medications/products.

Chemical substances include:

Tobacco, alcohol, illegal drugs, prescription drugs without a physician's order or used incorrectly, and all over-the-counter drugs or household products that are misused in order to cause mind-altering effects. Minors are in violation of the law if any of the above substances are used, distributed, or are in their possession.

If parents have suspicions or evidence that their child may be involved with chemicals, they are strongly encouraged to:

- Contact the WHS Chemical Health Counselor (952-442-0683) for a consultation to discuss options and get advice. This is a confidential conversation.
- Parents do NOT need proof to take action. Trust your instincts!

If law enforcement cites a student off-campus for the possession and/or use of illegal substances:

- Student will face consequences from law enforcement.
- As required by law, police will notify WHS administration (principal, school resource officer, guidance counselor, and activities director) of a student's

chemical substance violation (with the exception of tobacco-related incidents, which are not reported to the school).

- Student/parent conferences may take place with the Chemical Health Counselor.
- No suspensions or expulsions will occur.
- As mandated by Minnesota State High School League and Waconia Public School Board policies, co-curricular activity consequences for chemical violations will be enforced if eligibility has been granted when the student registered for an activity.

If school officials cite a student for possessing, using, or distributing chemical substances in or on school property, on school or activity buses, or off school property while participating in a school-related activity (e.g., prom, field trips, away games, etc.), the following consequences will be enforced for all chemical substance-related citations:

- Notification to parent/guardian, WHS principal, school resource officer, guidance counselor, and activities director.
- Legal action may be taken.
- School academic consequences (Waconia School District Chemical Use Policy):
 1. Immediate suspension or possible expulsion. Expulsion or length of suspension is dependent on the chemical, severity and number of offenses.
 2. Student, parent, principal and chemical health counselor conference.
 3. Possible chemical health counselor screening interview followed by recommendations (for chemical-related citations).
- Co-curricular activity consequences (athletic, enrichment, intramural, and club activities)
 - 1st offense:** no participation for 2 events or 2 weeks, whichever is greater.
 - 2nd offense:** no participation for 6 events or 3 weeks, whichever is greater.
 - 3rd offense:** no participation for 12 events or 4 weeks, whichever is greater.

IMPORTANT TOOLS TO KEEP YOUR TEENAGERS SAFE WHEN THEY GO OUT

- Curfew. Set and consistently enforce curfew times. Refer to the chart on page 13 for the Hennepin and Carver County curfews. This law applies year round.
- Be awake and interact with your children when they come home.
- Clearly tell your children (every time they go out!) your expectations that they not use illegal substances. Statistics tell us that the #1 reason kids choose to refrain from illegal substance use is because they don't want to disappoint their parents.
- Talk to your children in advance about situations that may arise around alcohol, drugs, and tobacco.
- In order to remove themselves from uncomfortable situations, give your children permission to use you as their “scapegoat” to their peers.
- Offer your children a safe ride home if they are ever in a situation that threatens their safety. Assure them that no questions will be asked until you can have a calm and caring discussion regarding that situation.
- Remove or keep alcohol in a locked area of your home to avoid temptation for your children or your children's friends.
- Get to know your children's friends and their parents. Kids have a hotline of communication – develop a network among the parents, as well. Learn about the Safe Homes pledge on page 18.
- Establish clear “sleepover” rules or ban sleepovers altogether. Teens will often spend the night away from home if they plan to use illegal substances.
- Tell your child you will be checking up on their plans, and then do it... “Truth through verification.”

CURFEW INFORMATION

It's the Law!

Curfew for Juveniles in Hennepin and Carver Counties

Age	Weekdays	Friday and Saturday
Under 12	Home by 9:00	Home by 10:00
12-14	Home by 10:00	Home by 11:00
15-17	Home by 11:00	Home by midnight

The curfew law applies year round.

"We have to stay connected with our kids. Whether or not they ever get involved with alcohol or drugs, adolescents need to know that their parents know about and care about what goes on in their lives."

—David Walsh, Ph.D.



PARENT/CHILD CONTRACT TO ABSTAIN FROM SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Purpose

The parent/child contract is a tool to provide an incentive for your teenager to avoid substance abuse, or to terminate substance abuse behaviors if they are already occurring.

- A formal contract helps clearly define your mutual expectations for abstinence from substance abuse and outlines consequences for chemical use.
- Once the contract is initiated, any substance abuse brings your child into violation of the contract.

Why Do Parent/Child Contracts Work?

Teenagers tend to believe that they have absolute power and control over their world. When they work with you to develop a contract, they generally sign it out of a sincere belief that they are in control of their chemical use.

- If they are able to refrain from chemical use, the contract has worked.
- If they are unable to refrain from chemical use, then the contract works by revealing their denial about chemical use.

Important Contract Guidelines for Parents

- Keep your contract simple. It only needs to contain four elements:
 1. Date of agreement
 2. Clear expectation of the child abstaining from all substance abuse
 3. Clear consequences for violation of contract
 4. Signatures of all parties agreeing to contract
- Follow through with the consequences of the contract.
- Use a business-like approach to the contracting process.

Action Steps for Creating a Parent/Child Contract

Before beginning the contract process with your child:

1. List all possible consequences if your teen violates the contract.
2. List all the reasons you would follow through with the consequences.
3. List the reasons your child would give for not wanting to agree to abstain from substance abuse or refusing to sign the contract. What will you do if your child refuses to sign a contract agreeing to be free from substance abuse?
4. Make an appointment to meet with your child in a place free from distractions (e.g., TV, phone, friends, siblings, etc.). Allow an hour for this process.

As you begin the contract process:

5. Clearly outline your position on substance abuse and share your honest concerns with your child.
6. Tell your children that you will always give them a safe, calm ride home with no discussion or questions until the following day.
7. Ask your children to name other caring adults in their life that they believe would help them if asked.
8. Write out the contract with your child. The goal of the contract is not to make them feel trapped, but rather, to let them make choices, knowing what the consequences will be if they choose substance abuse behaviors.
9. Make one copy of the contract for you and one for your child. You must both sign the copies. Give your child a copy at the end of your meeting.
10. DISENGAGE! Don't bring up other issues. Once the contract has been signed, the meeting is over. Back off and let the contract take effect.

Action steps following the contract process:

- Do not lecture about the contract. Constant reference to the contract will build anger and resentment in your child.
- Monitor your child's behavior and activities.
- If your intuition tells you something is wrong, it probably is. There is no need to wait for proof. Trust your instincts. Act now!

- Enforce the contract. If your child violates the contract, enforce the consequences immediately! Do not allow your child to renegotiate the terms after the contract has been violated.
- Use escalating consequences. Start with one of the least-severe consequences and increase severity as necessary. If the contract is violated and a consequence has been instituted, then negotiate a new contract with a more severe consequence.

Sample Consequences

(choose consequences that are meaningful to your child)

- Lose use of car, cell phone, TV, iPod, video games, computer, etc.
- Earlier curfew time
- Grounding from going out with friends or having friends visit
- Get a chemical dependency evaluation
- Participate in random drug testing
- Participate in a drug education program
- Participate in a chemical dependency treatment program
- Resign from extra-curricular activities
- Lose driver's license
- Parent will turn child in to school or police

The #1 reason kids choose to refrain from illegal substance use is because they don't want to disappoint their parents. Talk to your kids today!



Examples of Parent/Child Contracts

Date: _____

By signing this contract, I (*teen's name*) _____
agree to remain alcohol, tobacco, and drug-free. If I violate this contract,
I agree to (*insert consequence here*) _____

Signature of Teen

Signature of Parent

Date: _____

By signing this contract, I (*teen's name*) _____
agree to the following:

1. To remain alcohol, tobacco, and drug-free.
2. To not be present at or leave parties or other gatherings where alcohol, tobacco, and drugs are being used or sold.
3. To call you, or another caring adult, for a ride home if I am ever in a situation that threatens my safety, and we will defer discussion about that situation until both of us can have a calm and caring conversation. Besides you, I feel comfortable calling the following person(s):

If I violate this contract, I agree to (*insert consequence here*) _____

Signature of Teen

Signature of Parent

SAFE HOMES

What is “Safe Homes”?

Safe Homes is a parent pledge program. The pledge states:

- I will not serve nor will I knowingly allow anyone under the legal drinking age to consume alcohol in my home or on my property.
- I will not knowingly allow substance abuse or possession of illegal substances in my home or on my property.
- I will not knowingly allow parties or gatherings in my home without proper, responsible adult supervision.
- I will establish a clear “family position” on substance abuse and discuss this position with my child(ren) on a regular basis.
- I will support the WHS prevention curriculum and school discipline policies relating to substance abuse among our youth.

Parental responsibility when hosting a youth party or gathering:

- Be a visible host. Tell guests who choose to leave the activity that they may not return.
- Encourage “by invitation only” gatherings to avoid party crashers.
- Call the parents of anyone who appears to be under the influence or is in possession of illegal substances.
- Call appropriate law enforcement, if necessary. Do not allow anyone under the influence to go home alone or to drive.

Suggested parental responsibility when your child is invited to an activity:

- Call the adult in charge of the activity to verify the occasion, location, and that there will be appropriate adult supervision. Confirm that the use of illegal substances will not be allowed at this event.
- If the activity seems inappropriate, express your concern, keep your teenager home, and seek an alternate activity.
- Your job is to parent, not to be your child’s “best friend.”

SAFE HOMES Pledge Card Example

Take a stand... make the pledge!

- I will not serve nor will I knowingly allow anyone under the legal drinking age to consume alcohol in my home or on my property.
- I will not knowingly allow substance abuse or possession of illegal substances in my home or on my property.
- I will not knowingly allow parties or gatherings in my home without proper, responsible adult supervision.
- I will establish a clear “family position” on substance abuse and discuss this position with my child(ren) on a regular basis.
- I will support the WHS prevention curriculum and school discipline policies relating to substance abuse among our youth.

Signature of Parent _____

Date _____

COMMUNICATION IDEAS

Parent-to-Parent

Communication is a key protective factor in keeping your teen safe. At the next football game, during intermission at the school play, or at other shared events, strike up a conversation with another parent about a teen issue. Be prepared to call the parents in your teen's prom group or homecoming group to set guidelines.

The following real-life situations can trigger parent-to-parent conversations about typical teen issues that are not always easy to work out.

- Your teen's friendship group is going to Mexico for spring break and your teen insists it is okay because several parents are chaperoning... from a different hotel down the street.
- You hear about a drinking party your child attended. You call the host parents and they say they provided alcohol, but it was okay because they took the kids' car keys.
- It is thirty minutes before curfew, and your child calls to ask permission to stay over at a friend's house instead of coming home.
- Your child says she is absolutely not going on the annual family ski trip because "it's lame and I can't stand being cooped up with the family for a week!"

Family Dinner

The family dinner is a time when relationships are affirmed, the news of the day is shared, and coming events are discussed – a reconnection with those we most care about. "Mealtime is often the only time in the whole day when everybody's in the same room having a conversation," says William Doherty, Ph.D., author of *The Intentional Family* (Addison Wesley Longman, 1997). Even if it is not every day, sharing meals with your teens shows them they are important to you and that you care about their life.

RESOURCES FOR TEENAGERS AND FAMILIES

Waconia High School

Main Office	952-442-0670
Activities/Wildcat Hotline	952-442-0678
WHS Attendance Line	952-442-0680
Guidance Office (academic help, counselor)	952-442-0683
School Resource Officer	952-442-0656
Health Office/School Nurse	952-442-0674
Social Worker/Student Support Services	952-442-0670

Waconia School District 110

Waconia District 110 Website	www.waconia.k12.mn.us
Waconia District 110 Office	952-442-0600
Waconia HERO Coalition	www.herocoalition.org 952-442-0699 ext. 4248
Parent Education/Community Ed	952-442-0610
Transportation Office (Busing)	952-442-3370

Law Enforcement Serving Families Within the Waconia School District

Carver County Sheriff	952-361-1212
Chaska Police Department	952-448-4200
Minnetrista Police Dept.	952-446-1131
Central Dispatch for the Cities of Deephaven, Excelsior, Greenwood, Shorewood, Tonka Bay, Woodland	763-525-6210

Information/Referral Services

Acute Psychiatric Services (Hennepin County Medical Center, Minneapolis)	612-873-3161
First Call for Help—United Way	211
National Drug/Alcohol Help Line	1-800-821-4357

Crisis Help

Emergency	911
Canvas Health's Crisis Connection (24 hours)	612-379-6363 or 1-866-379-6363
Suicide Prevention	952-347-2222
The Bridge for Youth Southwest – Chanhassen www.bridgeforyouth.org/find-help/emergency-services/ West 78th Street and Hazeltine Boulevard in Chanhassen	612-400-SAFE

Mental/Chemical Health Assessment, Counseling and Treatment

First Street Mental Health	952-442-4437
Hazelden – Addiction Treatment Center, Chaska	952-679-2920
Minnesota Monitoring, Inc. (Drug Testing Center), Golden Valley	763-253-5410
New Connections (Outpatient Adolescent Chemical Dependency Treatment, Counseling, and Drug Testing Center), Minnetonka	952-941-5151
RELATE Counseling Center, Eden Prairie	952-932-7277

Additional Agencies/Support Groups/Websites

Al-Anon/Alateen	952-920-3961 www.al-anon.alateen.org
Alcoholics Anonymous	952-922-0880 www.aa.org
The Anti-Drug	www.antidrug.com
The Bridge for Runaway Youth	612-377-8800
Hazelden Center for Youth & Family	www.hazelden.org
Waconia Parent Education	952-442-0613 waconiaces.new.rschoolday.com/page/2526
Narcotics Anonymous	952-939-3939 www.na.org
National Institute of Drug Abuse	www.nida.nih.gov
National Institute of Mental Health	www.nimh.nih.gov
West Suburban Teen Clinic	952-474-3251

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING OUR CHILDREN AND COMMUNITY!

–HERO Coalition & Waconia School District 110



Helping create a community where all youth are valued, celebrated and empowered for living healthy, substance abuse-free lives.

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