



Parent Power

FIRST YEAR
PARENT GUIDELINES

PLANET
Youth

ABOUT PLANET YOUTH

Planet Youth is an evidence-based primary prevention project that provides us with the opportunity to improve long-term health and life outcomes of our children in . Every two years, between 2025-2028, we will survey 15 and 16 year olds in participating schools in Tipperary; this will give us the information we need to make positive changes for the younger children coming behind them. This survey will be repeated in 2026 and 2028.

This booklet has been developed to bring some of that information to parents who have children starting post-primary school and we hope you find it useful.

The 1596 teenagers that participated throughout Tipperary in the November 2024 Planet Youth survey told us that:

92%

Easy to get caring and warmth from parents



66%

Spend 3 hours or more on social media daily



30%

Out after midnight



53%

Not getting enough sleep



84%

Have a phone in their bedroom at night



62%

Get alcohol from parents



59%

Report good mental health



73%

Report good physical health

84%

Feel safe in their community

28%

Reported self-harm once or more



64%

Exercise 3 times a week or more



28%

Drunk last month



13%

Are daily vapers



7%

Have tried Cannabis



29%

Tried alcohol by 13

FAMILY TIME

This was the first Planet Youth survey in Tipperary, with it highlighting many positive findings, particularly around family life and the relationships our teenagers have with their parents. A very strong majority (92%) said it is easy to receive care and warmth from their parents. Young people also reported spending a lot of time with their parents, with 82% saying their parents know where they are in the evenings. As young people grow older, it becomes increasingly important to maintain open, high-quality communication — staying connected, interested, and engaged in their lives.

Encouragingly, the survey showed that we are doing well in this area too, with 83% of teens saying they find it easy to talk to their parents or carers about personal matters. Spending time together through shared interests, regular family meals, activities, and even family meetings helps to create space for meaningful conversations and for listening to our teenagers.

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

92%

Easy to get caring and warmth from parents



SCREEN TIME GUIDELINES

The Planet Youth survey showed us that 66% 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 at night.**

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.

66%

Spend 3 hours or more on social media daily



84% have a phone in their bedroom at night



BEDTIME GUIDELINES

53%

Don't get enough sleep



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

FIRST YEAR	09:30PM
SECOND YEAR	09:45PM
THIRD YEAR	10:00PM
TRANSITION YEAR	10:15PM
FIFTH YEAR	10:30PM
LEAVING CERT YEAR	10:45PM



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. No child should have a phone in their bedroom at night, a regular alarm clock is enough.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SLEEP

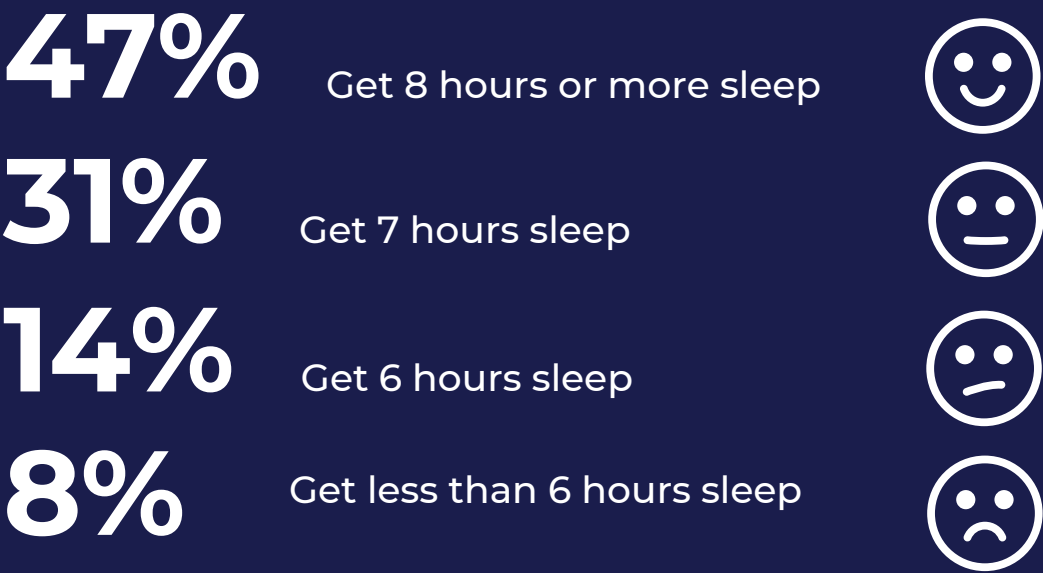
The Planet Youth survey has shown us just how little sleep our teens are getting. This is a significant problem because sleep plays a critical role in a teenager's development, it is every bit as important as nutrition and physical activity.

Without sufficient quality sleep, every aspect of a teen's life becomes more challenging. Physical health and mental health are affected, school becomes harder, self-esteem, resilience, and emotional development are impacted, and small problems often appear insurmountable.

Don't underestimate the importance of helping your teenager get sufficient, good quality sleep. This could be achieved by just improving their sleep environment, good sleep hygiene, limited screen time, reduced caffeine intake, and a consistent sleep routine.

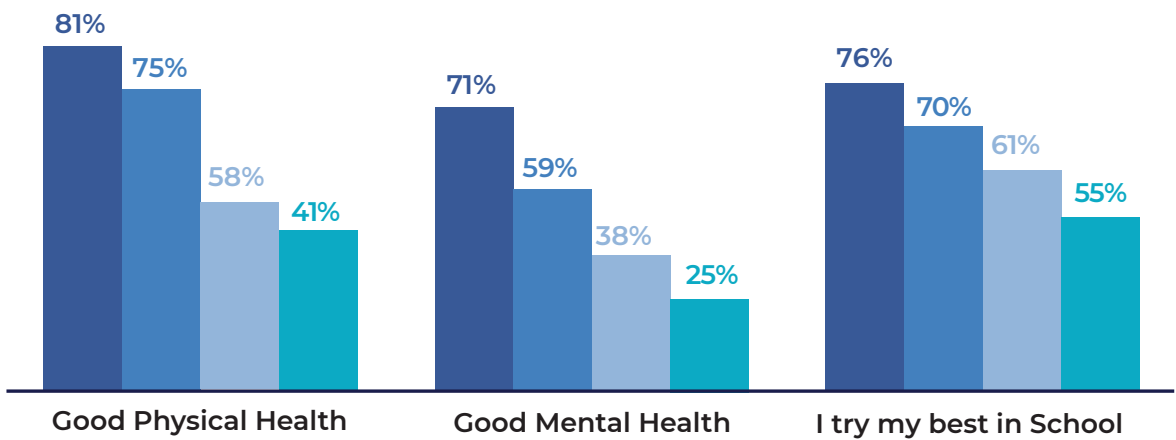
By creating a sleep positive culture in your home, you will be helping your teenager optimise their potential in many aspects of their development, health and wellbeing.

HOW MUCH SLEEP DO OUR TEENS GET?



THE IMPORTANCE OF SLEEP

■ 8 hours or more sleep ■ 7 hours sleep ■ 6 hours sleep ■ Less than 6 hours sleep





VAPING, SMOKING, NICOTINE POUCHES AND CANNABIS

Daily vaping rates among our adolescents is high at 13%, with the use of nicotine pouches becoming more common also.

The use of nicotine is unsafe for teenagers as it is a substance that is highly addictive, potentially harming adolescent brain development.

Using nicotine in adolescence can affect the parts of the brain that regulate attention, learning, mood, and impulse control. It 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.

Experimentation with vapes is not uncommon in first-year, so talk to your teen about why vaping is harmful for them, and set a good example by being nicotine free.

INTERESTS, HOBBIES & SPORTS

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.**

35%

Play team sports 3 times a week or more



64%

Exercise 3 times a week or more



13%

Are daily vapers



3%

Are daily smokers



7%

Used cannabis in the last month



11%

Have tried nicotine pouches



77%

Have
tried
alcohol



28%

Drunk in
the last
month



ALCOHOL AND PARENTS

Alcohol is the most commonly used substance among young people in Ireland. As our teenagers get older, they will increasingly ask parents for access to alcohol to use before or at parties and events. These requests can start as early as second year and become more common by transition year.

Use of alcohol at a young age can impair brain development and will increase the chances of developing a dependency later in life. This is in addition to increasing the risk of other alcohol-related harms. The best thing we can do for our teenagers is to try and defer all alcohol use until they are 18 years of age.

The Planet Youth survey shows us just how important parental attitude and parental alcohol supply is when it comes to adolescent binge drinking. Teenagers that get alcohol from a parent are getting drunk at two and half times the rate of those that don't. Introducing alcohol to teenagers at home, in the pursuit of teaching them to drink responsibly, may have the opposite effect.

The chart opposite clearly shows the importance of parental disapproval. Parents don't have to be at one end of the scale or the other, every conversation and effort made to defer alcohol use is important.

36%

Regularly get
alcohol from
their parent



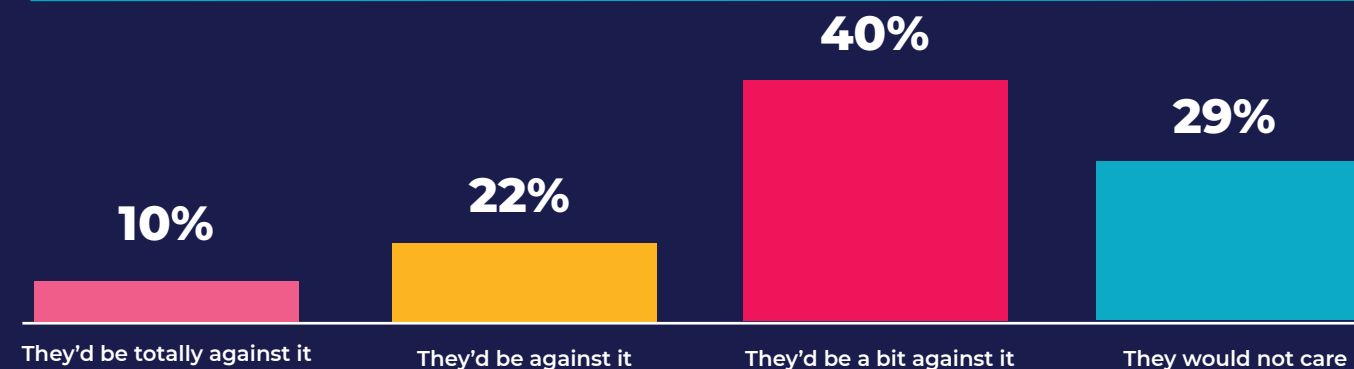
28%

Regularly
drink at a
friend's home



OF THE 28% OF PUPILS THAT WERE DRUNK IN THE LAST MONTH

How would your parents react if you got drunk?



Tipperary Planet Youth Partners



Comhairle Contae Thiobraid Árann
Tipperary County Council



Tipperary
ETB

Bord Oideachais & Oiliúna Thiobraid Árann
Tipperary Education & Training Board



Sláintecare.
**Healthy
Communities**

TÚSLA

An Ghníomhaireacht um
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach
Child and Family Agency



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive



Youth Work Ireland
Tipperary



WESTERN REGION
Drug & Alcohol Task Force
Meitheal Drugaí an Iarthair

Our sincere thanks to the Western Region Drugs and Alcohol Task Force for making their book available for our use.