

SAFE HOMES PARENTS NETWORK

PARTY GUIDELINES FOR PRETEENS OR TEENS

How parents and guardians can provide
safe, drug-free socializing for adolescents.

DID YOU KNOW?

- ◆ The average age of first use of any drug (including alcohol and tobacco) by any child in our community is 11.5 years of age.
- ◆ The first use of drugs often takes place at social gatherings with peers in the home.
- ◆ Every child is at risk to use drugs! Parents and guardians of pre-teens and teens can reduce this risk by taking action. Working together, we can make a difference.



THE FOLLOWING GUIDELINES CAN HELP KEEP GATHERINGS DRUG FREE AND VIOLENCE FREE

1. **ALL gatherings of youth should be "By Invitation Only."**

Party should include written invitations for invited guests. Do not allow entrance of any youth who is not on the invitation list. This prevents many problems from developing.

2. **Set rules ahead of time. Communicate rules to those that attend or chaperone.**

- ✓ No use of alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, any other drugs, or violence.
- ✓ No leaving the party and returning.
- ✓ No uninvited guests.
- ✓ Adult chaperones will be present and visible at all times.

3. **Never allow alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, or any other drugs at a youth party.**

The penalty for providing alcohol to minors is up to one year in jail, up to a \$1,000 fine or both. Other laws also apply regarding children and drugs. Liability is also a consideration. Adults at these parties should not use alcohol or other drugs. **Good role modeling is important.**

Be aware that most youth alcohol and other drug use takes place in homes when parents are absent. Youth have been known to take alcohol supplies (liquor/beer/wine coolers) from their own homes or their friends' homes. We suggest you remove alcohol temptation from young people. Keep alcohol and other drugs under lock and key, if kept in your home.

4. Make certain that any party you host is well supervised.

When having a party in your home, it is suggested that you be at home and visible. In subtle ways, replenish the refreshments, pick up dirty dishes, and be observant that no alcohol or other drugs have arrived. Make certain lights are always on. Invite other parents to assist you.

5. If you are a host parent, immediately call the parents of any child possessing alcohol, other drugs, or appearing to be under the influence.

Under NO circumstances allow the youth to leave alone! The child should be accompanied by a parent or other responsible adult designated by the parent. **NEVER** allow another youth to accompany that person home. In the event of an accident, the host parent could be found liable for allowing the child to leave without supervision.

6. Always know where your children are, whom they are with, what they are doing, and when they will be home.

Communicate expectations and consequences to your children. Follow through with consequences if rules are broken. Consequences must be established in advance, so parents and children know what will happen if any rules are broken.

The word "trust" can cause a lot of confusion for parents when it comes to safeguarding their child. Joining the SAFE Homes Parents Network and enforcing the "expectations" does not imply mistrust; but rather, it means you are aware of the pressures of today's young people. It means you care enough to create a safe, healthy environment for them. You realize that sometimes all youth can be persuaded to do something unwise. All youth at some time will make a bad decision.

The most important part of the SAFE Homes Parents Network is to use the membership list. Call other parents to check out information, concerns, or problems. Make certain activities are supervised and drug-free. Never be embarrassed to call and talk to the adult in charge, whether they are a SAFE Homes member or not. Discuss solutions with other parents on how concerns can be resolved.

7. Know that you can press charges against anyone who provides alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs to your youth.