

Party Safety

As the end of another school year draws nigh, celebrations take on a new meaning when faced with the decision to allow your teenagers to attend parties and the every present concern about alcohol consumption and its implications and ramifications. Most parents have rules regarding their teenager's use of alcohol, but enforcing these rules can be difficult when your teenager is visiting another family or attending a party.

It is easier to have the conversation with your daughters and sons before the pressure is on to have or to attend the party. Families can have very different values and attitudes towards alcohol, and in the interests of your teenager's safety it is very important to have good communication with them. Two peers you may have to contend with are that very popular girl Everyone Else, who is allowed to attend every party, and Nobody Else who is the only person whose parents check out the details of a party before the event. Don't be swayed. Find out if alcohol is being allowed, if the party is invitation only, and organise a drop off and pick-up time.

It is important to know that as the parent of a teenager having a party you are legally considered the host of the party and have a duty of care to all your guests. Tasmania Police advise that if there is a possibility that alcohol will be consumed at the party or gathering, then you must obtain permission from the adult responsible for each young person attending AND in addition to gaining permission you must supervise appropriately. Some Hobart publicans have chosen to no longer host 18th birthday parties because of the fines involved and it doesn't stop there. Only recently the Mercury reported a parent was fined \$250 per underage person at the party for failing to provide appropriate supervision.

Enjoy the holiday season but be "party smart". Talk to your teenagers and to other parents and aim to be firm, clear and consistent. There are a number of very good websites which provide helpful tips and explain your legal responsibilities. If you are thinking of having a party or are allowing your teenagers to attend them, we urge you to visit the following:

www.police.tas.gov.au/services-online/party-safe/

<http://www.police.tas.gov.au/services-online/pamphlets-publications/youth-and-alcohol/> (this article looks at your legal responsibilities when serving alcohol at home and on private property)

<http://www.den.org.au/factsheets/alcohol-factsheet/>

www.den.org.au/resources/young-people-and-drugs

www.education.tas.gov.au/__data/assets/word.../Fact-Sheet-8.docx

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