

THE NEW TERM TALK: SAFETY, FACTS, AND OPEN COMMUNICATION

Talk, They Hear You

1

Clear expectations for the new school year

Before back-to-school social calendars fill up, set aside time for a direct, low-pressure talk about drinking. Clearly state your household rules, make sure your teen knows you are always their safe ride home, and establish a simple exit plan so they can leave risky situations without hesitation.

2

Provide clear facts, not scare tactics

Hyperbole backfires. Teens see people drink without immediate catastrophe, so exaggerating dangers erodes parental credibility. Stick to real risks: impaired judgment, alcohol poisoning, academic/legal consequences, and the impact on brain development.

3

Establish a judgement-free zone

Frame the conversation around safety rather than punishment. If a teen believes they will face severe consequences or get grounded for life, their natural reaction will be to hide their behavior and cover up mistakes—even when facing dangerous or urgent situations. By reassuring them that their physical well-being always comes before strict discipline, you ensure they feel safe reaching out to you for help whenever they need it most.



Alcohol experimentation increases at a significantly higher rate after students enter 9th grade than during the middle school years, driven by less restrictive social environments and greater exposure to peers who use alcohol.



NATIONAL HELPLINE
FOR PARENTS
(1-800-THE-KIDS)

SJU Parent Resources



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