

# PARTIES

Parties, gatherings and sleepovers

“Mum, can I have a party for my next birthday?”

If your six-year-old child asks for a party then you relax, blow up the balloons, order the party pies and send out the invitations. If your sixteen-year-old comes to you with the same request then it is not quite so simple.



Parties are an important part of teenage life. They provide opportunities to socialise, relax and have fun. For many teenagers parties are synonymous with alcohol and other drugs. Teens often view alcohol as a way to make friends, gain acceptance, and feel like an adult. Teenagers should be able to hold parties that provide opportunities to mix with friends and be alcohol-free, or if they are of a legal drinking age, where it is responsibly supervised.

**THE FOLLOWING TEN-POINT PLAN CAN HELP YOU HOLD A SAFE PARTY FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.**

1. **VENUE:** Host the party in a safe venue. This means a venue where access is restricted or in a comfortable area at home that enables supervision.
2. **NUMBERS:** Limit the number of guests appropriate to the venue and the level of security you are providing.
3. **TIMING:** Limit the party's length and make sure this is stated on invitations.
4. **ADMISSION:** Admission to the party is by invitation only. Number the invitations to prevent photocopying.
5. **Security.** Consider adequate adult security for the party. Two adults is an absolute minimum supervision. Security is essential at the entrance

and exit points to deal with potential gatecrashers.

6. **NOTIFY:** Let neighbours know you plan to have a supervised teen gathering. Inform police so they can place it on their party register.
7. **FOOD & DRINKS:** Have plenty of food and non-alcoholic beverages on hand. If alcohol is permitted, discourage guests from bringing their own.
8. **ACTIVITIES:** Organise to have entertainment and a space where guests can dance.
9. **SUPERVISION:** Be present during the party. You can bring in snacks and non-alcoholic beverages. Not only will your presence help keep the party running smoothly, but it will also give you an opportunity to meet or get to know your teen's friends better.
10. **GATECRASHERS:** Plan ahead to prevent gatecrashers and work out how you will handle them if they arrive.

A teenage party without planning and adult supervision is an accident waiting to happen. These guidelines won't always be easy to follow. But, seriously attempting to establish reasonable guidelines can benefit you, your young person and the entire community.

## IF YOUR TEENAGER IS ATTENDING A PARTY CONSIDER:

1. Contacting parents of the party giver to check the occasion, to see if adults will be present and that no alcohol or other drugs will be permitted.
2. Finding out where the party is located

and how your young person will get to and from the party.

3. Establishing when you expect your young person home and then be awake or have your teen awaken you when he or she comes home.

## GATHERINGS AND SLEEP-OVERS

Parties go under different guises – ‘gatherings’ and ‘sleep-overs’ are just two activities that involve young people these days. It is part of growing up for young people to spend time with each other but the notion of supervision and monitoring is still part of the game with teenagers. Know where they are, who they are with and the level of supervision available are pre-requisites of parental supervision and monitoring that can help keep young people safe.

## KEEP IN MIND

1. Parties and other activities are part of your young person's social landscape. Adult supervision is one way to help keep young people safe and parties free from risk.
2. Play the party game with young people. That is, when they want to go a party they need to provide you with some basic information such as location, level of adult supervision and attendance of friends before you consider allowing them to attend.



**Parenting**ideas  
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