

## GUIDELINES FOR KEEPING SUMMERTIME SAFE FOR KIDS

As the unstructured days of vacation mode kick in each summer, kids loosen up and parents often relax the rules. But with more free time and fewer consequences, summer can also be the riskiest time of the year for middle and high school kids. From drug/alcohol experimentation to sexual activity, risky behavior tends to rise with the temperatures, and research shows that young people with unsupervised hours are three times more likely to engage in risky behavior and use marijuana, alcohol and other drugs.

B-PEN (Brookline Parent Education Network) urges Brookline parents to be vigilant about where their kids are and what they are doing during the upcoming vacation days. We join with the Brookline Police Department in making the following recommendations:

- Have your kids check in regularly.
- Reinforce the rule of never driving impaired or riding in a car with a driver who has been drinking alcohol or smoking marijuana.
- As you host parties and backyard barbecues, be mindful of the accessibility of your alcohol. Increasingly, parents in Massachusetts are being prosecuted for underage drinking on their property – whether they provide the alcohol or even know about its presence.
- Watch out for unsupervised house parties, which are especially troublesome over the summer months and have been the scene of many tragic events. Word gets out that parents will be away, and parties can quickly get out of hand, often resulting in alcohol and drug overdoses, date rape, vandalism and incidences of violence. All members of the Brookline community -- parents, neighbors and teens – should do our part to prevent these tragedies.
- If you go out of town, let the Brookline Police know – they can keep an eye on your property. And if you are aware of plans for an unsupervised house party, please call them -- 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The telephone number for the Police Station Front Desk is 617-730-2222. If you prefer, your call can be anonymous. The police will send out a special patrol to assess the safety of the situation. Appropriate steps will be taken to intervene with any risky behaviors, including alcohol and drug use.
- Please tell your kids that if they suspect any of their friends are in trouble or in danger of alcohol poisoning or drug overdose, don't walk away – make the call. They just might save a life.
- Put some structure in those lazy, hazy days – spend time as a family, and make plans for healthy activities.

For a list of suggestions, ranging from job/volunteer ideas for older kids to fun, safe activities, visit [www.B-PEN.org](http://www.B-PEN.org) for our [Summertime Tips](#) sheet.

Have a safe, happy summer!

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