

Party Safe Checklist For Parents

When planning a party, there is a lot to think about. Invites, food, drinks, decorations, not to mention setting up beforehand and packing up afterwards. If the party is held at a person's home, there is also the necessary preparation to ensure that valuables are protected. Whilst party safety may be high on the list of concerns for a parent, it may not be the same for a young person. [Encounter Youth](#) speak to parents throughout the year in our [Party Safe Education](#) program and we have compiled a party safe checklist for parents to work through with their young person. This can be helpful to ensure that important party safety concerns are talked about before the event.

Party Safe Checklist Essentials: Invites

- **How many people will be invited?**

It can be helpful to define the maximum number of guests that will be invited to the party. Young people and their parents can have vastly different opinions as to how many people should be invited! A good maximum number is around 30-40 guests. This is approximately the number of people that somebody can have conversations and 'catch up' with over the course of a party. Larger parties of 100-200 guests tend to be more about 'creating a party atmosphere' with a large crowd. These large numbers are hard to manage and probably not a great idea without significant levels of supervision and professional security.

- **How will invites be distributed?**

The safest way to distribute invites to a party is to go 'old-school'. Paper invites are the safer option than posting an event online, through social media. If paper invites are not possible and there is an event on Facebook or something similar it is essential that the event is set to private and invite only! If the event is public, or guests can invite their own friends, there can be a large number of unplanned guests! It is also helpful to have a list of all the people invited, with a supervisor at the door checking the names off the list the guests arrive. This will help the host to know who is in their home and will help prevent gatecrashers from getting in as well!

- **Will you enforce RSVP's?**

RSVP's are one of those painful things that every party host has to deal with! It can be helpful to decide early whether you will enforce RSVP's. Having guests confirm if they are coming or not is extremely helpful for planning and we highly recommend enforcing RSVP's. Keep in mind, however, that it will require work to chase down guests and get a definite yes or no answer!



Party Safe Checklist Essentials: Start and finish times

- **When will the party start and finish?**

It is a good idea to set both a start and a finish time for a party. Again, young people and their parents often have very different ideas of what constitutes appropriate start and finish times! So there may be some negotiation involved in defining these times! To find out more, read our blog about [start and finish times when planning a party](#).

- **Will you place conditions on the drop-off or pick-up?**

Especially if there are multiple parties among a group of friends on a single night, a lockout may need to be considered. This means that guests will need to arrive by a certain time to gain entry to the party. A party host can also place conditions on the pickup to make sure that the young people are safe as they head home. These conditions may include that guests must be picked up by a parent or other family member, or that the guest's parent must meet the host at the door when picking up. While these considerations may not be popular, they can be good strategies to ensure that the party guests are safe not only for the party but as they head home as well.

Party Safe Checklist Essentials: Supervision!

- **What will the adult:guest ratio be?**

Supervision of a party is essential to making sure that guests are safe. A good starting point is to define how many adults will need to be present to supervise and manage the party. Our recommendation is to have a ratio of at least 1:10. If possible, an adult:guest ratio of 1:5 will be an even safer option.

- **Will you provide professional security?**

This can seem like an extreme option but particularly for larger parties, this can be a good strategy to make sure people are safe and to prevent gatecrashers getting into the party. Keep in mind that security should not be counted in the adult/guest ratio.

- **What will supervision look like at the party?**

For those who will supervise the party, they can be given different roles.

1. Gatekeepers
At the entry point (one entry point is highly recommended) with a guest list, the gatekeepers will ensure uninvited guests do not enter.
2. Patrol team
The patrolling team will roam through the party, ensuring everybody is safe. This does not have to be invasive and combining this with serving food can be a good strategy. They



can pick up glasses or cups and look out for those dark spots, down the sides of the party area, to ensure everyone feels safe and comfortable.

3. Drink & food monitors

If alcohol is provided, this will help to ensure it is served responsibly and that you are able to meet your duty of care. If alcohol is not provided, this role can help to ensure guests are fed and have drinks available.

4. Street round-up person/people

This person takes on responsibility for making sure that all guests are within the premises of the party. This person will also look out for the safety of young people leaving the party to head home

You notice here in this plan that all supervisors are actively in the party environment. Active supervision is essential to keeping young people safe at a party. The supervisors are not going to be much use if they are sitting in the house with the young people having the party in the backyard!

Party Safe Checklist Essentials: Other considerations

- **What strategies will you enforce to prevent uninvited guests (gatecrashers)?**

The biggest things a host can do to prevent gatecrashers is to proactive and clear about who is invited and how those people are invited (see the invites section above). However, even with the best planning, uninvited guests can still hear about the party and show up unannounced. In this case, having a single, supervised, entry and exit point to the party can be helpful. This means the host is aware of who is coming into the party, and it can help prevent gatecrashers from getting any further than the front door.

- **Will guests be allowed to stay the night?**

Having guests stay the night can be a good idea, particularly if the party is going late or alcohol is going to be available. For young people on their P-plates, it can take away the stress of needing to get home before their P-plate curfew comes in at midnight. If alcohol is available, it can make sure that nobody heads out and gets behind the wheel while they're still over the limit. Collecting keys from guests may also help to ensure nobody drives after drinking! Particularly for young people, if they've had a heavy night, it can take [more than 18 hours](#) after their last drink before they reach a blood alcohol concentration of 0.00. To be safe, waiting 24 hours will make sure there's been enough time for the alcohol to process out of their bloodstream and stop them from being caught driving over the limit!

- **What food and drinks will be available?**

This may not cross many people's minds as a safety issue, but thinking about the types of food that will be available can be a good idea. Particularly if alcohol is going to be permitted at the party, a host may need to apply for a limited liquor licence. Having a discussion with your young person about this subject can make the expectations and responsibilities are around alcohol



clear. If alcohol is available, it is a good idea to limit the amount of salty foods available. Salty foods create thirsty guests and make people more likely to drink more. Making sure there is plenty of water and other non-alcoholic options available and encouraging the guests to drink water or other non-alcoholic drinks can help reduce alcohol-related harm. Having enough restroom facilities is also important and is particularly the case if alcohol is permitted. This is because alcohol is a diuretic, and can make people who choose to drink need to use the bathroom more frequently.

- **Have the police been notified?**

Letting the police know is always a good idea, even if no problems are expected. Somebody may make a noise complaint or any other call to police about the party. If the police have all the information about the party on-hand, they are better informed about the best way to respond. For example, if somebody calls and says there are 200 people gathered, and the police have been notified that only 50 were invited, they will be aware that gatecrashers have probably shown up. South Australia Police (SAPOL) have a [party safe notification form](#) that can be used to easily notify police of the party.

Conclusion

The reality is that parents will typically think a lot about the risks and everything that could possibly go wrong. Young people, on the other hand, tend to think a lot more about the social benefits and rewards of holding a successful party and see the risks as a less important topic. This is perfectly normal because young people's brains are continuing to develop in areas like risk assessment and critical thinking, up until at least the mid 20's. Working through this party safe checklist with your young person can help them to think a bit more about the risks and what plans need to be put in place so everybody can party safely. It can also help your young person to develop their skills in risk assessment and critical thinking!