

Students First, Safety First Spring Activities

Fulton County Schools is committed to providing safe and secure learning environments for our students. Our Board of Education makes annual, ongoing investments that provide safety and security to our physical buildings as well as programs that focus on the social and emotional well-being of our students and staff. This commitment continues with educational updates to parents and the community about student safety issues.

What parents need to know about the risks of “Spring Activities”

Spring Break

According to the [Office of National Drug Control Policy](#), one in seven high school students under the age of 18 take unsupervised trips during Spring Break. However, students who travel are not the only ones at risk. Teens who stay at home may be unsupervised by parents or teachers which can affect teen use of marijuana, cigarettes and alcohol.

Keeping your teen safe during Spring Break can be easier than you think. Following are a few safety tips for Spring Break:

1. Establish/Refresh House Rules (i.e. no drinking or drug use)

- Explain that Spring Break does not mean a break from responsibility. Be clear about your expectations and the consequences for breaking the rules.
- Talk candidly about the risks of drug use and drinking, including alcohol poisoning, violence, STIs (sexually transmitted infections) and sexual assault. For parents with daughters, include a conversation about date rape drugs which can be secretly mixed into alcoholic or non-alcoholic beverages.

2. Prepare your teen

- Stress the use of a buddy system for safety in numbers. Three or more is recommended.
- If your teen is traveling, make sure they know and obey the laws of the areas to which they are traveling.
- Walk through peer pressure scenarios. Give them ways to tell their peers no, without making them feel "uncool."

3. Stay in touch and double check everything

- Know where your teen is staying and the activities he/she has planned.
- If your teen is staying at home, know how he/she is spending his/her unsupervised time.
- Require a daily check in via phone call and ask questions. If your teen is traveling, make sure you have phone numbers for his/her friends as well.
- Network with other parents. Compare plans and coordinate rules with other parents.

Prom

- **Plan safe transportation well in advance.** Prepare for prom by helping your teen plan how they are getting to prom and back home. Some teens rent limos while others ride with their date or friends.
- **Warn your teen** not to get into the car with someone who has been drinking, doing drugs or is exhausted. Also tell them to be aware of others on the road. During prom season, there are more impaired drivers traveling during weekends. Just because your teen and her friends aren't drinking or doing drugs doesn't mean that someone on the road isn't.
- This seems simple but **remind your teen to wear their seatbelt.** It is against the law for them not to wear it, so not only can it prevent costly tickets, but it can also save their life.
- **Be available.** Let them know that you or an older sibling can come get them if they no longer feel safe with their date or their friends.
- **Know what your teen is doing before, during and after the main event.** Check with other parents to make sure plans are true and approved by all. If your teen wants to go to a party that you don't approve of, suggest something else.

- **Don't be afraid to be creative.** If you suggest something cool like late night formal wear bowling, or an after-prom swim party at your house, or even a sleepover with a pancake breakfast (made by you of course), they will be more willing to skip the party and you will know where they are. You can also collaborate with other parents to give your child a great after-prom experience without drugs or alcohol.
- **Talk to them about drugs and alcohol.** Adults at proms are always vigilant regarding the presence of drugs and alcohol at proms and are hyperaware of any suspicious actions or substances. Warn your teen that wrong choices have consequences and explain them. Let your teen know the consequences for your household as well as the legal and social consequences of being impaired by drugs or alcohol.
- **Prepare them with cash, credit cards and fully charged cell phones.** You want your teen to be ready for any emergency. Be sure they have cash and an emergency credit card in case they need anything. Also, be sure their cell phone is fully charged so they can contact you if they need help.

End of the school year parties

Many teens will want to go to a party with their friends during their last few weeks as a high school student, but that doesn't mean they should participate in risky behaviors that can jeopardize their future. Following are tips for parents to help your teen remain safe while still having fun.

- **Explain the repercussions of drug and alcohol use.**
Drugs and alcohol impair judgement. They can cause teens to act in ways they wouldn't if they were sober, and oftentimes cause them to socially embarrass themselves. Thanks to social media and smart phones, this social embarrassment can last forever through pictures and messages your teen wishes no one could see. Furthermore, it is illegal for them to use alcohol drugs and there are serious consequences if they get caught. As a parent, emphasize the consequences for teens in your household. Tell them what will happen and be prepared to follow through. For more information on drugs or alcohol and its effects, please visit the [just for parents](#) website and follow the links.
- **Prepare your teen with ways to say no.** Teach them to change the subject, treat it as a joke and laugh it off or pretend they didn't hear the person offer drugs or alcohol. Another option is using the "parent excuse." They could say something like "My parents are waiting up and I will be in so much trouble," or "I'll have to tell mom

everything right when I get home and she will know if I'm messed up."

- **Warn them about impaired drivers.** On the weekends, there are higher numbers of drunk drivers on the road. Warn them to be a defensive driver, to wear their seatbelt and to not get into a car with anyone who has been drinking or doing drugs, even if they seem fine or they are only going a short distance.
- **Host the party or event yourself.** You could avoid some of the worry and angst by hosting a fun event for your teen and their friends. You and other parents could get together and host THE EVENT. This would allow you to be the cool parent and you would know where your teen and friends are all night. Ask for your teen's input and help planning the party so you will know it is something they will enjoy.

