



Code of Social Conduct

May 2025

The Principals of member schools of the Association of Independent Schools of South Australia (AISSA) are united in their conviction that parental interest, supervision and support are essential as young people seek greater freedom and independence.

Adolescence has always been a turbulent time. Today's young people are facing an increasingly complex society. Social media continues to create additional pressures and influences for children and young people to navigate as they take their first steps into the adult world. Parents face the challenge of encouraging young people to become independent but of also setting boundaries so they can learn the lessons of life in a safe and secure environment. It is a joint responsibility to assist them to grow to be self-reliant even though there will be times when they rebel against the rules adults set.

A primary development task of young people is to seek independence. Adolescents and young adults go through rapid physical and emotional changes, but it is important to remember that young people's brains are still developing, and they are, therefore, not always able to make the best choices for themselves. Parents have a responsibility to support young people to be able to appropriately assess risks.

Making the decisions that are best for young people can sometimes be very difficult and will often cause more conflict than giving in and allowing them to engage in behaviours that they are not yet physically or cognitively mature enough to cope with. Although seldom publicised, surveys show that most young people appreciate it when their parents set boundaries and establish expectations that are fairly enforced.

Parents need to make the decisions that are in the best interests of their children and must be brave enough to maintain a decision in the face of pressure and disappointment.

AISSA member School Principals urge parents to maintain close contact with their children, to establish and maintain clear guidelines of behaviour and expectations.

Parents are asked to pay particular heed to the following information.

1.0 Parenting and Behaviour

Teenage parties can be a source of contention. Students, parents and the police regularly report incidents where parties get out of control, often with serious, unintended consequences for hosts and guests.

It is important to acknowledge from the outset that parties are an important social experience for young people. However, a friendly and often-repeated warning: large parties for young people can go horribly wrong.

Social functions should be few leading up to and including Year 12, and infrequent during term time. School-aged students are not permitted by law to smoke cigarettes, take illicit drugs, or vape. They are not permitted to drink alcohol without parental permission and in unsupervised environments. Like voting, these are rights of adults over the age of 18, who should then accept the consequences. The laws of South Australia support this view.

Research confirms that adolescent brains have not fully developed and alcohol and drugs can impair cognitive development and, as such, are not recommended. An adolescent can become physically addicted to alcohol in six months. Alcohol use may lead to deterioration of grades, inappropriate sexual behaviour, depression, and to other drug use. Many studies have concluded that alcohol can have significant effects on brain development. This, in turn, has an enormous impact on the brain being able to reach its optimum functional potential. Vaping and the use of new psychoactive substances pose significant health risks.

Schools work in partnership with parents to support the development of young people and their ability to make sound choices. If either avoids responsibility, the other becomes relatively powerless to provide effective influence. Alcohol and drug use is appreciably lower among young people with parents who make their expectations for alcohol and other drug use clear.

In interviews with senior students who have not consumed alcohol, every student indicated that the primary reason they have not consumed is the fact that their parents expect them not to. Generally speaking, if parents expect and communicate the fact that alcohol is not to be consumed, the possibility of that being a reality is strong. If the parent feels that “kids will be kids,” and that their child will try alcohol or drugs, that is more likely to be the outcome.

2.0 Hosting Parties

It is a legal requirement that if, despite all the medical and other evidence against it, alcohol will be served at a party to young people under the age of 18, **the consent in writing of that young person’s parents must be obtained**. Significant fines are legislated for breaches of this requirement. **Any parent hosting young people under the age of 18 accepts a non-delegable duty of care.**

The *Liquor Licencing Act 2017 (SA)*, expressly prohibits the supply of alcohol to individuals under 18 years of age at an organised event, which includes after formal parties held at various locations including but not limited to industrial sheds, out-buildings and warehouses.

In addition, the law requires that young people are **responsibly supervised** if they are consuming alcohol. This means that direct supervision is required. The supervising adults must not be intoxicated, and the young person’s consumption of alcohol should be supervised to ensure that they do not become intoxicated.

Parties should be planned well ahead of time. Many problems can be prevented by open communication. There will be areas of agreement and others parents will need to negotiate. It is important that parents and their child(ren) both understand and stick to the plan that they have devised together.

Social functions should be kept simple and should finish at a reasonable hour. Elaborate functions tend to produce a spirit of competition and often cause embarrassment to young people whose parents are not in the position to reciprocate on the same scale.

Define the party area. Ensure adequate lighting. Advise neighbours and the local police of the date, time, and supervision arrangements and that there may be some loud music and general noise. Check the regulations regarding permitted noise levels in the relevant local area.

Parents can notify South Australia Police of a party either [online](#) or using [this form](#).

To minimise the possibility of gatecrashers, establish a guest list and issue individual written invitations. Information on the invitations should include the address and contact phone number of the host parents, starting and finishing times, and a written RSVP if alcohol is to be served. Avoid invitations that can be reprinted and RSVPs being transmitted by SMS, social media or email. There should be a responsible adult at all points of entry throughout the night, checking the guest list. Gatecrashers should be asked to leave immediately and Police assistance should be requested when needed.

Supervising adults should move among the guests regularly, as hosts, parents are responsible for the welfare and safety of other people’s children. Never leave young people in a house unsupervised and ensure specific areas of the house, such as bedrooms, are clearly out of bounds.

Make the ‘no alcohol or illegal substances’ position clear. Parents have a non-delegable duty of care and will be liable if alcohol and drugs are served at their home without prior parental consent.

It is an offence to sell alcohol to minors (young people under the age of 18 years), supply alcohol to minors in a public place or serve alcohol to minors where they have paid an entrance fee. Minors cannot buy alcohol or drink alcohol in public places.

It is illegal to supply cigarettes, vapes or tobacco to people under the age of 18 years. It is also illegal for someone under 18 years of age to smoke tobacco or vape. Parents are encouraged to make the whole party smoke-free.

Do not allow backpacks into the party. Be vigilant about hip flasks. Never allow guests to leave the party and then return later. These guests may be using the function to disguise errant behaviour elsewhere.

There are provisions under the criminal code relating to sexual offences and age restrictions. Parents must be mindful that when young people consume alcohol, their inhibitions decrease and the likelihood of them engaging in sexual activity, with or without consent, increases. As such, supervision of all areas of the premises is critical.

Serve plenty of water as well as soft drinks and finger food popular with young people.

Accidents can occur, damaging both people and property. Parents need to check they have minimised the risks and that both public and house and contents insurance are up to date. Parents have a duty of care to make sure that guests at their home are safe. Failure to fulfil this duty of care can result in legal action being instigated against them.

It is strongly recommended that home insurance includes public liability coverage for any injury or death that may occur at home, to people who do not usually reside there.

Make sure there are contingency plans in place for guests to go safely home. Check those who are driving are safe to do so. Prevent any person from driving who is under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Consider that some guests may have to sleep over if transport becomes a problem, or if the party finishes very late. In South Australia, P1 license holders under 25 years of age are restricted from driving between midnight and 5.00am unless accompanied by a qualified supervising driver or they meet specific exemption criteria.

Encourage appropriate forms of entertainment that include music and dancing. Boredom can lead to less desirable activities. Also provide a safe and quiet place where young people can slow down away from the action of the party.

Have readily available a list of emergency numbers and a first aid kit. Act immediately if someone becomes violent or is injured or is severely affected by drugs or alcohol. If someone is ill, do not delay in calling in an ambulance. Young people do not always seek help when they should so vigilance by adults is essential to ensure the safety of every young person present in the home. Remember the duty of care rests with hosts of the party.

3.0 Attending Parties

AISSA Member school Principals urge parents to be sensitive about the strength of peer pressure and the desire of young people to be accepted and popular.

It is strongly recommended that parents of party-goers:

- Make contact with the host parent to ask how the party will be run, what time it starts and finishes, including what plans are in place for minimising risks.
- Deliver their young person to the party or event themselves, and always collect them at an agreed time. Principals recommend that parents pay close attention to transport and other arrangements made by their children for attendance at social functions. Parents have the right to enter the venue themselves. Most young people are more likely to drink or smoke or take illicit drugs if they think there is a chance they will not see their parents that evening. At the very least, parents should speak with their young person after they arrive home.

- In circumstances where they are not able to transport their young person to and from the party, they encourage them to go with trusted friends and to leave the party together. Discuss the venues they intend to visit and which friend will be their buddy to keep them safe. Obtain contact details, especially the mobile phone number, of this buddy.
- Ensure that their young person knows the strategies to avoid trouble and is knowledgeable about the risks of substances and situations. Parents should always be immediately available by telephone if their young person wishes to leave a difficult situation early. Young people should be encouraged to take a mobile phone and to telephone a parent if assistance is required, and a phrase prearranged that they can use which will enable them to let their parent know they are concerned without having to alert their friends who may be listening.
- Ask their young person to let them know of any changes to agreed plans.

Parents will need to provide written permission if their young person is permitted to drink alcohol at a private function. In this case, it is also recommended that parents

- set a limit to drinking in terms of types and quantity of alcohol and stick to it;
- do not let them drive;
- allow only trusted people to serve them drinks;
- ask them to eat before leaving home;
- space their drinks with non-alcoholic drinks and food and encourage them to avoid shouts or top ups; and
- make sure they know not to leave drinks unattended.

This Code of Conduct has been developed by the AISSA and endorsed by the schools listed below. It is intended for the guidance of parents and students. Parents are asked to note its contents and any additional requirements which Principals of individual schools may have for the pupils in their schools.

4.0 Drug and Alcohol Education Programs at School

Parents should check with their child's school about educational programs on drugs and alcohol.

Together parents and schools can take a strong stance against the use of alcohol, tobacco, vapes, drugs and other sources of difficulty for young people of school age. Parents are urged to work with their child's school on these matters at all times.

5.0 Further Information

Further information can be obtained from the following websites:

<https://darta.net.au/resources/facts-sheets/> (Drug and Alcohol Research and Training Australia)

<https://www.cbs.sa.gov.au/documents/faq-for-parents-supply-of-alcohol-to-minors.pdf>
(Consumer and Business Services – Parent FAQ – Stop the Supply of Alcohol to Minors)

Emergency Telephone Numbers:

Emergency: 000

Police: 131 444

Kids Helpline: 1800 555 1800

Headspace: 1800 650 890

Women's and Children's Hospital: 8161 7000

This Code of Conduct is endorsed by the following AISSA member schools:

Aspect Treetop School	St George College
Australian Islamic College Adelaide	St John's Grammar School Inc
Blakes Crossing Christian College	St Martins Lutheran College
Cedar College	St Peter's College
Concordia College	St Peter's Girls' School
Cornerstone College	Suneden Specialist School
Crossways Lutheran School	Sunrise Christian School Marion
Dara School	Tatachilla Lutheran College
Emmaus Christian College	Temple Christian College
Encounter Lutheran College	The Hills Christian Community School Inc
Endeavour College	The Hills Montessori School Inc
Faith Lutheran College Inc	Torrens Valley Christian School
Garden College	Trinity College Blakeview
Harvest Christian College	Trinity College Gawler River
Heritage College	Trinity College North
Hope Christian College	Trinity College Roseworthy
Horizon Christian School	Trinity College South
Immanuel College	Tyndale Christian School, Murray Bridge
Indie School Elizabeth	Tyndale Christian School, Salisbury East
Investigator College	Tyndale Christian School, Strathalbyn
IQRA College	Unity College Murraylands
King's Baptist Grammar School	University Senior College
Maitland Lutheran School	Walford Anglican School for Girls
Mid North Christian College	Westminster School
Mount Barker Waldorf School	Wilderness School
Mount Torrens Christian School	Willunga Waldorf School
Muirden Senior College	Woodcroft College
Navigator College	YouthInc.
Pedare Christian College	
Pembroke School	
Pinnacle College	
Playford College	
Portside Christian College	
Prescott College	
Prescott College Southern	
Prince Alfred College	
Pulteney Grammar School	
Rivergum Christian College	
Seaview Christian College	
Seymour College	
Southern Montessori School	
Southern Vales Christian College	
Sports College South Australia	