



Safe Homes is concerned with underage substance use and abuse, not a program designed to address adult alcohol consumption.

The Safe Homes pledge is NOT a legally binding contract. It is an “Agreement” among a community network of parents.

Safe Homes Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

What are Safe Homes?

Safe Homes are homes where parents agree to cooperate with the community, schools, law enforcement, other parents, and young people to create a healthy atmosphere where the illegal use of alcohol and other drugs is not acceptable. Safe Homes’ parents are taking a stand against the alarming increase in alcohol and drug use among our youth.

What makes the Safe Homes Program effective?

Safe Homes is effective because it helps bring together parents who share a desire to help their children enjoy their teen years drug and alcohol free. By signing a pledge to supervise teen get-togethers and prohibit the use of drugs and underage drinking, parents are teaching their own children about their values, as well as participating in a network of parents in whom other parents can have confidence. In our mobile society, such networks are needed and require more organizing than perhaps they did in the past.

What are the benefits to signing a pledge form?

When adults in a community join together and take a united stand against alcohol and drug use, they are more effective than when they act separately. Parents benefit from the support of other parents because of the help they receive in resisting pressure from others who do not set these limits on their children's behavior. Your children will know that parents are working together and talking regularly to each other. In addition, parents can be reassured when their children attend a party at a Safe Homes location because Safe Homes members have access to a Safe Home Directory listing families who have signed on and support this program. Parents already know the expectations when they contact hosts of a party at a Safe Homes location.

Is there a cost to join Safe Homes or be a member?

No! It is a free program open to any parent or adult guardian who signs the Safe Homes Pledge and lives by this agreement in their home.

But I trust my children completely. Why would I need to be involved?

One of the valuable aspects of the Safe Homes program is that it provides information for each family about the rules and limits set by other families with whom their children interact. This can make it easier to ensure that your own child will enjoy social events without being put in uncomfortable positions because of a lack of parental supervision. In addition, it can help children, who might feel self-conscious that perhaps their parents are stricter than others, to know that many parents have the same rules.

I can't imagine that parents would permit their children and their friends to drink or use drugs at parties in their homes. Why is signing a pledge needed when these rules seem so obvious?

To some, they are obvious. To others, substance use may seem like normal behavior for teenagers so they allow it in their homes. However, parents who choose to sign a Safe Homes pledge are making a commitment to be active in their supervision as well as in their communication with their teens. This sends a message to their own children about the importance they attach to this issue as well as to the community. The goal is, in fact, to strengthen the idea of drug and alcohol free teens as a norm that IS supported by everyone in our community.

My children are in high school--of course they are going to experiment, that's only natural. I'd rather they did it in my home where they are safe than out somewhere they could get hurt. Won't this program just make them more secretive?

Maybe, but it provides them one fewer place to experiment. In addition, teens won't receive mixed messages about alcohol/drug use. Teens need to hear consistency in the messages they receive from adults. Clear messages from parents have been shown to help most teens resist the temptation to experiment in this hazardous way. While we know that few teens are going to avoid making mistakes, we are trying to give them the tools they need to make wise decisions in as many situations as possible.

What will happen if I join the pledge and something happens--the kids sneak it in or my child drinks at someone else's house?

Again, Safe Homes is about parents taking a stand against alcohol and drug use by teenagers. Not all teenagers take that same stand even if their parents do. Remind them that there will be consequences for their behavior. Some of those consequences can be severe involving law enforcement. Remember that you are part of a network of parents and community members committed to helping create a drug and alcohol free environment for the teens of your community.

What is my liability if I host or provide alcohol?

There are several things you must know. Drinking under the age of 21 is against the law, and those who provide alcohol can be held liable for anything that happens to an underage consumer. This means that you could be charged with a criminal offense for procuring alcohol and/or be sued for damages or injuries caused by any underage drinking in your home. The adult is held responsible, NOT the underage drinker, though there may be separate consequences for the underage drinker.

Who will know I am a member or have my phone number?

The Safe Homes program coordinator and member parents who have also signed the pledge will have your name and phone number. This information will be available to all Bedford Safe Homes parents in the annual Safe Homes Directory and to the Bedford Police. However, your personal information is never given out in any other way.

If I sign the Pledge, does it mean I can't have alcohol in my home?

The Safe Homes Pledge states you will not allow anyone under 21 to have alcohol in your home or on your property and that you will provide secure storage of firearms and other hazardous materials. Your decision about alcohol use as an adult of legal age is up to you.