

## Fact Sheet 3

### Parties - Will You Allow Alcohol at Your Adolescent's Party?

Many parents and carers will be helping young people in their family celebrate birthdays, special occasions, finishing their school year or leaving school.

It is time for careful planning so that everyone enjoys themselves. Some parents may not be aware of their responsibilities in relation to supplying alcohol to under 18's.

Regardless of where the function will be held, it is against the law to obtain for, or supply alcohol to anyone under 18 years of age - even at private parties. This activity is called secondary supply of alcohol - an offence that carries a maximum penalty of \$5,500 per offence or \$11,000 and 12 months prison in very serious circumstances. On the spot fines of \$550 can also be issued by police.

This information comes to you from the NSW Department of Liquor, Gaming and Racing. Check their website for further information: [www.olgr.nsw.gov.au/liquor\\_info\\_young\\_people\\_2nd\\_party.asp](http://www.olgr.nsw.gov.au/liquor_info_young_people_2nd_party.asp)

#### Points to consider:

- ◆ What do you do if an underage guest arrives with alcohol?
- ◆ What do you do if students arrive intoxicated?
- ◆ What do you do if your alcohol has been consumed during the course of the party?
- ◆ How can you plan a successful party that addresses these issues?

It is much easier to plan and control what happens at your next party if you follow some simple guidelines. Here are some suggestions that can make a difference:

- ◆ Ideally RSVP invitations should be issued, giving as many details as possible about times of starting and finishing, the nature of the party, a dress code, how it will be supervised and how guests will return home. Indicate guests will be required to bring their invitation for party entry.
- ◆ On the invitation, suggest guest parents contact host parents to fine tune details and discuss any concerns. This will ensure parents are not pressured against their better judgement and gives everyone permission to talk about supervision, safety, alcohol and drug issues etc.
- ◆ Have only one entrance or exit to make it easier to control who attends your party.
- ◆ Guest lists should be kept to a manageable size. If guest numbers are large, ask other parents to assist with supervision or consider hiring security personnel.
- ◆ Host parents need to be aware of appropriate return transport for guests and/or provide overnight, supervised accommodation.
- ◆ Make it clear in advance it is an alcohol free party. (Parents are reminded of the NSW Office of Liquor, Gaming and Racing penalties cited earlier).

- ◆ Alcohol at parties is not easily supervised. Alcohol can easily be consumed in advance or mixed with soft drinks prior to the party. Alcohol may be left outside in cars or hidden in

bushes. Although these problems can occur, they are less likely if the party is well supervised.

- ◆ Confiscate BYO alcohol from under 18s. Return it to their parents or carers.
- ◆ If guests are a mixture of under and over 18s, there is less control over the consumption of alcohol. A nominated adult should serve alcohol.
- ◆ Actively serve non-salty food throughout the party. This will slow down alcohol consumption for those who are drinking.
- ◆ Attractive non-alcoholic drinks should always be provided. For example, “Mocktails”, non-alcoholic punches, soft drinks, fruit juices, coffee, tea and of course, water.
- ◆ If under 18s consume alcohol or other drugs during the party, their parents should be contacted and asked to collect them. Parents should be advised of unacceptable behaviour.
- ◆ Be firm about excluding gatecrashers. If admittance is by invitation only, gatecrashers are less likely. Prior to the party, encourage students not to broadcast party details in the school community, via the Internet or mobile phone. If gatecrashers arrive, ask them to leave immediately or tell them the police will be called.
- ◆ Parents should be present and provide active supervision throughout the party.
- ◆ If you are planning a large party, it may be a good idea to employ security guards.

### **Register your party with NSW Police**

NSW Police have developed a range of strategies and an online **Party Sign Up form** which must be completed at least 72 hours before your party. Register your party at [www.mynite.com.au](http://www.mynite.com.au). This way local Police will know that you are having a party and can offer support. Have emergency numbers handy and call police before the situation gets out of control. Advise neighbours of your party as common courtesy.

### **Other useful websites to help you plan a successful party and avoid problems:**

[www.det.nsw.edu.au/media/downloads/languagesupport/alcohol/acs\\_english.pdf](http://www.det.nsw.edu.au/media/downloads/languagesupport/alcohol/acs_english.pdf)

Alcohol: celebrations and supply information for parents

[http://www.police.nsw.gov.au/hot\\_topics/safe\\_party](http://www.police.nsw.gov.au/hot_topics/safe_party)

[http://www.youthsafe.org/safe\\_celebrate.html](http://www.youthsafe.org/safe_celebrate.html)

This website has current safe partying information, games, and competitions on how to party safely for young people and information for parents

Look for information about the RRISK Program and risk taking at our website

[www.rrisk.com.au](http://www.rrisk.com.au)