

# Youth Position Statements Regarding Alcohol

SADD believes that underage drinking and alcohol misuse creates obstacles that prohibit students from reaching their fullest potential and living a safe and healthy life. SADD recognizes that alcohol use is a choice, and the pressures on young people to drink and engage in other unhealthy behaviors are strong. SADD, at any level, will not alienate those students who make poor choices around alcohol use, but rather aim to inform and educate them to make positive decisions in the future. SADD is an inclusive, not an exclusive, organization.

As SADD seeks to empower teens, engage parents, mobilize communities, and change lives, we uphold the following positions specifically related to alcohol:

## **1) Education through Prevention & Intervention**

SADD supports federal, state, and local efforts that implement prevention education and focus on underage drinking. SADD supports evidence-based strategies that lead to long-term behavior change, delaying the onset of first consumption. These programs should identify the effects alcohol has on the body and the risks that come from alcohol use, including impaired driving, bodily harm, and the effects on one's mental health.

SADD believes in empowering students with the knowledge to take action if they see someone who is at risk after consuming alcohol, as long as their own personal safety and morals are not in jeopardy.

## **2) Marketing & Advertising of Alcohol**

SADD supports advertising that is mindful of the impact the materials have on youth behaviors and attitudes. Marketing and advertising of alcohol to youth increases the risk of premature and illegal consumption.

## **3) Legal Drinking Age**

SADD supports a national drinking age of 21. Research shows that brain development and social factors continue to be best served by delaying the onset of the first use of alcohol. SADD believes in maintaining a drinking age of 21 in all states and territories.

## **4) Reducing Student Alcohol Access Through Enforcement**

SADD supports policies that reduce youth access to alcohol and sound strategies to enforce those policies with appropriate consequences. Research shows that as teens understand the consequences of alcohol use, in administrative, civil, and criminal contexts, their use of alcohol decreases.

## **5) Zero Tolerance**

SADD believes there is no responsible way to break the law. SADD supports zero tolerance of anyone under the age of 21 with respect to alcohol.

#### **6) Providing Alcohol to Minors**

Adults who provide alcohol to underage persons are endangering the young people involved and those around them. SADD supports the criminalization of providing alcohol to any underage person. Further, SADD supports any policy, procedure, or practice that strengthens the penalties of providing alcohol, including social hosting laws.

#### **Empowerment Clause**

Alcohol consumption is and always will be a personal choice. You have the power and freedom to choose whether or not you consume alcoholic beverages once you have reached the legal drinking age. Whichever path you choose, it is important to consider your risks. The “No-Use” model is the most responsible way to ensure safety. If you choose to drink, remember that to lower the risk you must take extra precautions and ensure you have adequate resources and education necessary to partake responsibly.