



# GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS

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PLANET  
*Youth*

# ABOUT PLANET YOUTH

Planet Youth is an innovative public health project being adopted in counties Roscommon, Mayo and Galway. Its aim is to improve the **health and happiness of young people** in our communities and assist them in achieving their potential.

The first Planet Youth Survey was conducted amongst 4,480 15-16 year olds in all of the secondary schools in Roscommon, Mayo and Galway during October 2018.

**91%**

Easy to get  
Caring and  
Warmth from  
parents



**53%**

Exercise  
3 times a  
week or  
more



**17%**

out after  
midnight



**50%**

getting 8  
hours or  
more sleep



**82%**

happy in  
their lives

**46%**

Drunk  
in their  
Lifetime



**89%**

feel safe  
in their  
community

**23%**

report their  
mental health  
bad/ very bad



**30%**

Tried alcohol  
by **13**

**26%**

Drunk  
last  
month



**18%**

have tried  
Cannabis



**45%**

have 3hrs  
or more of  
social media  
screen time  
per day



# FAMILY TIME

The Planet Youth survey had some really positive findings related to family life and the relationships that our teenagers have with their parents. 91% stated that it's easy to receive caring and warmth from their parents. Teens report spending a lot of time with their parents and 90% stated that their parents know where they are in the evenings.

Having shared interests, regular family mealtimes, family activities and meetings creates enjoyable time and space to chat with and listen to our teenagers. As they get older, it is important to maintain good quality communication with them and to stay connected, interested and engaged in what's happening in their lives.

As parents, we are the most important role models for our teens so it is important that we set a good example with our own behaviours.

# 91%

Easy to get  
Caring and  
Warmth from  
parents



# SCREEN TIME GUIDELINES

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The Planet Youth survey showed us that 45% of our young people are spending 3 hours a day or more on social media. We know that too much screen time impacts upon homework and hobbies and can be detrimental to good mental health. Screen use should be kept to a maximum of **2 hours per day** after homework and other activities are completed.

**Screens should be off at least one hour before bed and kept out of bedrooms after bedtime.**

If you can have these guidelines in place from first year they will become increasingly important as your child gets older. Talk to your child about their online life and be a good role model with your own screen use.

**45%**  
have 3hrs or  
more of social  
media screen  
time per day





# BEDTIME GUIDELINES

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The Planet Youth survey showed us that half of our young people are not getting enough sleep. The suggested guidelines for bedtime are:

**FIRST  
YEAR** **09:30**PM

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**SECOND  
YEAR** **09:45**PM

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**THIRD  
YEAR** **10:00**PM

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**TRANSITION  
YEAR** **10:15**PM

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**FIFTH  
YEAR** **10:30**PM

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**LEAVING CERT  
YEAR** **10:45**PM

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Sleep is just as important to your child's development and well-being as nutrition and physical activity. It is recommended that teenagers get a minimum **8 to 10 hours** of undisturbed sleep per night. For example; a first year that has to get up at 07.30am should be asleep by 09.30pm in order to get their 10 hours of sleep.





## INTERESTS, HOBBIES & SPORTS

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

**Physical activity is important for good health and wellbeing** but not every child is interested in sports. Other hobbies and interests that provide opportunities to get involved in their community outside of school allow our children to further develop their social skills and build emotional resilience.

Good quality **supervised** and structured activities are also a known protective factor against substance use and anti-social behaviour.

# 53%

Exercise  
3 times a  
week or  
more



26%

Drunk in  
the last  
month



46%

Drunk  
in their  
Lifetime



## ALCOHOL

The Planet Youth survey also showed us that **30% of our children have tried alcohol by thirteen.**

As your child gets older, they will become more and more curious about alcohol as well as other drugs. The evidence is clear that the best thing we can do as parents is to defer any alcohol use for as long as possible. Use of alcohol at a young age can impair brain development and will increase the chances of developing a dependency later in life.

Nearly a third of the teenagers reported that they were doing their drinking at a friend's house.

By agreeing, as parents collectively, **to not give any alcohol to other children in our homes** we can make a positive difference to the long-term health and wellbeing of our young people.

# VAPING

The use of e-cigarettes is unsafe for teenagers. Most e-cigarettes contain nicotine and nicotine is a substance that is highly addictive and can harm adolescent brain development.

Using nicotine in adolescence can affect the parts of the brain that regulate attention, learning, mood, and impulse control. Using nicotine in adolescence may also increase the risk of future addiction to other drugs. Additionally, vaping or inhaling any substance can cause harm to the lungs and respiratory tract.

Set a good example by being nicotine free and talk to your child or teen about why vaping is harmful for them.

# 14%

used e-cigarettes  
in the last month



You can find updates,  
resources, further  
information and links at  
the Planet Youth website.

[www.planetyouth.ie](http://www.planetyouth.ie)