

**9th Grade Parent-to-Parent Tip Sheet**

***Welcome to the Brookline High School Community. Making the transition to high school is exciting, but it also***

***can present new challenges for you and your teen. Here is a list of tips from some of us who have already made the leap***

***to help keep your teens healthy and safe, and away from alcohol/drug use and other risky behaviors!***

1.  **Set aside** **time** each week to spend with your teen, whether it's having dinner as a family, taking a walk, going out for ice cream or a movie, shopping or driving to school. You are still your teen’s single most powerful influence. Remember to give positive feedback and encouragement to your teen on a regular basis. Freshman year can be a struggle, and teens need their parents’ support.

2. **Stay connected**. Get to know your teen's friends and their parents. Come to BHS and meet other parents at PTO and Parent Network meetings, athletic and performing arts events. Check out the calendar on the PTO webpage ([www.bhs-pto.org](http://www.bhs-pto.org) )for opportunities for you and your teen to try something new.

3. **Introduce yourself** to your teen’s teachers, dean, and/or guidance counselor if you have any questions or concerns about class work, attendance, morale, etc. The homework load may be heavier than your teens are used to, and they may need some extra support and organizational help.

4. **Monitor screen time and content** -- TV, the Internet and video games – and set clear expectations. Facebook and games can quickly become addictive.

5. **Free time** -- Know what your teen is doing during the weekday free blocks, X-block and lunch, and after school. On weekends, limit unsupervised "hanging out time" and set reasonable curfews. A 2007 survey of BHS parents revealed the average curfew for freshman is between 10 and 11pm, if at a supervised event. Call the parent host to make sure get-togethers and parties are adult supervised and substance free, and be clear about how your child is getting home at night and who they may get rides from. Stay up to check in with your teen when they return home in the evening.

6. **Be clear about substance use.** Let your teen know the risks of using alcohol, marijuana, other illegal drugs and other people's prescription drugs (Ritalin, Adderal, antidepressants, etc.). Discuss some of the bad decisions kids can make when they are under the influence. Communicate clearly that you trust your child to behave responsibly and not use any alcohol or other drugs, and that breaking this trust will have significant consequences, both at home and at school. If you find signs of alcohol or other drug use, the BHS substance abuse prevention program at 617-713-5155 offers confidential information and support. Visit the BCASA website at [www.BCASA.org](http://www.BCASA.org) to learn more about teen alcohol and drug prevention in Brookline, and how you can get involved in keeping our kids safe.

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**B-PEN** (*Brookline Parent Education Network*) works with Brookline school administrators and PTOs to engage and educate parents on how to successfully navigate the complex social and emotional challenges currently affecting teens and pre-teens – developmental challenges all our kids face in some form or other that often can lead to risky behavior. Our goals are to facilitate connections – with other parents, with school and town resources, and with helpful information via written/electronic materials on a wide variety of teen concerns. For more information on B-PEN or for help starting a Parent Network, visit [www.B-PEN.org](http://www.B-PEN.org) or contact coordinators June Harris ([jharris@brooklinema.gov](mailto:jharris@brooklinema.gov) ) or Karen Campbell ([kcampbell@brooklinema.gov](mailto:kcampbell@brooklinema.gov))

***informed \* involved \* connected***