

What are BHS Teens Really Up To? ***Information from 2017 Youth Risk Behavior Survey and National Studies***

Alcohol

- *18% of freshman admitted to alcohol use; doubled in sophomore year, 54% by senior year.
- * Binge drinking went from 5% in freshman year to 35% in senior year.
- * 15% of students reported drinking during the school day.

Marijuana

- * 7% of freshman girls and 12% of boys admitted to having used marijuana; 44% by senior year.
- * Legalization of marijuana (21+) leads students to consider marijuana “no big deal.”
- * Legalization may lead to greater access (including edibles and vaping oils).

Vaping

- * The FDA declared teen vaping an epidemic. (Vapes -- e-cigarettes, JUULs, etc.-- are devices that heat up a flavored liquid or marijuana oil in a cartridge or pod to release an aerosol “vapor” when inhaled.) Vaping in school is a problem for administrators and students across the country.
- * One cartridge/pod contains as much nicotine as a pack of cigarettes, leading teens back to nicotine addiction -- currently roughly 15% of all BHS students vape.

Mental Health and Stress

- *84% of all BHS students reported feeling overwhelming stress over the past 12 months. (more females than males), and there is a big jump in sophomore year.
- * Primary cause of reported stress is school work.
- *BHS students identifying as LGBTQ were more likely to report symptoms of depression than heterosexual students -- lesbian and gay 56%, bisexual 63%, and questioning 31%, as compared to 25% among heterosexuals.
- *29% of students reported symptoms of depression; 24% felt suicidal in the past 12 months.
- *Stress and depression correlate to increased alcohol and marijuana use.
- * Students also are selling and using ADHD meds that are not their own, some for self-medication, some for study aids, energy boost, etc.

Social Media/Digital Lives

- * Nationally, 95% of teens report they have a smartphone or access to one.
- *45% say they are online on a near-constant basis.
- * At BHS, 51% use handheld devices for non-school related work for three or more hours a day.

Teen Sexuality

- *18% of BHS students had sexual intercourse, but only 66% used a condom.
- *Students were more likely to engage in sexual activity after drinking; rates increase dramatically by grade -- from 3% of freshman girls to 15% of senior girls, from 1% of freshman boys to 10% of senior boys.
- * 18% of freshman females said they have been sexually harassed at school.
- * 8% of freshman girls have had sexual contact against their will, which increases to 21% by senior year.
- *1% of freshman males had sexual contact against their will, increasing to 8% as seniors.
- * 4% of all students reported forced sexual contact with someone they were dating.
- *Nationally, 1 in 3 adolescents is a victim of physical, sexual, emotional or verbal abuse from a dating partner.

Parenting

*Parent influence matters.

*Students who believe their parents disapprove of alcohol and marijuana, use notably less of those substances. For example, nationally, 3 out of 4 teens say their parents are the leading influence on their decisions about drinking.

BHS RESOURCES

For questions or concerns, please first contact your child's assigned guidance counselor, listed in the parent portal - <https://www.brookline.k12.ma.us/parentportal>

Class of 2023 Deans' Team

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Communications & Resources

Sign up for PTO communications, including the BLAST and B-PEN *Parent Updates* on the PTO website www.bhs-pt.org (click on the *News and Events* page).

www.B-PEN.org
*informed * involved * connected*

B-PEN's website has a wealth of info and parenting tips. "Like" B-PEN on Facebook for timely articles about social, emotional and developmental challenges affecting today's adolescents.