

Common Questions about Drugs and Alcohol

First, a few tips for parents:

- Smell empty pop cans and water bottles after a gathering at your home
- Keep track of what alcohol you have in your home, especially clear vodka, rum and gin (which can be replaced with water). Lock these up if you feel necessary
- Check contents of car and backpacks
- Monitor phone calls
- Have your child occasionally call from the land line at their location when they are away from home
- Keep the lines of communication open with the parents of your child's friends. Ask them if they allow friends over when no adult is home
- Always ask Who, What, When, Where, and Why questions

1. What is an MIP?

MIP stands for Minor in Possession. It is the consequence of an individual under the age of 21 being in possession of alcohol, or an individual of any age being in possession of a controlled or illegal substance.

2. What is a DUI?

DUI stands for Driving Under the Influence. An individual is issued an MIP and a DUI if caught driving after drinking alcohol. The third DUI results in a felony.

3. What are the consequences of receiving an MIP?

A student could receive a ticket requiring a court appearance, or possibly be taken to jail, by law enforcement officials. If the student were intoxicated at a school event, school consequences would consist of an out-of-school suspension and a referral to the Portage Police Department. In addition, if a student is involved in extra/co-curricular activities at school, a suspension from these activities will result as stated in the Portage Public Schools' Student Code of Conduct, even if the MIP occurred away from school or from a school event.

4. What is the difference between an MIP issued at a school function verses one issued at another location?

An MIP issued at a school function will automatically result in an out-of-school suspension in accordance with the "Zero Tolerance" policy adopted by the Board of Education. An MIP issued at a private party or other non-school related activity will not result in an out-of-school suspension. However, a suspension from extra/co-curricular activities will result regardless when and where the MIP is issued, as outlined in the Portage Public Schools' Student Code of Conduct. Students are expected to continue to attend practices and competitions (not in uniform) if suspended for part of the season.

5. How long does it take for the school to learn about an off-campus MIP?

This information is relayed to the school approximately within one week from the date of incidence.

6. What plan is in place to assist students who illegally use or possess drugs and/or alcohol?

The new Code of Conduct states that the consequences for students who are in possession of illegal drugs and/or alcohol for the first time will face a minimum 10-day suspension, which can only be reduced by a voluntary drug assessment and professional counseling. First-time offenders will be encouraged to seek the assistance of substance abuse counselors to reduce the chance of a repeat offense. "Intoxication" and "Under the Influence" are considered "Possession."

7. What is the Diversion Program?

The Diversion Program is a **one time only** statutory program created for individuals between the ages of 17-20 who have no prior MIPs. (Individuals under 17 will be routed through the juvenile court system with similar sanctions.) The individual must plead guilty to the possession charge for the program to take effect. The presiding judge will usually describe the program at the time of the guilty plea. The judge will place the individual on probation for a period of time along with some or all of the following requirements: Attend an alcohol-awareness class, random drug/alcohol testing, community service, write an essay, and pay all fines and costs. If all of the requirements are completed as prescribed, the case will be dismissed. (There will be a record of Diversion Program completion filed with the Secretary of State as a second offense will result in a loss of driving privileges.)

If the requirements are not completed as described, a conviction is entered. A sample of a typical sentence would be 6 months probation, attend a substance abuse class, 10 hours of community service and pay fines and costs (~\$100-\$250). Whether or not you desire to hire legal counsel is personal preference.

8. Do all area law enforcement departments (Portage, County Sheriff, Kalamazoo, Western) follow the same procedures for issuing MIP's?

Yes. State law indicates that the legal drinking age is 21. Controlled substances are governed by federal law.

9. How is law enforcement made aware of parties where underage drinking might be taking place?

Silent Observer tips, reports of noise disturbances, or parking complaints are a few of the ways. Officers may enter by consent of the homeowner or by search warrant issued based on factual information such as a noise violation.

10. If a party is busted, do all in attendance receive an MIP?

No. Normally all students at the party will be given a PBT (Preliminary Breathalyzer Test) and released if no alcohol is detected.

11. Is there any consequence for parents who knowingly or unknowingly may have alcohol consumed by a minor in their home?

This could result in significant fines or criminal charges.

12. Where are the most common places for alcohol consumption or drug use?

Private parties such as sleepovers, campouts, and bon fires, parking lots, personal vehicles, rave parties, etc.

13. Where do the students get the alcohol?

- Two-thirds of students with alcohol steal it from their parents' liquor cabinet. (75% at the 7th grade level)
- Older siblings, cousins, neighbors, employers, or unknown people at the store.
- Theft from open garages or employers has also been known to occur.
- In our area, Western students are big suppliers.

14. Where do students hide drugs/alcohol?

Alcohol can be hidden in soda or juice bottles, or fountain drink cups from convenience stores. Drugs are hidden in pen cases with the ink barrel removed, cosmetic cases, foil wrap, shoes, calculator battery compartments, pockets, and in cars.

15. If a student is 18, are they allowed to have cigarettes at school?

No. The Student Code of Conduct clearly states that possession of tobacco in any form is prohibited on school property (including in a car), to/from school or at any school event regardless of location.

16. What is meant by probation?

A court-appointed Probation Officer monitors the behavior of an individual for a specified period of time. A Probation Officer is assigned only if a student is put on probation.

17. What constitutes a probation violation?

Probation is violated when an individual does not meet the requirements of probation outlined by the court. Each case can be different.

18. What is KPEP?

Kalamazoo Probation Enhancement Program – this is a program that individuals are enrolled in when they are nearing the end of their probationary period.

19. At what age can an individual be charged as an adult?

An individual is considered to be an adult at age 17 for any offense, consequently, parents may or may not be called depending on the circumstances.

20. What is the difference between a misdemeanor and a felony?

A misdemeanor is the lesser of the two crimes (i.e. shoplifting). Examples of felonies are larceny, criminal sexual conduct, aggravated assault, etc.

21. Can a charge be expunged from an individual’s record or is it permanent?

A felony can never be expunged. Some misdemeanor charges can be expunged once the individual reaches the age of 17.

22. If a charge was received at age 16 and was erased from a student’s record, is it necessary to list it on a college application?

If the juvenile record has been expunged by the court, it would not be necessary to include this on a college application. An individual who receives a drug-related charge at age 17 or older minimizes the opportunity to receive federal aid for college.

23. What is the difference between possession and possession with the intent to deliver?

A charge of *possession* is assigned when the substance was intended for personal use. A charge of *possession with intent to deliver* is assigned when an individual intends to give away or sell substance in his/her possession.

24. What are the most commonly abused prescription drugs and where are they obtained?

- Narcotic pain relievers such as Dilaudid, Lorcet, Lortab, OxyContin, Percocet, Percodan, Tylox, Vicodin
- Depressants such as Lirium, Valium, Xanax, Ambien
- Stimulants such as Adderall, Concerta, Ritalin

These drugs are obtained in various ways, such as from home medicine cabinets, fraudulent prescriptions, theft or purchase of legitimate prescriptions, or friends.

25. Is it illegal to pass prescription drugs along to others?

Yes, prescription drugs should only be used by those to whom they are prescribed. It is illegal to distribute them to others and to use them if they are not prescribed to you.

26. What over-the-counter drugs are abused?

Cough and cold medications such as Nyquil, Vicks Formula 44, and Coricidin HBP Cough and Cold tablets (otherwise known as “Triple C”) are the most commonly abused over-the-counter (OTC) drugs. Others include diet pills, sleep aids, and motion-sickness medication, caffeine pills (acts like speed), and aspirin (crushed and snorted).

27. What is Triple C? (also referred to as Skittles or Red Devils)

Triple C is the nickname for Coricidin HBP Cough and Cold tablets. These tablets contain much more potent doses of a cough-suppressing ingredient known as Dextromethorphan (DXM) than cough syrups, offering individuals the convenience of taking a few pills to get high, rather than drinking a whole bottle of bad-tasting cough syrup. The high is a trippy, disconnected feeling similar to that of Ketamine or PCP.

28. Are all Coricidin products the same?

No. There are three Coricidan products for colds and flu that do not contain DXM . Instead, they contain acetaminophen, which can cause liver failure in high doses.

29. How are prescription and over-the-counter drugs abused?

Those drugs that are available in tablet form are typically either consumed orally or crushed into powder and snorted. Occasionally the crushed tablets are dissolved in water and injected.

30. What are the signs of drug use?

From www.streetdrugs.org

PERSONALITY:

- Becomes disrespectful—is verbally and physically abusive
- Is angry a lot, acts paranoid or confused, or suffers from extreme mood swings
- Seems depressed and less out-going than usual
- Is secretive and lies about what he is doing and where he is going
- Is stealing or “losing” possessions he used to value
- Seems to have a lot of money, or is always asking for money
- Withdraws from the family and family activities

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE:

- Not taking care of hygiene and grooming
- Not sleeping or sleeping too much
- Loss of appetite
- Weight loss or weight gain
- Too hyperactive or too little energy

SOCIAL ACTIVITY/SCHOOL PERFORMANCE:

- Drops old friends and activities
- Is skipping school
- Loses interest in school work and is getting low grades
- Is sleeping in class
- Loses concentration and is having trouble remembering things

31. What is a drug dog capable of detecting?

The capability of drug dogs depends on training. Typically drug dogs can detect prescription and over-the-counter drugs, alcoholic beverages, gun powder items, and illicit drugs.

32. Will an announcement be made when drug dogs visit the school?

Every effort will be made to minimize disruptions to the educational process when drug dogs visit the school. Therefore these visits will not be announced.

33. What areas of the school will be searched?

Drug dogs will search cars parked in school lots, hallways, restrooms, and lockers.

34. What consequences will result if over-the-counter drugs are discovered?

The substance will be confiscated and parents will be contacted.

35. Helpful Web Sites:

- www.streetdrugs.org
- www.theantidrug.com
- www.health.org
- www.drugabuse.gov
- www.drugfree.org
- www.samhsa.gov
- www.aap.org/family/subabuse.htm
- www.acde.org