

INTRODUCTION

The goal of *Safe Homes* is to build a communication network among the parents of Santa Fe Catholic High School students to reduce the use of alcohol and other drugs and foster a positive social environment for our youth. As students enter a regional High School, it is common for parents to not know their children's friends and their families well. By signing the *Safe Homes* pledge, parents are letting other SFC families know that they intend to supervise teen social gatherings in their homes to try to make sure teen parties and get togethers are alcohol and drug free. It also indicates that they welcome being contacted by other parents.

To the best of our knowledge, all the families in this Resource Guide have asked to be included because they are committed to not allowing the illegal use of alcohol or other drugs in their homes now, even if they may have done so in the past.

Safe Homes cannot guarantee this information. Personal telephone calls to the host parents are still vital to confirm social plans. By signing the *Safe Homes* pledge, parents are indicating that they recognize that communication among parents is essential to the effectiveness of the *Safe Homes* network.

The contents of this guide (without the parent list) may be found on the Santa Fe Catholic website at www.santafecatholic.org.

PARENT PLEDGE

As members of the *Safe Homes* Parent Network, parents make an effort to uphold the following pledge:

- I/we will actively supervise all gatherings or parties of youth in our home or on our property, or ask another responsible adult for help to do so.
- I/we will not allow the possession or use of alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, other drugs, or violence by youth in our home or on our property.
- I/we will set expectations for my/our child(ren) that I/we know where they are going, whom they are with, what their plans are, and when they are to return home.
- I/we want to be contacted by parents who are aware that my/our child(ren) are

involved in alcohol, tobacco, or drug usage.

Signature of father/guardian

Signature of mother/guardian

Home phone number
(if different)

Home phone number

Father's cell phone
cell phone

Mother's

____ I/we want our name and phone numbers published on the *Safe Homes* list.

____ Even though I/we pledge, please do not publish my/our names.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT *SAFE HOMES*

1) Why should I sign a pledge to declare that I have a "Safe Home?"

Signing a pledge is a way of letting other parents know that you support the ideas in the pledge and are making efforts to uphold it. The pledge is NOT a legally binding contract. As a parent, you cannot control absolutely

everything related to your children, but you can demonstrate your commitment to the pledge ideas and encourage other parents to do so.

2) Why do I need to list my name and phone number in the resource guide?

Being listed in the guide is optional, and you are welcome to sign the pledge without being listed. Putting your name and number on the list lets other parents know that you welcome phone calls when their children will be socializing with yours. It is one step toward making communication among parents easier.

3) I've looked at the list and I know there are people on there who have served minors in the past. What does that mean for the network?

The *Safe Homes* Parent Network welcomes all parents who are committed to making the effort to ensure a safe social environment for local youth. We assume that anyone who signs on is doing so in good faith, with the intention of upholding the pledge now, even if they may have made other decisions in the past.

4) If I join the network and youth drink at my house without my knowledge, will I be removed from the list?

No, the network is there to support parents in their efforts, not to punish them. We hope that if something like this happens, you will be able to turn to other network parents for support and to help you in working to ensure that teen social gatherings at your house are substance free.

5) If I sign the pledge, does that mean that I cannot drink at home?

No, this is not the intent of the *Safe Homes* pledge. It is, however, important for parents to model appropriate behavior (not necessarily abstinence) to their children. This include showing that adults of legal drinking age may drink moderately, if they choose. Think carefully about how your behavior will be perceived by your children. Make sure you communicate that the drinking age exists to postpone use of alcohol by young people until they reach an age when they are less likely to develop a drinking problem. It is also important to show that excessive drinking is not appropriate at any age.

6) What happens if my child is going to someone's house that is not on the list?

The *Safe Homes* Parent Network encourages you to contact that family anyway. See if your child can get a phone number for you. Just because they are not listed does not mean they do not support the pledge. Direct communication is the best way to find out what will be happening at another family's house.

7) What if young people are at my house socializing and they want to stay up later than I can? Can I go to sleep and let them stay up?

The best solution is for you or another trusted adult to stay up as long as there are young people at your house, especially when you are less familiar with the kids attending. It is important to agree in advance with your child about how late you want friends to stay, and then be awake to stick to it when the time

comes. To be able to provide late night supervision, getting some extra rest before the gathering, and planning a restful day for yourself afterwards may be helpful.

WHY TAKING THE KEYS IS NOT ENOUGH

Some parents would rather have their children drinking at home, to keep them off the roads and protect them from car accidents. But there are many more risks associated with "supervised" alcohol use:

THE CONSEQUENCES

A person who begins drinking before the age of 15 is **more than five times more likely** to develop alcohol dependency than someone who waits until after age 21 to use alcohol.

Every year after age 15 that a young person delays use of alcohol reduces his/her risk of dependency by 14%.

Teens who drink alcohol are at a higher risk for other drug use, drinking and driving, damage to property, alcohol poisoning, inappropriate social behavior, and risky sexual contact.

Sexual activity under the influence of alcohol or other drugs is most often unprotected, increasing the risk of unwanted pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.

Teens can suffer an alcohol overdose more easily than adults. Even though a teen may have the same blood alcohol content as an adult, the young person is far less likely to feel the effects of intoxication as an adult would. Because they don't feel impaired when intoxicated, they are more likely to drink longer than adults, thereby increasing their risk of alcohol poisoning.

THE LAW ABOUT SERVING ALCOHOL TO MINORS

CRIMINAL LIABILITY

In Florida, it is a crime with the possibility of arrest:

- To serve alcohol to anyone under 21 other than your own child, even in your own home, even with the permission from other parents.
- For an adult to sell alcohol to, or purchase it for, anyone under 21.
- To have an "open house" party (defined as a social gathering at a residence) where

alcohol is served to minors, whether with or without the consent of the adult who owns the property (a misdemeanor of the second degree, punishable by up to 60 days imprisonment.)

CIVIL LIABILITY

If an adult gives or allows alcohol to be consumed by anyone under 21, including one's own child, and that person causes personal injury or property damage, the adult and minor are both civilly liable for financial damages. Therefore, if there is a party with alcohol in your home, even if you are unaware of it, you are responsible for injuries and damages.

For more information about Florida laws related to alcohol and drugs, go to flsenate.gov/statutes

CAR ACCIDENTS ARE STILL OF CONCERN:

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death among youth ages 15-20.

The rate of fatal crashes among drinking drivers under 21 years old is more than twice the rate for drinking drivers 21 and older.

So, your teen is going to a party...

Call the host:

- Make sure the host parents will be home all evening and that no tobacco, alcohol, or drugs will be allowed.
- Let the host parent know your teen's transportation plans.

Check Party Plans before-hand with your teen:

- Know where your teen is going and with whom.
- When taking your teen to a party, wait to see that he/she is inside the house.
- If you don't know the host parents, introduce yourself.

In the event that tobacco, alcohol, or drugs do find their way into a party:

- Make it easy for your teen to leave the party. Prearrange for them to call you (or a designated adult) for a ride home.
- Establish a code word with your teen in case he/she needs to leave the party without letting peers know.
- You might have an understanding that there will be no punishments or restrictions for a call letting you know that things are getting out of hand.
- Remind your teen that FRIENDSHIP include dissuading a friend from driving after drinking.

BE UP TO GREET YOUR TEENAGER WHEN HE/SHE COMES HOME FROM THE PARTY.

- Have a conversation with your child.

- Kiss and hug them goodnight...look for signs of alcohol or drug use.

So, your teen is giving a party...

Plan in advance:

- Limit the number of guest by direct invitation only.
- Know how your guests are getting home.

Set a time limit:

- Make sure everyone knows clearly what time the party is ending, so they have their rides there on time.

Agree to rules ahead of time. For example:

- No drugs.
- No alcohol.
- No smoking or chewing tobacco.
- No leaving the party and returning.
- No gate-crashers allowed.
- Lights should be left on .
- Some rooms of the house are off limits
- No closed doors.

Invite another parent over:

- Other adults are company for you during a long evening and can help with problems.

- Invite parents who call regarding party plans to stop and introduce themselves that night.
- If parents have driven teenagers to your house, consider inviting them in to meet you.
- When supervising a teen party, set the example that you can enjoy an evening without drugs and alcohol by not drinking yourself.
- Circulate through the party rooms frequently to supervise.
- Plan to stay home the length of the party. Be visible and be **aware!**

TIS FOR KEEPING YOUR TEEN DRUG AND ALCOHOL FREE

Nine minutes a day is the average number of minutes that parents spend with their high school youth. Even though schedules are busy, work around them to plan family time. Play a game, watch a movie, talk, or have dinner. This way if your teen needs to talk to you, he/she will have casual opportunities to do so.

Most teens spend most of their time doing positive, constructive activities. Many young people, however, only get attention when they have done something wrong. Show you teens you recognize their positive efforts through words, a note in their backpacks, telling someone else so they can hear you, a special meal, etc.

Three ways to protect your child from using drugs and alcohol:

- Delay their first use of alcohol.
- Keep them from smoking. Teens who smoke are more likely to use drugs.
- The higher the number of times you have dinner with your children each week, the lower the chance of their getting involved in alcohol and drug abuse.

Talk to your teen to set rules about using alcohol and drugs that you agree upon and think are fair and reasonable. Let your children know the consequences of breaking the rules, and enforce the rules you set.

Know where your teens are and what they are doing. Make sure to know that wherever they hang out, there will be appropriate supervision.

Research shows that the hours between 3 and 6 p.m. are when teens are at the highest risk of drinking or doing drugs. Encourage your teens to get involved in **positive, supervised** extracurricular activities during this time.

Check on your teens. Don't rely on cell phones as a way of knowing your child's location. Get the land line number at the house where they are going. Be sure to tell teens that they can call you at any time and you will pick them up.

Be sure your teens know the consequences of their actions and how you would feel (sad, scared, disappointed) if they were involved in any alcohol or drug related accident. Give them examples of scenarios to think about (like if they were drinking and became involved in a serious or fatal accident.)

Know your teen's friends and their parents. Make sure they know the rules in your house and ask them about their rules.

Sometimes young people need an excuse to help them stay away from risky situations. Some ideas:

- "No thanks, it's not for me."
- "I like you, but it makes me uncomfortable to be around you when you use (alcohol, tobacco, drugs.)"
- "I don't need it."
- "Can't do it. Gotta get home."
- "My parents would KILL me!"
- "I could get kicked off the team if anyone found out."
- "My parents promised to _____if I don't use until after I graduate."

SIGNS OF POTENTIAL ALCOHOL OR DRUG USE AMONG TEENS

Observation of one or two of these signs during a short period should not cause panic. If several of these signs persist and the young person resists discussing your concerns, this may indicate a problem. Resources are listed in this guide.

- Significant changes in friends
- Loss of respect for self and others
- Loss of self control
- Negative changes in schoolwork, missing school, or declining grades
- Increased secrecy, or lying about possessions or activities
- Use of incense, room deodorant, or perfume to hide smoke or chemical odors
- Subtle changes in conversations with friends, e.g. more secretive, using "coded" language
- Change in clothing choices: new fascination with styles that highlight drug use
- Increase in borrowing or stealing money
- Evidence of drug paraphernalia such as pipes, rolling papers, etc.
- Evidence of use of inhalant products (such as hairspray, nail polish, correction fluid, common household products; rags and paper bags are sometimes used for this purpose)

- Bottle of eye drops, which may be used to disguise bloodshot eyes or dilated pupils
- Use of mouthwash or breath mints to cover up the smell of alcohol.
- **Missing prescription drugs, especially narcotics and mood stabilizers (this is the new trend.)**

NEED MORE INFORMATION?

Santa Fe Catholic High School
3110 Highway 92 E.
Lakeland, Florida 33801
863-665-4188
www.santafecatholic.org

School resources:

Principal: Gwen Cote
 Assistant Principal/Dean of Students: Glenda Pierce
 Guidance Counselor: Pam Garzarelli
 Campus Minister: Sarah LeFloch
 Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD)
 moderator: Scott Morris

Phone numbers (Hotlines are anonymous and confidential):

For Parents:

Drug/alcohol hotlines: 1-800-662- HELP
 1-800-ALCOHOL
 Drug Prevention Resource Center: 863-802-0777
 ToughLove 1-800-333-1069

For teens:

Alcoholics Anonymous	863-284-5808
Narcotics Anonymous	800-614-6479
Alanon/Alateen	888-425-2666

Websites:

www.theanitdrug.com learn how to talk about important drug issues with your children

www.drugstory.org Research drug related issues and contact information for drug experts

www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov Find a treatment facility near you

www.freevibe.com Encourages empowerment in young people

www.camy.org Information on how alcohol is marketed to youth

www.drugpreventionresource.org our local drug prevention website in Polk County

www.socialnorm.org how to change peer perceptions and behavior

**PARTICIPATING FAMILIES
2008-2009**

A hard copy of the list of names and phone numbers of participating parents can be obtained from the school office.

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