

## **Safe Party Planning- Ideas for Senior School Parents**

For a teenager, attending or hosting a party should be an earned privilege. A privilege of this nature is best earned by consistently demonstrating to parent's respectful and reliable behaviour and choosing friends who do the same.

### **Rules and practical details**

- Set clear and realistic rules.
- Discuss the standards of behavior you expect and stand firm.
- Resist buckling under teenager accusation of not trusting them. The issue is safety, not trust.
- Resist guilt that can result from comments such as "None of my friends parents set rules when they have parties". Responsible parents set rules and boundaries.
- Encourage your children to be a part of the planning process and be willing to negotiate the practical details.
- Consider suitability of the venue for the number attending- Private home vs. hired venue, inside or outside, kitchen and toilet facilities.
- Consider an activity celebration e.g. Bowling, Go Karts, Waiwera.
- Know the law and discuss whether alcohol will be allowed and how you will supervise guests who drink alcohol.

### ***The law: Supplying alcohol to young people***

***The purchase age remains at 18 years. From 18 December 2013 a person can only supply alcohol to a person under the age of 18 years if:***

- ***they are the parent or guardian of the minor; OR***
- ***they have express consent from the parent or guardian; OR***
- ***the young person is married, in a civil union or living with a de facto partner.***

***Anyone who supplies alcohol to a person under the age of 18 years must do so responsibly, for example by supplying food and non-alcoholic drinks and arranging safe transport. The penalty for failing to do so is a fine of up to \$2,000.***

### ***Ministry of Justice. NZ***

- Providing non alcoholic or low alcohol alternatives.
- Encourage a smoke free zone. As well as being a hazard to health it can be difficult to discern the difference between a roll your own cigarette and Marijuana.
- Check with the local council regarding by-laws controlling volume of music and general noise.
- Notify neighbors about the party, its start and end time.
- Ensure any entertainment organised is suitable for the age group.
- Provide a space for dancing or other activities.
- Decide whether you want to make bedrooms out of bounds and if so how you will enforce this.
- Provide a space that is quiet for guests who need to slow down, chill out or recover.
- Provide plentiful amounts of food (bread, pizza etc.) and encourage guests to eat frequently. Consult with your children as to preferred food.

## Invitations

- Decide on a manageable number of guests.
- Compose a guest list with the guests name, phone number, address and parents name and contact details.
- Do not text or email invitations. Discourage discussion about the impending party on Face book.
- Individualise and number invitations.
- Give a specific start and finish time appropriate to the age group being catered for.
- Specify whether alcohol will be allowed and any rules you have.
- RSVP should be essential.
- Note that entry to the party is strictly by presentation of the named and numbered invitation which matches the guest list.

## Safety

- Do not give older siblings the responsibility of supervising a party.
- Provide a good ratio of supervising non drinking adults to number of guests.
- Consider hiring security guards.
- If hiring a hall talk to the local community police about issues in the area.
- Register your party on the Police Register Form at the local police station.
- Check whether your insurance policy will cover you if something goes wrong or is damaged at the party.
- Consider what furniture and breakable items you might want to move.
- Lock away money and jewelry.
- Have only one entry/exit point with an adult presence.
- Prevent access to young people who are under the influence of alcohol or who are behaving badly or who are not on the guest list. Be firm.
- Consider storing bags and coats in a secure room under adult supervision to avoid theft and unwanted items being brought to the party.
- Know First Aid
- Consider how guests will get home e.g. pre booked taxi or responsible adult

## During the party

- Be present and vigilant, but discreet.
- Distributing food can be a good 'cover'.
- Be aware that toilets and windows are entry points for supplies of alcohol.
- Be wary of H2O/ PowerAde bottles etc. They could contain vodka.
- Keep an eye out for alcohol stashed in the garden.
- It is advisable not to allow guests who have left the party to return.
- If a young person is intoxicated and not in control do not try to reason with them. Stay with them while another adult calls their parents to take them home ASAP.
- If a guest collapses and is not breathing start CPR immediately. Have another adult call an ambulance. If necessary you can be talked through the steps when you call 111. Call the parents straight away.
- If a guest has a clear airway and is breathing, roll them onto their side and stay with them. Call the parents straight away.

### **Ending the party**

- Stop the music and turn all the lights on at the designated finish time.
- Police presence at this stage may be helpful.
- Supervise the departure of guests to avoid them congregating in the street.
- Preferably guests should only leave when transport is available.
- If a guest is planning to drive under the influence take away their keys and telephone parents to pick them up.
- Post party-Review what went well and what might be done differently in the future

### **Encouraging young people to stay safe if attending a party away from home**

- Confirm the party details with the host parent. Discuss adult supervision, start and finish times, whether alcohol will be served, transport arrangements and safety measures.
- Ensure host parents have your contact details.
- Ensure your teenager eats before leaving home.
- Encourage your son or daughter to attend with trusted friends and to discuss how they will support one another.
- Ensure your teenager and their friends know how to respond if a teen is drowsy, intoxicated, vomiting, passes out or stops breathing.
- Ensure they know they can always call and consult with you regarding the above and that you will not be angry.
- Encourage your teenager and their friends to have a signal to indicate someone is bugging them or if they are feeling drowsy or intoxicated.
- Decide on a one word signal your son or daughter could use to indicate they want you to pick them up immediately at any point during the party if they call or text.
- Negotiate a curfew that you are comfortable with.
- Offer to pick up your teenager at the end of the party and decide on a meeting point, or ensure they have a taxi pre booked and money to pay for it.
- In some instances it can be unsafe for young people to travel in taxis alone.
- If your teenager's friend is intoxicated it is recommended that you do not allow them to stay at your house. Contact the parents and ask them to pick up their son or daughter.
- If your son or daughter is intoxicated when you pick them up, support them to rest safely at home. Leave any discussion until the next day.

### **Parent- Teen Relationships**

#### **Relationship, relationship, relationship-**

- Work hard to maintain a positive relationship with your teenager.
- Parents who listen and are non judgmental make it easier for their children to be open, honest and ask for their help when needed.
- Know and develop a positive rapport with your teenager's friends and their parents.

#### **Stay informed**

- Find out the facts about drugs and alcohol, not the myths.

### **Subtly educate**

- Beware parent lectures usually fall on deaf ears.
- Find low key opportunities to chat e.g. In the car or when watching TV.
- Subtly educate “Some young people find themselves in a dilemma at the end of the party if the designated driver is drunk. What do you think they should do?”.....or- “My colleague at work thinks her daughters drink might have been spiked at a party as she can't remember anything that happened. How do you and your friends make sure no one spikes your drink?”
- Chat about alcohol and drugs, peer pressure and safe drinking (Standard drinks, spacing drinks with food and non alcoholic beverages, never leaving a drink unattended, the connection between alcohol and unwanted sex and violence etc.)

### **Practice what you preach**

- Your past and present alcohol use is an example to your sons and daughters.

### **Keep them busy**

- Encourage your teenagers to involve themselves in sports, the arts and any other activities they enjoy. Busy teens have less time to get up to mischief.

### **Don't panic**

- The majority of teenagers grow up to be responsible young adults.
- The majority of teenagers mature out of binge drinking and illegal drug use.
- Remember you were young once.

For further information contact:

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