

When Teens Host a Party at Home

With spring just around the corner followed by the summer break, end of year parties, proms and other festivities and gatherings will be common. The PTSO and CAFY have come together to offer some suggestions to consider when your teen decides to host a party. Parents and teens should work together to provide a setting that is both safe and fun, and it is important for teens to take responsibility for this activity. The teenage years are filled with memorable experiences, opportunities and choices, and as parents/guardians and members of this community, we hope to provide a safe atmosphere for our children.

The Guidelines listed below are taken from a variety of web resources for you to consider with your teen.

1. Set party ground rules with your teen before the party.

- Let your teen know what you expect and agree to the rules together. Let your teenager decide how these rules can be conveyed to guests.
- Select an area in the house where guests will be comfortable and proper supervision can be maintained. Establish areas that are off-limits. Beware that the yard and garage are potential problem areas.
- Tell your neighbors about the party in advance.
- Consider co-hosting a party with other parents or invite other parents to help chaperone.
- Anticipate situation, which might occur at parties and discuss specific ways of handling them with your teen.
- Do not allow purses, backpacks, open bottles/cans to be brought in to party area. This will discourage teens from bringing in alcohol or another drug.

2. Limit attendance and hours. Specific hours and a smaller group are easier to manage.

- Agree to a guest list prior to the party.
- Establish a starting time and ending time so parents will know when to expect their teens to return home.

- Send invitations or have your teen call each guest personally.
- Be available for parents of guests to contact you for information.
- Only one entrance/exit may be used. Have a responsible adult at the entrance/exit door.
- Discourage guests from leaving and returning during the party.
- Circulate during the party. You may want to check off-limits areas frequently.
- Be aware of problem guests and be prepared to ask them to leave.
- Do not accept party crashers.

3. Provide entertainment

- Have snacks and non-alcoholic beverages available
- Play movies or party games
- Play dance music.
- Have plenty of places to sit and talk.

4. Never provide alcohol to guests under 21. It is illegal to offer alcohol to guests under 21 or to allow guests under 21 to use alcohol in your home.

- Be alert to signs of drug or alcohol use.
- Ask any teen who tries to bring alcohol or drugs to the party or who does not comply with party rules to leave. Notify the teen's parents.

- Call the police if unwanted guests refuse to leave or if their parents cannot be reached.
- If alcohol is found among the teens at the party, confiscate it and contact parents of all teens in attendance to alert them to the issue and assure the teens' safe arrival home.
- Never let anyone drive under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- Notify the parents of any teenager who arrives at the party drunk or under the influence of another drug to ensure his/her safe transportation home.
- Remember that spontaneous, open parties are more difficult to control than planned parties. If things get out of hand, be ready to call other parents or the police department for assistance.

5. Be aware of social host liability laws.

Under social host liability law, adults who serve or provide alcohol to a person under the age of 21 can be held criminally liable if that minor is killed or injured, or kills or injures another person.

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For more information, see:

http://www.alcoholpolicymd.com/pdf/Wisconsin_Parents_Guide.pdf

<http://www.jtnn.org/partytips.asp>