

So You Want To
Go To
Beach Week?
A Guide for Parents
and Teens



Substance Abuse Prevention
Coalition of Alexandria
(SAPCA)

<http://www.alexhealth.org/partnership/sapca.html>



Partnership for a
Healthier Alexandria



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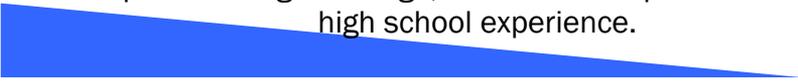
Talking to Teens About Beach Week

*Remember this is a process,
not necessarily a one shot deal.*

Introduce the topic in a casual way. It's best to be side-by-side not face-to-face (driving, or in the kitchen, or while shopping)

- “Some parents have started talking about Beach Week. What are the kids at school (on your team) saying about it?”
- “You know I read some information on Beach Week. They had a lot to say about it . . . what have you heard about it?”
- “Have you heard anything about Beach Week? There are a ton of stories out there. What things are the kids saying about this?”

The first efforts may not bring anything but one-word answers. Be ready for your teens to bring it up later. You've planned this conversation, they haven't.

- Take the opportunity to listen to what your child is thinking. It helps to repeat/paraphrase what was said so that your teen feels heard.
 - Realize that teens don't anticipate disasters and are naturally programmed to seek out novel experiences. Beach Week may seem like the first step to heading to college, or the final step of the high school experience.
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Talking to Teens About Beach Week

Listen for your teen's concerns. If you miss them the first time, s/he will mention them again. Your graduate still depends on your wisdom.

- Some teens aren't really interested in Beach Week. This makes it easy.
- Avoid the opportunity to lecture. Reinforce your trust for your teen, but share your concerns about the potential risks associated. Repeat as needed.

Be clear from the beginning if you are not planning to agree to the trip. Stay consistent, and know that your concerns will likely be challenged. Responses can include

- "I'm willing to talk about it, but I am not inclined to say yes to this idea."
- "I hear what you are saying, but I'm not convinced that this trip is the wisest choice right now. I know that this is disappointing, and there are plenty of other options we can consider. Beach Week just doesn't make sense for us."
- "I'm sorry that you are disappointed/mad/never speaking to me again. I can't find enough reasons in favor of this kind of trip."
- "Blame me, it is my fault. And it is my responsibility. I/We take that responsibility seriously."

Tips For A Successful Beach Week

HOUSE MEETINGS

- ☀ Before you go off to Beach Week, hold a “house meeting” with your fellow students renting with you. Involve parents at the meeting. Discuss behavior expectations.
 - ☀ Go over the rental contract, responsibilities as renters, keeping the unit clean, safely locked, and respect for property and other vacationers.
 - ☀ Keep a copy of the rental agreement in a safe spot inside the unit.
 - ☀ Only housemates should have keys. Know where the keys are kept.
 - ☀ Decide as a group how to handle food and extra items before going. Will you pool your money, shop together, cook together, keep receipts in one place to divide up later?
 - ☀ Decide as a group how to handle overnight guests. Are you okay with having guests of the opposite sex in the house? What if your roommate brings someone? Be frank ahead of time.
 - ☀ Decide as a group how to handle it if someone wants to bring alcohol or drugs into the house.
 - ☀ Who’s going to drive to the beach? This may depend upon how many parking spots come with the unit. How are supplies and luggage divided up for the ride?
 - ☀ Think about added safety... what about a parent escort to drive the group to the beach and then another parent drive the group back home afterwards?
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Tips For A Successful Beach Week

The 411 for Parents... KEEPING IN TOUCH with your TEEN

- ☀ Be clear and specific about your expectations. Talk candidly about the risks of drug use, drinking, alcohol poisoning, violence, sexually transmitted diseases, and sexual assault.
 - ☀ Give clear no-use messages about drugs and alcohol.
 - ☀ Network with and connect with other parents to confirm plans and coordinate ground rules.
 - ☀ Send your teen with a group of friends and at least one adult that you have met and trust.
 - ☀ Know your teen's itinerary and where he/she is staying.
 - ☀ Require a daily check-in via cell phone and make sure your teen is reachable.
 - ☀ Make sure to have cell phone numbers for your teen's friends and parents and check in with them, too.
 - ☀ Give your teen the option to call you during the week to ask for help or be picked up without questioning.
 - ☀ Be a good listener; maintain an open and honest dialogue with your teen.
 - ☀ Supervision without invasion—Parents may consider renting a house near where teens are staying.
 - ☀ Make sure the adult that signed the contract is on site. They are ultimately responsible for what happens inside and to the house.
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DRIVING SMART

- ☀ Consider your car insurance –do you want someone other than your child driving your vehicle?
- ☀ Consider if you are prepared to drive six hours to your destination.
- ☀ Do not ride with anyone who is/has been drinking or using drugs. Have a system in place so you can call someone to get you.
- ☀ Night driving is not recommended.
- ☀ Keep your car registration and insurance information handy.
- ☀ Decide in advance who else, if anyone, may drive your car.
- ☀ Be aware of parking regulations for your house and beach area.

HAVE FUN, BE SMART

- ☀ Remember in all 50 states it is illegal to consume alcohol under the age of 21!
- ☀ Keep gatherings to small numbers and know everyone who is there. Do not announce a party in a large group or in a public place where unwanted guests might overhear.
- ☀ Attend parties where you know the people and have the ability to leave if necessary.
- ☀ Decide ahead of time what you will do if you are in a situation where there is alcohol or drug use.
- ☀ Take along information on alcohol poisoning.
- ☀ Avoid hanging on balcony railings. Every year someone is very seriously injured or killed doing this.

SAFETY

- ☀ Be sure you have your insurance card or a copy of your card (both sides). Also, have a listing of the medications you take, allergies, date of last tetanus shot, and significant medical history. If under 18, you should have written parental authorization for medical treatment.
- ☀ Place second copies of all housemates' emergency information in a folder to keep handy. (Imagine needing information concerning a housemate who is not lucid.)
- ☀ Prepare a list of emergency numbers such as the police department, hospital, and other such emergency contacts. Include phone numbers of family or friends for emergencies.
- ☀ Know the house address and phone numbers (even if you use cell phones).
- ☀ Have an emergency/safety kit containing things such as aspirin, bandages, disinfectants, cold compress, and sun block.
- ☀ Stay close to your friends. Three or more people watching out for each other are better than one. Support, protect, and take care of each other. Never allow a friend to go off alone with someone they've just met.
- ☀ Walk through different scenarios and discuss how to handle pressures, including offers of drugs or alcohol and other risky situations.
- ☀ Have a plan "B" in mind in case things get out of hand or you need to get out of an uncomfortable situation. Feel free to leave, not take part, and even to go home earlier than planned. Respect yourself and your dignity.
- ☀ Swim close to guarded areas. Undertow, riptides, and body surfing in large waves are the cause of rescues and deaths. Watch for warning flags and swimming conditions posted on beaches near life guards.
- ☀ Leave valuables at home. Lock extra money hidden in a car or other safe place.

Parents: Get the Facts from Alexandria High School Teens

While statistics show that youth substance abuse is a serious problem among Alexandria teens, with proper planning and parental support, many teens have had successful beach week experiences. It is possible to have a great time without alcohol and drugs. Still, it is important to know the facts.

Alexandria teens report:

- ◆ 67% tried alcohol and 36% are currently using alcohol.
- ◆ 20% report binge drinking in the last 30 days! (Binge drinking is defined as 5 or more drinks in a row – within a couple of hours.)
- ◆ In the past year, 79% have been at parties where teens their age have been drinking.
- ◆ 31% have ridden with a drinking driver in the past month and 17% drove after drinking.
- ◆ During focus groups, many youth said, “everyone drinks alcohol” and “life is boring without weed”.

Data gathered from the *Alexandria Development Assets Report* in March 2007, the *Alexandria Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS)* administered in February, 2008 and the *Qualitative Assessment of Alexandria Youth Substance Use Report* in September, 2008. For more information on the surveys please visit <http://www.alexhealth.org/partnership/sapca.html> or contact Noraine Buttar—noraine.buttar@alexandriava.gov

Teens: You do not have to drink or use drugs to enjoy Beach Week

Ways To Say No:

- ◆ **Say, "No, thanks."** It could be just as easy as that! However, if the person offering the cigarette, beer, or joint persists, you will have to back up your "No thanks" with other tactics.
- ◆ **Be a broken record.** Say no as many times as you need to, either to cause the person pressuring you to stop, or to stall until you can think of something else to say.
- ◆ **Give a reason.** This reason could be simply, "I'm not allowed to do that," or, "That's bad for you." It could state the consequences, such as, "I don't want to do that; it will make me sick," or, "You can die from doing that." The important thing is that you state your reason for saying no with confidence. It's important for you not to get into an argument; the goal is to refuse what is being offered.
- ◆ **Walk away or ignore the offer.** This doesn't work in all situations. Sometimes you will be alone or in some other situation where you can't walk away.
- ◆ **Change the subject or suggest doing something else.** By saying, "Let's do ____ instead," you have the potential to not only refuse an offer of drugs, alcohol, or tobacco, but to prevent a friend from using them too.
- ◆ **Assert yourself.** This is an important part of all the above tactics. If you can stick up for herself, you are learning an important life skill.

This information was taken from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA). For more information please visit <http://www.family.samhsa.gov/teach/refusal.aspx>

Beach Week Packing Suggestions

General House

- Paper towels
- Toilet paper
- Paper cups, plates and napkins
- Soap
- Cleaning supplies
- Dish Detergent (check to see if your unit has a dish washer)
- Laundry Detergent
- Water Bottles
- Beach Blankets
- Check to see if your unit has beach chairs and umbrella (you can also rent these on the beach)
- Note pad and pens/pencils to leave each other notes and make shopping lists
- Beach bag and cooler

Medical

- First Aid Kit
- Headache medicine
- Suntan/Sunburn lotion
- Bug repellent
- Stomach remedies
- Prescription medicine
- Antibiotic cream

Documents

- Valid form of I.D. with your picture and birth date
- Copy of beach house lease
- Copy of housemates emergency information and contacts
- Copy of your insurance card

Food

Discuss and decide this with your housemates. You might save money buying in bulk before you go. Things can be more expensive at the beach.

Personal Items

- Beach Towels
- Bath Towels
- Sheets (what size beds and how many are in the unit?)
- Pillow
- Pajamas
- Toiletries and cosmetics/hair dryer
- Lip balm
- Swimsuits/trunks and cover-up
- Shoes (sandals, flip flops, tennis)
- Pants/Sweatshirt
- Shorts and Tees
- Underwear
- One or two nicer outfits
- Workout clothes
- Rain Jacket/pullover
- Umbrella
- Hat(s)
- Sunglasses
- Change for vending machines, laundry, parking meters
- Camera and new batteries
- Cellphone and charger
- Disposable underwater camera

Activities

What will you do if it rains? What will you do at night?

- DVDs/movies/video games
- Radio/CDs/iPod/MP3 player
- Board games
- Deck of cards
- Sports gear (football, volleyball, frisbee, fishing pole/tackle)
- Guitar
- Beach activities (surfboard/boogie board, paddleball)
- Books/magazines

BEACH WEEK AGREEMENT

I understand that _____ is the adult legally responsible for the house I am renting for Beach Week. I pledge to _____ that I will follow these rules to ensure a safe, police-free week at _____ beach house in _____.

*We will create a daily house manager rotation that will be agreed upon in advance of arrival and posted at the beach house.

*I will be a house manager one day during the week to ensure that the house is in good condition. I will be responsible for the key and locking the house when everyone is out. I will handle any problems that occur that day. Problems may include broken glass around the house, spills, toilet clogs or other maintenance problems.

*I will be aware of where at least one other person is during the day and at night in case of an emergency.

*We will post emergency numbers (fire, police, hospital) at the beach house.

*We will figure out a buddy system so that no one person is on the beach, in town or at a party by himself/herself.

- I will stay in _____ and not drive or be driven to another beach community/town during the week.
- I will not host parties at the beach house.
- Only those persons in our group who have paid a share of the week's rent will spend the night at the beach house. There will be no overnight guests.
- If something is broken or damaged, I agree that everyone will pay for it regardless of how it happened or who did it.
- I agree to leave the house in the same condition it was in when we arrived and participate in its clean-up.
- As a parent concerned about the health and safety of my child, I pledge that I will not provide him/her, and especially someone else's child, with alcohol, nor will I support underage drinking parties. Underage drinking can ruin a young life, and I want to be a part of a caring community that says "We do not support underage drinking!"

Teenager Signature

Date

Parent or Guardian Signature

Date



Rehoboth Beach/Dewey Beach Police Department statistics

Alcohol:

Rehoboth – 36 arrested for underage possession or consumption of alcohol from May 27, 2008 to June 23, 2008.

Dewey Beach: 108 arrest for underage possession or consumption of alcohol from May 27, 2007 to June 23, 2007.

Ocean City: 792 arrests during June 2007.

Drugs:

Rehoboth- Drug arrests up in June 2007 also; Drug arrests in June 2007 totaled more than May, July, and August 2007 combined.

Realtor Coldwell Banker:

Zero tolerance for underage drinking. If police are called to a unit for load parties, etc. tenants are usually evicted.

Penalties for underage alcohol arrests:

Rehoboth – \$100 up plus court costs

Dewey Beach – can be \$300 or more plus court costs

Delaware – These charges can result in loss of license.

Out of state residents from Virginia could face sanctions from their home state DMV such as: 6 months loss of license, 30 hours of community service, and a mandatory Alcohol Education program. Those underage who enter a package store or bar risk a \$50 fine.



Tips for Alternatives to Beach Week

TAKE A RISK, EXPLORE OTHER GRADUATION ADVENTURES

- ☀ How about a beach weekend instead of a whole week?
- ☀ Take a trip elsewhere with a few good friends
- ☀ Learning Adventure Vacations: experience a country's culture in-depth by taking cooking classes, learning a language, etc.
- ☀ Family vacation
- ☀ Take advantage of local attractions: rafting, tubing, rock climbing, hiking, theme parks, etc.
- ☀ Community service projects (i.e. Habitat for Humanity, Meals on Wheels, etc.)
- ☀ Mission trip with a local church

Other Resources

www.TheCommunityOfConcern.org
www.maddva.org
www.abc.state.va.us
www.sadd.org
www.playitsafeoceancity.com
www.theantidrug.com
www.vdh.state.va.us
www.drugfree.org
www.connectnetwork.org
www.nccrimecontrol.org
www.daodas.state.sc.us
www.alcoholfreechildren.org
www.away.com
www.drugfreealliance.org
www.toosmarttostart.com
www.itwonthappentome.org

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www.Chesterfieldsafe.org

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- ◆ Rehoboth Beach Police Chief: **Keith Banks**

Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition of Alexandria (SAPCA) Mission:

To engage diverse sectors of the community in Collaborative, cross-cultural and comprehensive substance abuse prevention efforts that result in a reduction of underage substance use and abuse in the City of Alexandria.

Contacts:

For more information or to join SAPCA please contact Noraine Buttar at 703-746-3670 or noraine.buttar@alexandriava.gov

Please visit our website:

<http://www.alexhealth.org/partnership/sapca.html>

