



Parents Make A Difference!

Teens and School Activity Codes

August 2014

• Have you signed an activity code so that your teen can participate on a school athletic team or in a co-curricular school activity?

• When you sign this code, do you talk about the behavior expectations of the code with your teen?

• Have you talked about your own behavior expectations for your son or daughter?

Since athletics and co-curricular activities are an extension of the classroom, the activity or athletic code outlines how a school will maintain a healthy environment that will lead to positive youth development through student activities. Activity codes are used to set behavior standards for teens that have the privilege of representing their school in athletics and student activities.

A parent can use the activity code as an opportunity to discuss behavior expectations. Parents can also remind teens that participating in these activities is a privilege.

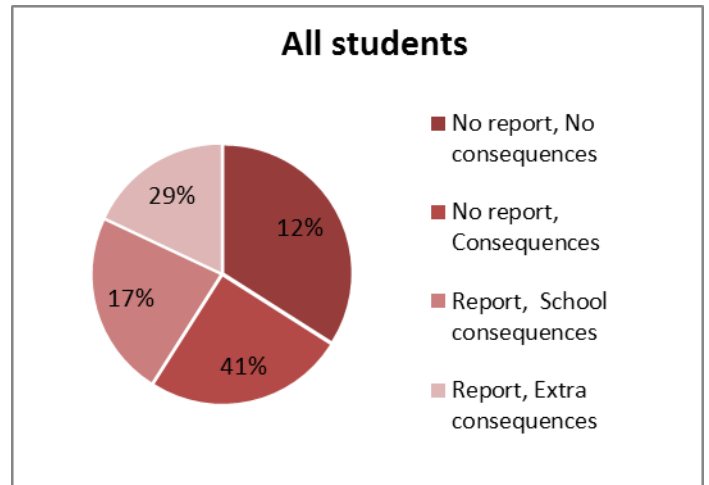
Teen Perceptions of Activity Codes and Parents

The recent Department of Public Instruction Youth Risk Behavior Survey of 3, 551 youth in grades 9 through 12 in Southwest Wisconsin asked teens about activity codes and their parents. Teens were asked, "If you violated a school code (behavior, athletic, or activity) and your parent(s) found out, what would they most likely do?"

As the following chart shows, over 1/2 of the teens (53%) say their parents would not have them report an activity code violation. Specifically,

- 12% of teens report their parents would not ask them to report a violation of the activity code to school officials and would not assign consequences at home
- 41% report their parents would not ask them to report a violation of the activity code, but would assign consequences at home
- 17% of teens report their parents would ask them to report a violation of the activity code to school officials and would support the consequences assigned at school, while

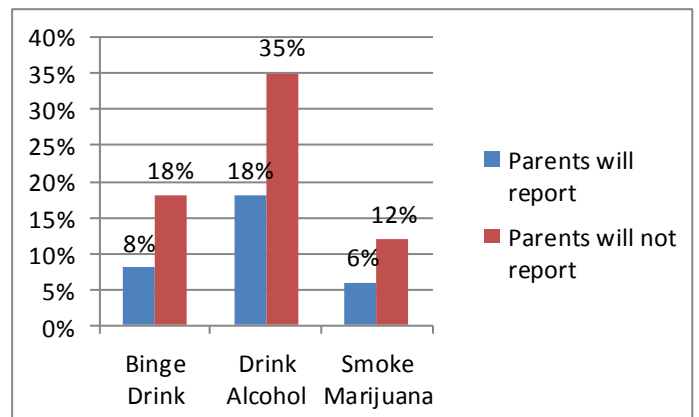
- 29% report their parents would ask them to report a violation of the activity code and would assign additional consequences at home.



Teen responses to the question: "If you violated a school code (behavior, athletic, or activity) and your parent(s) found out, what would they most likely do?"

Impact of Teen Perceptions on Behavior

When teen responses to the school code question were compared to teen behaviors, teens who believe their parents would ask them to report a code violation were half as likely to use alcohol and marijuana, and half as likely to binge drink compared to teens who said their parents would not ask them to report a violation. The chart below illustrates these results.



Comparison of teen perceptions of code reporting to teen behavior

How Does Alcohol and Other Drug Use Affect Athletic Performance?

Since many activity codes relate to teen participation on athletic teams, parents might also discuss the effects of alcohol and other drugs on brain development and athletic performance when they discuss their behavior expectations.

Recent research by the Institute of Mental Health confirms recent studies that show the teen brain is not fully developed until age 25. The areas of the brain that are the last to develop are where decisions are made so teens benefit from guidance and direction as they face choices about behavior.

A study by the American Athletic Institute showed that athletic performance by teens that used alcohol and other drugs was affected by that use. Researchers noted decreases in speed, agility, endurance, strength, and reflexes in athletes who used alcohol and other drugs. Overall, these researchers reported that one time being drunk had an effect of removing 14 days of training for an athlete.

Teens who want to perform their best will do better without alcohol and other drug use.

Think about this: “It is not just that you put on a uniform, or show up every day at practice or for the games... You are an athlete all the time, off and on the field. You represent your family, your community, your school, your teammates, your coach and YOURSELF.” John Underwood
Life of an Athlete

Resources for Parents

Parents can find more information about school codes, sports and teens at these websites:

[Wisconsin Life of an Athlete \(www.wisloa.org/\)](http://www.wisloa.org/) focuses on providing information to students regarding the negative effects alcohol consumption can have on their athletic performance and their life.

[The Teenage Brain-- Why Do Teenagers Think Different than Adults?](http://www.edinformatics.com/news/teenage_brains.htm)
(http://www.edinformatics.com/news/teenage_brains.htm)

Tips for Parents

- √ Realize that athletics and school activities are a part of education and that the benefits of these activities go beyond the final score or concert.
- √ Attend the pre-season athletic or activity meeting with your teen.
- √ Review your school’s code with your teen(s). Emphasize that you are signing this code and that your signature means: “I have knowledge, understanding and agreement to these standards.”
- √ Discuss your behavior expectations with your teen(s).
- √ Encourage your teen to be a role model/leader for positive behavior.
- √ Remind your teen that AODA (Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse) use is against state law.
- √ Talk to other parents about teen behavior and activity codes.
- √ Help your teen learn from mistakes and poor decisions.
- √ Partner with schools and coaches to enforce the activity code in your school.



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REMEMBER: PARENTS MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

“Parents Make a Difference” is a product of the Southwest Wisconsin Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), a program of the Department of Public Instruction, University of Wisconsin-Extension and local school districts. This newsletter is adapted from the UW-Extension newsletters “Whose Kids?...Our Kids!” This issue of “Parents Make a Difference” was written by Deb Ivey, UW-Extension Iowa County and reviewed by Sarah Hopkins and Bev Doll, UW-Extension Grant County; Amy Mitchell, UW-Extension Crawford County, Lori Berget, UW-Extension Lafayette County; Jennifer LaTour, UW-Extension Richland County; and Ruth Schriefer, UW-Extension Iowa County. Thanks are extended to the 5,354 7th to 12th graders from Southwest Wisconsin who participated in the 2013 YRBS survey. Contact UW-Extension for further information: Grant County (608) 723-2125; Lafayette County (608) 776-4820; Crawford County (608) 326-0223; Iowa County (608) 930-9850; or Richland County (608) 647-6148. Or visit our new website at: <http://www.cesa3.org/yrbs.html>