

Teenage drinking:

Communicating with other parents and families

This fact sheet discusses tips for parents in communicating with other parents and families when their teenager is visiting friends, or attending or hosting a party...

Did you know?

- › Most parents have rules regarding their teenagers and alcohol, but enforcing these rules can be difficult when your teenager is visiting another family or attending a party.

Key facts

- › Many young people spend a significant amount of time at their friends' homes.
- › Families can have very different values and attitudes towards alcohol. This can make communication with other parents/families difficult. However, in the interests of your teenager's safety, it is very important to have good communication with them.
- › In South Australia, parents and other adults can legally provide alcohol to teenagers in a private residence.

Special considerations and tips

- › **Talk to your teenager.** It helps to make sure your teenager knows exactly what the boundaries and limits are in relation to alcohol. Although it's important to be firm, confident, clear and consistent, keep in mind that it can be challenging for your teenager to stick to your rules when faced with a different set of rules in their friends' families homes.
- › **Is your teenager attending a party?** As the parent of a minor, you have a right to all the information needed to decide whether or not to allow your child to attend a party. Here are some things to consider:

- Written invitations tend to mean that the party is for invited guests only. The RSVP also provides an opportunity to speak with the party host's parents.
- Find out how many people will be at the party, and if indeed attendance is by invitation only, whether there will be any food served, whether alcohol will be provided or allowed and what time the party will finish.
- › Drop off your teenager at the party and arrange to pick her or him up at a certain time.
- Get the name and phone number of a responsible adult who will be present at the party, and don't hesitate to call them if you are concerned about anything.
- › **Are you hosting a teenage party?** As the parent of a teenager having a party, you are legally considered the host of the party. Therefore, you need to be well informed of the legal and insurance implications.
- › **Plan well.** First, decide what kind of party to hold, including whether or not alcohol will be allowed. Make sure you discuss the party with your teenager. As the adult, the decision ultimately is yours, but things will go more smoothly if everyone in the family agrees about the party and takes the same approach.
- › **If you are unsure, seek help or advice from other parents:** 'My daughter is having a party next weekend and I don't think we'll be allowing any alcohol as we don't drink/let underage people drink in our home.'
Or 'I'm having difficulty deciding whether to allow Sarah and Catherine to have alcohol at their birthday party as we let them have a drink, but other families may not—what do you think?'





- › **'No-alcohol' party.** Having a party with no alcohol is a valid choice, especially when there will be lots of young teenagers present. There are many ways to give the occasion that bit of 'spark'. For example, by having a theme party or being creative with the decorations and activities. Experiment with fruit and other ingredients to create fun and exotic 'mocktails'. Show your teenager that alcohol is not needed to make the party a success.
- › **Adult supervision.** Having some extra adults at the party can be a great help, especially if a large number of young people have been invited. Helpers can be particularly useful for preventing gatecrashers and for serving drinks. You may even consider hiring a security firm.
- › **Your duty of care.** As the host you have a duty of care to all of your guests. This means that you will need to do all that you reasonably can to provide a safe environment, protect your guests (young people as well as adults), and help them avoid trouble. With this in mind, ensure that you are firm, clear and consistent in applying your party rules to all guests while they are on your premises.
- › **Plan for emergencies.** It's a good idea to have a plan for emergencies and to have someone available at the party who is able to provide emergency first aid and is familiar with the recovery position. Don't hesitate to call for an ambulance if one is needed—call 000 for police, ambulance or fire brigade (or 112 if your mobile phone is out of range).
- › **Talk to your guests' parents.** You are responsible for providing information to parents of other teenagers attending your party, particularly if alcohol is involved. Other parents may object to their children attending if alcohol will be consumed. They may want to be reassured that the party will be properly supervised.
- › **Use the invitation to provide information.** A written invitation can be helpful for other parents. As well as the usual details about when and where the party will be held, your invitation should make it clear whether only invited guests may attend, whether or not alcohol will be allowed etc. Include your contact details and an RSVP date so other parents can call you for the information they may need to help them decide whether to allow their teenager to attend the party.
- › **Make a guest list with emergency contact numbers.** A guest list can be a useful way to keep track of party guests. It can also be used as a way to record parent/guardian phone numbers for your guests if there was to be an emergency and you needed to contact someone.

1. Check for any injuries and have someone stay with them.

3. Tilt head back and tuck hand under chin to keep mouth open.

2. Gently roll person onto their side.



4. Bend arm to stop person rolling over.

5. Bend leg to support position.

Recovery position

An unconscious person should be gently moved into the recovery position so their tongue cannot fall back and prevent breathing.

Further information/Where to get help

- › Register your party with the local police. If you register your party well in advance they may be able to organise for a patrol car to drive by on the night to check for any trouble with gate-crashers.
- › **Fact sheet 2: Alcohol, teenage parties and the law** explains the law in relation to underage drinking, provides suggestions for minimising the harms.
- › The Australian Drug Foundation has published a helpful booklet, *Teenage Drinking: The facts and issues*. To purchase a copy or other resources around alcohol, see www.druginfo.adf.org.au or call 1300 85 85 84.
- › The DASSA website has information to support parents. See www.dassa.sa.gov.au /Parents and families/Parties and events.
- › See also www.decs.sa.gov.au/drugstrategy /Student and Parent Support/Parent Information and Resources/Alcohol education.
- › For additional copies of this fact sheet see http://www.olgc.sa.gov.au/default.asp?page=general.Youth_Issues.htm&menu=general or <http://www.decs.sa.gov.au/drugstrategy> >resources or parent support

The project was funded by the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.

Copyright owned by the State of Victoria (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development). Used with permission by The Office of the Liquor and Gambling Commissioner and Dept of Education and Children's Services, Learner Wellbeing and Drug Strategy Team, South Australia.



Australian Government

Department of Education, Employment
and Workplace Relations



Government
of South Australia

