



The Principals of AISSA Schools are united in their conviction that parental interest, supervision and support are essential as adolescents seek greater freedom and independence.

Adolescence has always been a turbulent time. Today's teenagers are facing an increasingly complex society. Social media has created additional pressures and influences for our children to navigate as they take their first steps into the adult world. As parents, you face the challenge of encouraging teenagers to become independent but of also setting boundaries so they can learn the lessons of life in a safe and secure environment. It is a joint responsibility to assist them to grow to be self-reliant even though there will be times when they rebel against the rules adults set.

A primary development task of teenagers is to seek independence. Teenagers go through rapid physical and emotional changes but it is important to remember that a teenager's brain is not fully developed and they are, therefore, not always able to make the best choices for themselves. We have to allow for some risk taking so they can learn. However, it is important that risks are taken in an environment where there are clear rules and boundaries to protect them.

Making the decisions that are best for teenagers can sometimes be very difficult and will often cause more conflict than giving in and allowing them to engage in behaviours that they are not yet mature enough to cope with. Although seldom publicised, surveys show that most teenagers appreciate it when their parents set boundaries and establish expectations that are fairly enforced.

Parents need to make the decisions that are in the best interests of their children and must be brave enough to maintain a decision in the face of pressure and disappointment.

School Principals urge parents to maintain close contact with their children, to establish and maintain clear guidelines of behaviour and expectations.

Parents are asked to pay particular heed to the following.

1.0 Parenting and Behaviour

Teenage parties can be a source of contention. Students, parents and the police regularly report incidents where parties get out of control, often with serious consequences for hosts and guests.

It is important to acknowledge from the outset that parties are an important social experience for teenagers. However, a friendly and often-repeated warning: large parties for young people can go horribly wrong.

Social functions should be few leading up to and including Year 12 and infrequent during term time. School aged students should not smoke cigarettes or drink alcohol. Like voting, they are rights of adults over 18, who should then accept the consequences. The laws of South Australia support this view and also make other drugs, such as Marijuana or Amphetamines, illegal.

Please note that research confirms that adolescent brains have not fully developed and alcohol or any drugs are not recommended. An adolescent can become physically addicted to alcohol in six months. Alcohol use may lead to deterioration of grades, inappropriate sexual behaviour, depression, and to other drug use. Many studies have concluded that alcohol can have significant effects on brain development. This, in turn, has an enormous impact on the brain being able to reach its optimum functional potential.

Your teenager's school shares with parents the responsibility for the development of young people and their ability to make sound choices. If either avoids responsibility, the other becomes relatively powerless to provide effective influence. Alcohol and drug use is appreciably lower among teenagers with parents who make their expectations for alcohol and other drug use clear.

In recent interviews with senior students who have not used alcohol, every student said that the primary reason they have not used it is the fact that their parents expect them not to use. Generally speaking, if parents expect and communicate the fact that alcohol is not to be consumed, the possibility of that being a reality is strong. If the parent feels that "kids will be kids," and that their teenager will try alcohol or drugs, that is more likely to be the outcome.

2.0 Hosting Parties

It is now a legal requirement that if, despite all the medical and other evidence against it, alcohol will be served at a party to young people under 18, the consent in writing of that young person's parents must be obtained. Significant fines are legislated for breaches of this requirement.

In addition, the law requires that young people are responsibly supervised if they are consuming alcohol. This means that direct supervision is required. The supervising adults must not be intoxicated, and the young person's consumption of alcohol should be supervised to ensure that they do not become intoxicated.

Parties must be planned with your teenager well ahead of time. Many problems can be prevented by open communication between parents. There will be areas of agreement and others you will need to negotiate. It is important that you both understand and stick to the plan that you have devised together.

Social functions should be kept simple and should finish at a reasonable hour. Elaborate functions tend to produce a spirit of competition and often cause embarrassment to teenagers whose parents are not in the position to reciprocate on the same scale.

To minimise the possibility of gate-crashers, establish a guest list and issue individual written invitations. Information on the invitations should include the address and contact phone number of the host parents, starting and finishing times, and a written RSVP if alcohol is to be served. Avoid invitations that can be reprinted and RSVPs being transmitted by sms or email. There should be a responsible adult at all points of entry throughout the night, armed with the guest list. Gate-crashes should be confronted and asked to leave immediately. Police assistance should be requested when needed.

Check the guest list off at your door. Never permit gate-crashers or others whom you have not specifically invited to join in. The adults should move among the guests regularly. As hosts, parents are responsible for the welfare and safety of other people's sons and daughters. Never leave younger people in a house unsupervised.

Make your 'no alcohol or illegal substances' position clear. You have a duty of care and will be liable if alcohol and drugs are served at your home without prior parental consent.

Define the party area. Ensure adequate lighting. Advise neighbours and the local police of the date, time, and supervision arrangements and that there may be some loud music and general noise. Check the regulations regarding permitted noise levels in your area.

Be careful about the moral and legal implications of selling alcohol, which includes the requirement to hold a liquor licence. It is an offence to sell alcohol to minors (young people under the age of 18 years), supply alcohol to minors in a public place or serve alcohol to minors where they have paid an entrance fee. Minors cannot buy alcohol or drink alcohol in public places.

Do not allow backpacks into the party. Be vigilant about hip flasks. Never allow guests to leave the party and then return later. These guests may be using you and your function to disguise errant behaviour elsewhere. Negotiate rules about tobacco. It is illegal to supply cigarettes or tobacco to people under the age of 18 years. It is

also illegal for someone under 18 years to smoke tobacco. We encourage you to make the whole party smoke-free. If not, then ensure you have smoke free areas.

There are provisions under the criminal code relating to sexual offences and age restrictions. Parents must be mindful that when young people consume alcohol, their inhibitions decrease and the likelihood of them engaging in sexual activity, with or without consent, increases. As such, supervision of all areas of the premises is critical.

Serve plenty of water as well as soft drinks and finger food which is popular with teenagers.

Accidents can occur, damaging both people and property. Parents need to check they have minimised the risks and that both public and house and contents insurance are up to date. Parents have a duty of care to make sure that guests at their home are safe. Failure to fulfil this duty of care can result in legal action being instigated against them.

Make sure there are contingency plans in place for ways to get guests safely home. Prevent any person from driving who is under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Consider that some guests may have to sleep over if transport becomes a problem, or if the party finishes very late.

Encourage appropriate forms of entertainment which include music and dancing. Boredom can lead to less desirable activities.

Provide a safe and quiet place where young people can slow down away from the action of the party.

Check those who are driving are safe to do so.

Have readily available a list of emergency numbers and a first aid kit. Act immediately if someone gets violent or becomes injured or is severely affected by drugs or alcohol. If someone is ill, do not delay in calling in an ambulance. Teenagers do not always seek help when they should so vigilance by adults is essential to ensure the safety of every young person present in your home.

3.0 Attending Parties

Be sensitive about the strength of peer pressure and the desire of your teenager to be accepted and popular.

You should ask how the party will be run, what time it starts and finishes including what plans are in place for dealing with situations such as gate-crashers.

Deliver your teenager to the party or event yourself, and always collect him/her at an agreed time. Principals recommend that parents pay close attention to transport and other arrangements made by their children for attendance at social functions. You have the right to enter the venue yourself. Most young people are more likely to drink or smoke or take illicit drugs if they think there is a chance they will not see their parents that evening. At the very least, always speak to your teenager after they arrive home.

If you are not able to transport your teenager to and from the party, encourage him/her to go out with trusted friends and to leave the party together. Discuss the venues they intend to visit and which friend will be their buddy to keep them safe. Obtain contact details, especially the mobile phone number of this buddy.

Be sure that your teenager knows the strategies to avoid trouble and is knowledgeable about the risks of substances and situations. You should always be immediately available by telephone if your teenager wishes to leave a difficult situation early. Encourage them to take a mobile phone and to telephone you if assistance is required. Prearrange a phrase they can use which will enable them to let you know they are concerned without having to alert their friends who may be listening.

Ask your teenager to let you know of any changes to agreed plans.

You will need to provide written permission if your teenager is permitted to drink alcohol at a private function.

- set a limit to drinking in terms of types and quantity of alcohol and stick to it;
- do not let them drive;
- allow only trusted people to serve them drinks;
- ask them to eat before leaving home;
- space their drinks with non-alcoholic drinks and food. Encourage them to avoid shouts or top ups; and
- Make sure they know not to leave drinks unattended.

This Code of Conduct has been developed by the AISSA and endorsed by the Schools listed below. It is intended for the guidance of parents and students. Parents are asked to note its contents and any additional requirements which Principals of individual schools may have for the pupils in their schools.

4.0 Drug and Alcohol Education Programs at School

Please check with your teenager's school about educational programs on drugs and alcohol.

Together parents and schools can take a strong stance against the use of alcohol, tobacco, drugs and other sources of difficulty for young people of school age. Parents are urged to work with their teenager's school on these matters at all times.

5.0 Further Information

Further information can be obtained from the following websites:

<http://darta.net.au/factsheets/>

(Drug and Alcohol Research and Training Australia)

www.alcohol.gov.au/internet/alcohol/publishing.nsf/Content/guide-parent

(Alcohol and Your Kids – A Guide to Parents and Carers)

<https://www.cbs.sa.gov.au/assets/LAR/liquor-gambling/Liquor-reform/FAQ-for-parents-supply-of-alcohol-to-minors.pdf>

(Consumer and Business Services – Parent FAQ – Supply of Alcohol to Minors)

This Code of Conduct is endorsed by the following AISSA member schools:

Aspect Treetop School	Prince Alfred College
Australian Islamic College Adelaide	Pulteney Grammar School
Cedar College	Scotch College
Cornerstone College	Seaview Christian College
Crossways Lutheran School	Seymour College
Domino Servite College	Southern Montessori School
Emmaus Christian College	Southern Vales Christian College
Encounter Lutheran College	St George College
Endeavour College	St John's Grammar School Inc
Eynesbury International	St Martins Lutheran College
Eynesbury Senior College Inc	St Peter's College
Garden College	St Peter's Girls' School
Harvest Christian College	Suneden Specialist School
Hope Christian College	Tatachilla Lutheran College
Horizon Christian School	Temple Christian College
Immanuel College	The Hills Christian Community School Inc
Investigator College	The Hills Montessori School Inc
IQRA College	Torrens Valley Christian School
King's Baptist Grammar School	Trinity College
Maitland Lutheran School	Tyndale Christian School, Murray Bridge
Mid North Christian College	Tyndale Christian School, Salisbury East
Mount Barker Waldorf School	Tyndale Christian School, Strathalbyn
Muirden Senior College	Unity College Murraylands
Navigator College	University Senior College
Pedare Christian College	Walford Anglican School for Girls
Pembroke School	Westminster School
Pinnacle College	Wilderness School
Playford College	Willunga Waldorf School
Portside Christian College	Woodcroft College
Prescott College	YouthInc.
Prescott College Southern	