

The Pony Club Alcohol Policy

As you may know, alcohol in particular raises a number of issues, both for young people and for adults including coaches, officials and volunteers. The guidance below deals with the questions that alcohol might raise in a Pony Club environment.

Introduction

Alcohol is a part of many people's lives, regardless of whether they consume it. The issues alcohol raises are not just about the effect it has on health. Drinking alcohol can have associated hazards. The level of risk depends on who is drinking, how much and in what situation.

Drinking any amount of alcohol has effects on the physical co-ordination of the body and can seriously slow down judgement and reaction time. Within minutes of being consumed, alcohol is absorbed into the blood stream and reaches the brain where there is an immediate impairment of brain function. It takes an hour for the adult body to process one unit of alcohol.

Young people find out about alcohol by trying it themselves, observing others and through information from parents, at school and via the media, through advertising, etc. As an adult in The Pony Club, you are a role model for young people. Young people are impressionable and will inevitably be influenced by those adults they respect. Drinking alcohol may not mean adults set a bad example to young people. However, in certain circumstances doing so has the potential to place adults in a compromising position with regard to their responsibilities for child protection and their duty of care.

The Pony Club's Health and Safety Policy

The Pony Club states that organisers must do what is reasonably practicable to ensure the health, safety and welfare of Members and volunteers at Pony Club activities. All adults need to be physically and mentally fit to undertake their responsibilities in this area.

Pony Club coaches, officials and volunteers must not consume alcohol when they are directly responsible for young people, who are not their own children, at a Pony Club activity and must not permit young people (aged under 18 years) to consume alcohol at Pony Club activities.

Good Practice

During Pony Club events that are attended by under-18s, the following should apply:

- Under 18s must not consume alcohol under any circumstances.
- At any one time there should be the correct ratio of responsible adults who must not consume alcohol (a minimum of two people) and risk assessments in place depending on the size and nature of the event.
- Consideration should be given to the effects alcohol can have and how it may affect an individual's ability to fulfill their Pony Club duties. This should form part of the risk assessment (for example, if someone drinks excessively they may be ineffective in

performing duties the following morning).

- All young people and adults should be aware of the standards of behaviour expected of them. Best practice is to draw up codes of conduct in advance of events.
- Young people and adults should be helped to understand the issues associated with alcohol and how to access information and advice to make informed choices.

Help and information

Facts provided are courtesy of the Institute of Alcohol Studies and Alcohol Concern. If you would like further information, please visit:

- www.ias.org.uk
- www.alcoholconcern.org.uk
- talktofrank.com
- drinkaware.co.uk