

Thoughts on Drugs and Alcohol Use

Dear Parents:

In this letter we would like to highlight the important work we continue to do in order to help young people deal with the issues presented by underage drug and alcohol use. Research continues to show definitively that underage drug and alcohol use negatively affects brain development and learning capacity, and increases the probability of dependency as an adult. Newer and ongoing research also highlights concerns about the potency and proliferation of marijuana and nicotine products that are available and are heavily marketed to teens and college students. As educators, we at Middlesex consider it our duty both to educate about the dangers of underage use and provide resources for students to seek help and support, just as we are compelled to hold and enforce the rules detailed in the Handbook. We consider parents to be partners in this important work.

How can parents help this partnership?

- Engage in conversation with your child. You will receive information and resources from our Health Center specifically on vaping, and we hope that this can assist that conversation.
- Be unambiguous about the many negative ways that underage drug and alcohol use affects teenage brain development. While avoiding the severe consequences involved in getting caught may be a relevant deterrent, teenagers can be confused by the logic of simply avoiding consequences as opposed to the logic of promoting good physical and neurological health and better performance in school and extracurriculars, as well as limiting the long term risks associated with underage drug and alcohol use.
- Be aware of your child's purchases online and elsewhere. In addition to the booming online marketplace for tobacco and marijuana products and paraphernalia, there are liquor stores, vape shops and marijuana dispensaries in the surrounding area, some of which could have a negative track record of selling to underage buyers.
- Communicate with other parents. Middlesex expects that parents are not hosting parties or gatherings at which drug or alcohol use will be condoned and we ask that parents are present when hosting students. If your child will be staying at the home of another Middlesex student, we strongly encourage you to call the host parents before the visit just to check in and make sure that everyone is clear and comfortable about the upcoming visit.

How do prescription medications fit into the picture?

Across secondary and post-secondary educational communities, there are concerns about the flow of controlled prescription drugs through student communities. In order to curb the potential for abuse in our community, we require that the Health Center is aware of all prescription medications that all students, boarding or day, are taking while at school. Additionally, any prescribed stimulants, narcotics, psychotropics, antidepressants, and anti-anxiety agents, as well as any products containing CBD, must be kept in the Health Center for monitored administration.

Thank you for your partnership in this matter that is so critical to the health and development of your children, as well as the safety and good function of the MX community. Please do not hesitate to be in contact with the Deans' Office should you have further questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

The Dean's Office