

Safe Partying

What parents need to consider

If there's a party at your house...

- Set party guidelines for your teenager and their friends and **plan the party together**.
- Decide on an appropriate venue by considering; number of guests, transport options to and from the party, noise, security, access, lighting, safe surroundings – avoid hazardous settings such as boats, swimming pools, lakes, high traffic areas, easily accessed by uninvited guests.
- Advertise the party as entry by 'invitation only' to reduce the likelihood of gatecrashers. Have the guests name on the invite and include clear start and finish times. Have a guest list at the entry.
- Decide whether alcohol is going to be made available and check local licensing laws to ensure you know your obligations and responsibilities.
- If alcohol is going to be consumed, consider supplying it yourself or monitor it closely so you know how much and what type is available. Find out about liquor licensing laws to ensure you are complying, by phoning the local Office of Liquor Licensing. If you are supplying drinks, ensure low and non-alcoholic drinks are readily available, such as tea, coffee, soft drinks and water.
- Have a responsible adult serve alcohol and use plastic rather than glass containers.
- Provide a safe environment for the guests and a secure area for their valuables.
- Notify your local police of the party details a week before and on the day of the party.
- Advise neighbours of the party and the likely finish time.
- Make arrangements so that there are transport options for guests to get home. Options may include; public transport, taxi, organised lifts with sober and responsible drivers (including other parents) and prepare to have guests stay overnight.
- Ensure a steady supply of food is available, not just chips, nuts and lollies, but include some more substantial options such as BBQ, salads, pies and sausage rolls.
- Work out a strategy to deal with the possibility of illicit drugs being present. Contact your local Alcohol & Drug Information Service who can help you by providing advice.
- Supervision and security is critical. Arranging some additional people such as family and friends to help supervise and provide assistance throughout the night. Consider hiring professional security to manage gatecrashers and assist at larger events.
- Have a plan for preventing gatecrashers such as having only one entry and exit point that is easily monitored and controlled.
- Think about the entertainment and plan party activities that don't involve drinking as the main focus. Themed parties, dancing, music and providing a 'chill-out' area are some good ideas.
- Find out about local noise regulations – contact your local police if in doubt
- Turn down the music and turn up the lights as a signal to end the night.

If your teenager is attending a party...

- Know where and when the party will be held. Make contact with the host's parents to check the details such as supervision, location, transport and the conditions on alcohol.
- Discuss and share your concerns and negotiate the conditions of going out.
- Find out if alcohol is being supplied and discuss with your teenager their limits and encourage them to make positive decisions that consider their health and safety.
- Make sure your teenager is going out with a group of friends you know and trust and who can read the danger signs and look out for each other.
- Offer to drive and pick up your teenager or talk about alternative transport if required, e.g. the need to use a taxi or car-pooling with responsible sober friends.
- If your teenager advises that they are sleeping over at their friends place, confirm the arrangements with the other parents to ensure that they will be safe for the night.
- Confirm that a responsible adult(s) will supervise the party.
- Have contact numbers for your teenager's friends and their parents so everyone can stay in touch.
- Discuss the possibility of peer pressure with your teenager and how to deal with this.
- Obtain the phone number of the venue and don't hesitate to contact them if it is late and you have not heard from your teenager.
- Tell your teenager if plans fall through or if they are feeling unsafe wherever they are, they can contact you anytime without question. You can talk about the issues the next day.
- Establish a 'check-in-with-home' arrangement, via SMS or a quick call so together you can keep in touch.
- Help your teenager prepare for all aspects and issues that may arise during their partying experience. Keep open, honest and approachable while staying firm and clear with agreed ground rules.

Community Solutions Inc. – Information obtained from various resources – see References Page