



# ABINGDON

From: Deputy Head (Pastoral); Mark Hindley

20 May 2016

## **Summer Term: Advice for Third and Fourth Year Parents.**

Every Summer Term we talk to the Third and Fourth Years about the dangers that can come from a step change in the way that they socialise, usually because a party scene can begin to flourish for a number of them. This is by no means universal, and can often only affect a minority of boys, but the advice is pertinent for them all. Given we have just spoken to your sons about this, please see below the advice we offer for parents, taken from the "Pastoral Advice for Parents" document that we send out regularly.

### **Going out:**

It is a chastening moment when instead of searching for baby sitters, you realise that your son's social life is better than yours. As boys move through the school they will want to meet up with friends, often in a town rather than at someone's house. This is natural, and to be embraced as part of the process of growing up, but we would advise you to be clear on who they are meeting, where they intend to go, and agree the details of when they will return or be picked up. Do ring the parents of the other boys and girls they say they are meeting so that your son knows that everyone is in communication and that parents can't be played off against one another.

### **Parties:**

We all enjoy a good party, so it is important to try to ensure that partying is a positive experience, not one that leads to ambulances and damaged property! Parties can easily go wrong, especially if there are gatecrashers or if the invite becomes open ended on social media.

Given this, the need for parents to communicate with one another is especially important when it comes to parties. If you are organising a party then we would strongly advise you to be clear about the ground rules you want to establish, and do share those with the parents of the other boys and girls invited, especially when it comes to agreeing when people should be picked up. Teenagers are wired - biologically and by evolution - to be more prone to risk taking than adults: they will sometimes get it wrong, particularly when they are at the age and stage when they are experimenting with alcohol. In these situations we would advise that you have a very clear list, including contact details, of who is responsible for those who have been invited.

On the other hand, if your son has been invited to a party, do check who is the responsible adult, and do contact the hosts to check on details. No one will consider this rude, but will rather be reassured that their ground rules will be clearly reinforced before the event. We would always advise that an adult drops off at the party and picks up from the party, and does so at a set time. There can be pressure to arrive at a party already drunk, or having had something to drink, so dropping off and picking up in person can guard against this.

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/teen/Pages/A-Parents-Guide-To-Teen-Parties.aspx>

<http://www.alcoholeducationtrust.org/parent-area/teenage-parties/>

<http://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2014/sep/05/teenage-parties-a-parents-guide>

<https://www.verywell.com/teen-parties-setting-the-rules-2610502>

**Alcohol:**

We do recognise that alcohol is something that boys need to learn about, and that they need to learn to drink responsibly. This, along with smoking, drugs and addictive behaviour, is something that we address at a number of regular points in PSHCE, tutor time and in Assemblies. However the brunt of the practical side of this (!) will be born by you, the parents. There has been lots of relatively recent thought and research into this that we would point you towards. (The link below might serve as a good starting point.)

That said, parties are a dangerous environment for boys and girls to be experimenting with alcohol. We would advise you to think very carefully before offering any alcohol, and if you chose to do so, ensure that all the parents of the students invited are aware of this and have given their permission. If in any doubt, we would urge you to err on the side of no alcohol, but if there is alcohol it should be distributed by an adult who has an overview of who has drunk what, and there should be clear parameters as to how much each person is allowed to drink.

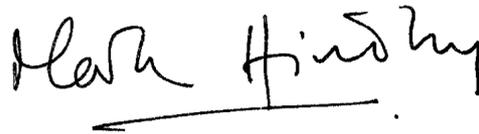
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/7856595.stm>

**And finally...:**

If there are questions and queries that spring from what we have said or any other areas that you would like to discuss, please do get in touch. The Head of Middle School (Rev. Paul Gooding,) your son's housemaster, or his tutor, would be equally happy to give age specific advice.

My email address is [mark.hindley@abingdon.org.uk](mailto:mark.hindley@abingdon.org.uk)

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Hindley". The signature is written in a cursive style. Below the signature is a horizontal line that starts under the first letter and ends under the last letter, with a small dot at the end of the line.