

Growing up in Highland -

Parental pledge



This pledge looks to bring parents together to make key decisions which affect their children's wellbeing. There often isn't a lot of guidance on these issues, a collective community agreement can be much stronger than trying to make all of these choices on your own. For example, when other parents decide to buy their child a mobile phone, this will likely influence when you buy your child a mobile phone



Spend quality time with your child every day

Spending time with you child can be a protective factor against substance use. Those who spend more time with their parents throughout the week and during the weekend are less likely to use alcohol, tobacco and other drugs (substances).



Help out with schoolwork, take part in sports groups and show an interest in their hobbies

It is important that young people are encouraged to keep engaging in quality supervised, structured activities that interest them as they get older.



Encourage two or more activities per week

Young people who are busy and engaged in high quality activities are less likely to use substances and it is also beneficial for their overall physical and mental wellbeing.



Reduce the amount of time your child is out late, especially unsupervised

Being out late is a risk factor for substance use. Knowing where your child is, is a protective factor. Local parents agree that 9pm is the latest time for S1 pupils to come in.



Sleep is essential. Follow guidance from Sleep Scotland

S1 recommendation is between 9 to 11 hours.

Great resources on sleep can be found at sleepscotland.org including advice for other ages. Planet Youth data highlights that many young people are not getting enough sleep.



Get to know your child's friends and their parents

Getting to know your child's friends and their parents is a key protective factor and can help form a supportive community around them. This can allow for easier conversations between parents. It can also benefit children whose parents may not be as involved in the local community.



Internet access – use guidance and parental controls

thinkuknow.co.uk is a great resource for parents and young people on internet safety. Evidence suggests that if a child spends a lot of time on screens during childhood it can affect many important aspects of their life. Things like sleep, healthy weight, behaviour, and learning can all be impacted.



Don't buy alcohol, cigarettes, e-cigarettes for young people under the age of 18

Sometimes parents think that buying a small amount of alcohol for your child will provide them with a 'safe' amount of alcohol. However, we know that young people often access more alcohol alongside what parents may supply. By providing even small amounts of alcohol, parents show their child they are more accepting of alcohol use and drunkenness.

Local Planet Youth data shows that young people whose parents disapprove of alcohol use and drunkenness are less likely to use alcohol or get drunk. The same applies to smoking, vaping and drug use.



Keep a look out for bullying – See it, report it

Young people often use substances for the same reasons as adults. We know that those who are bullied are more likely to use substances. Dealing with bullying as soon as it arises can help young people feel safe in their school and community, which is a protective factor.



Build your child's confidence and self esteem

Young people who are confident in making their own choices and feel good about themselves are more likely to make positive decisions around alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.

Downloadable parent's guide

Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs: A Parent's Guide is available on the Highland Substance Awareness Toolkit website, providing practical advice to help you communicate with your child: www.highlandsubstanceawareness.scot.nhs.uk/planet-youth-model/

Want to get involved?

Join our local parents group, sign up using the QR code!

