

A PARENT'S GUIDE TO TEENAGE PARTIES/DANCES

When your teen is giving a party:

- Plan in advance. Check party plans with your teenager; know the guest list. If you agree with who is invited, it will help you to curb the “open party” situation. Be aware that some kids may show up even if the party is “closed.”
- Set a time limit. Set a definite starting and ending time. Do not let it last too long. Consider day time parties as an alternative or plan an activity such as swimming, skating, or renting movies.
- Agree to rules ahead of time.
 - ~ No drugs or alcohol.
 - ~ No smoking. No leaving the party and then returning.
 - ~ No gate crashers allowed.
 - ~ Lights should be left on.
 - ~ Some rooms in your home should be left off limits.
- Know your responsibilities. The responsible adult at a teen party is visible and aware. Remember it is illegal to serve drugs, including alcohol, to minors. You are legally responsible for anything that may happen to a minor after leaving your home if he/she has been served drugs or alcohol in your home. The County of Marin and several city councils have passed local ordinances related to the responsibilities of parents/adults hosting a gathering where alcohol is served to, consumed by or in the possession of minors. These laws are called Social Host Accountability Ordinances and identify legal consequences including citations and related fines for violations.
- Invite another parent or couple over. Other adults are company for you during a long evening and can help you with problems. It is a good idea to have about one adult to every 10-12 kids.

When your teen is going to a party:

- Call the house. Before giving consent that your teenager be allowed to attend a party, make sure there are basic rules such as parental supervision and that no alcohol/drugs will be allowed.
- Check the party plans beforehand with your teenager. Know where your child is going and with whom. When taking your teenager to a party, wait to see that he or she is inside the house. If you don't know the host parents, introduce yourself.
- Make it easy for your teenager to leave a party. Urge your teenager never to ride home with a driver who has been drinking. You might have an understanding that there will be no punishment or restriction for a call letting you know that things are getting out of hand. Be available to pick up your child if he or she needs it.
- Be up to greet your teenager when he or she comes home from a party.

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When your teen is going to a dance:

- Parents should check and verify if the dance is a school-sponsored event.
- All school dances have strict enforcement of school behavioral guidelines and appropriate supervision is provided.
- If the dance is a non school-sponsored event, parents will need to:
 - ~ Investigate the background of the sponsoring entity.
 - ~ Gather information and research on the dance venue.
 - ~ Be assured that supervision, security, enforcement of no alcohol drugs, and appropriate guidelines are followed.
- If concerns arise, parents are encouraged to contact local law enforcement and communicate with school administration.

When parents are away and leave their teenagers at home:

- Don't allow unchaperoned parties at your home for any reason. Homeowners/parents can be held civilly responsible for problems occurring at their home.
- If parents go out of town and teenagers are left behind, parents must insist that no parties are allowed while they are away.
- Parents should notify an adult relative or neighbor to check in on their children's welfare while they are away.
- Parents should inform their adult relatives or neighbors that no parties are allowed, and leave specific information where the parents can be reached in case of emergency.
- Parents should inform their local police department that they are going away, that their teenagers will be home alone, and no parties are allowed.

Parents are encouraged to pay attention, ask questions, and keep the lines of communication open with their children to ensure these special events remain safe and enjoyable.

All school-sponsored events are listed on schools' websites at URL:

<http://www.marinschools.org/district.htm> and a comprehensive listing of high school activities are listed on the Student Activity Calendar located on the Calendar webpage of the Marin County School/Law Enforcement Partnership website at URL: <http://mcoeweb.marin.k12.ca.us/SchoolLawB2/frontpage2.htm>.