



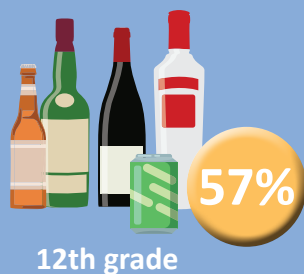
Safer Party Planning & Social Host Guide

for Lynnfield Parents and Caregivers

Research has found that teens are most likely to use alcohol, or other drugs, for the first time in the months of June and July. We also know from our 2023 Lynnfield High School Youth Risk Behavior Survey that the percentage of Lynnfield High School students that report drinking alcohol triples from 9th grade (**19%**) to 12th grade (**57%**). Close to **40%** of Lynnfield High School students reported that they do NOT believe there is moderate or great risk in drinking 1-2 alcoholic beverages per day. Keep these facts in mind as your teen starts to make plans this spring and summer!

Underage drinking can not only negatively impact your teen. As their parent and caregiver, you may also be put in a risky position if the consumption is taking place in your own home.

Do not host a party with underage drinking. You have too much to lose.



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What is Social Host?

The law in Massachusetts is clear:

It is against the law to serve or provide alcohol to underage guests or to allow them to drink alcohol in your home or on other property you control. If you do, you may be prosecuted criminally. The penalty is a fine of up to \$2,000, imprisonment for up to a year, or both. M.G.L. c. 138, s. 34

Parties in private settings are the most common location for underage drinking. The Social Host Law prevents underage drinking parties by holding the “host” accountable for these parties. It does not matter if the alcohol was provided by the homeowner or not. **Just providing the location, with or without knowledge, is enough to hold the homeowner liable.**

The Social Host ordinance sends a clear message to parents and other adults that it is not acceptable to give alcohol to teens or provide the space for consumption. **Teens need to be aware that they are putting their parents in jeopardy even when they themselves host a party in the absence of their parents.**

- After a noise disturbance call for an underage party in **neighboring Peabody** with 70 minors present, including a 16-year-old highly intoxicated girl who was transported by ambulance to the hospital, **two parents were sentenced to nine months in the House of Correction** with 30 days to be served and the balance suspended for two years. During that time, they were ordered to remain drug and alcohol free, submit to random screens, and perform 50 hours of community service.
- Also in a neighboring town, an **18-year-old male crashed** into a home resulting in his car going up in flames after leaving a house party. After a social host investigation was conducted, a **mom pleaded guilty** in court for allowing alcohol to be consumed by roughly 20 minors in her home. The mother came home from work at 10pm, told the boys to sleep over, and went to bed. The boys left **without her knowledge**. The **DA requested six months to a year of jail time**. The homeowner was sentenced to a year probation, had to pay a hefty fine and was ordered to complete a “Brains at Risk” program.

If your teen is a guest at a party...

Parties can be an opportunity for your teenager to socialize and explore their independence. But, you may have questions about who is attending, who is supervising and if alcohol will be provided. If you have concerns, it is always helpful to contact the host to find out what sort of party it’s going to be.

Some good questions to ask the host parent/guardian are:

When will the party start and end?

How old are the people attending?

Will there be supervision and how many adults will be supervising?

Will there be alcohol? Food?

Is there a plan to prevent gate crashers?



Teen Party Safety Tips:

- Talk with your teen about the rules for the party before the event, ask for their input on what should and should not be acceptable.
Do not demand or lecture!
- Tell your teen to **not post the party on social media** – such as SnapChat. This is the #1 reason unwanted guests show up at teen parties.
- Be open to talking with **other parents** about the event and your household rules if they reach out.
- **Be present** and visible, but don't crash the party.
- Have a **"no backpack"** rule or let the teens know you plan to search bags upon arrival.
- Create a **"party area"** and lock rooms that are off-limits and not in the designated area.
- Parents should also work towards **reducing alcohol access** at home all the time, not just when their teen is having a larger gathering. One of the number one ways we can prevent underage drinking in Lynnfield is eliminating access to alcohol at home.



54%

of high schoolers report it would be easy to take alcohol from their home.



Reducing Alcohol Access at Home:

- Have a reliable system to **track your alcohol inventory** or a liquor cabinet that locks. A Healthy Lynnfield also offers complimentary **tamper-evident bottle seals!** Contact us for details!
- Have clear family rules about alcohol use and discuss them with your teen. Educate your child on **Social Host responsibility** and what you, as their parent and homeowner, have to lose – even if you aren't present and are unaware of underage alcohol use.
- When rules are established and broken, **enforce fair consequences.** Allow your teen input on what they think the consequences should be if they break the rules.
- **Monitor** all teen gatherings in your home.
- If you are hosting a party where alcohol will be present and so will young people under the age of 21, consider hiring a **bartending service with an insured, TIPS certified bartender**, and/or keep all alcohol in a location where underage guests do not have access.
- If you are hosting a very large party and are worried about not having complete control over the situation, you can also **hire a private security company** to monitor things like who is coming and going, if underage guests are coming in with bags or backpacks, ensuring the party is shut down by a designated time.
- **Book a location**, such a restaurant or function hall, rather than hosting a party in your home.
- If you do end up in a situation where you find there is underage drinking, do not kick them out without ensuring **safe transportation.**





Take the opportunity to talk to your teenager about your expectations:

- whether they are allowed to drink or not
- what time they need to be home by
- how they're getting home

Support your young person with safer partying tips

- If your teenager is attending a party, this is an ideal time to support them with information to reduce potential harm.
- It's important to have a plan for the night and agree how they're getting home.
- Make sure they know to never drive or swim if they've been drinking, and to not get a lift from someone who has been drinking or using drugs.



Let them know you're always available to pick them up – any time – if they feel unsafe, or something hasn't gone to plan.

You could also come up with a 'code' message for your teenager to use in case they want to come home, but feel embarrassed about calling you or feel pressured to stay. *'I'm playing in a big game tomorrow' or 'I'm on antibiotics'.*

Talk about why it's important to stick with their friends, and to let their friends know where they are going, what they are doing and who they are with, if they do leave them.

Discuss how they can look after their friends. You could talk about how a fight could be defused and what to do if someone becomes intoxicated or unwell.

If they notice someone is intoxicated, unwell or being taken advantage of they should:

- tell the host, or alert someone not affected by alcohol/drugs
- call for help – a parent, or 911 in an emergency
- intervene, if safe to do so. Don't leave them alone.



CONTACT

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