

## Making Burrillville's 2017 Prom Season Memorable

Prom is a significant rite of passage and celebration of a time together as a graduating class. There are months of planning for the event and the financial investment is real as seen from the *Visa 2014 Prom Spending Survey* where the average household spent \$978 on prom-related expenses, with the previous year averaging \$1,139.

Many parents are hard at work to help make the prom memorable. Since statistics show approximately one-third of alcohol-related teen traffic fatalities occur during peak prom season (April and June), and with accidents as a leading cause of death of those between 12 and 19 years of age, helping to establish guidelines for prom season can literally save lives. Here are a few tips that can help parents look beyond the external trappings of prom to truly create a safe experience.

### 1. Communicate Expectations

Prom and graduation season are another opportunity to reinforce alcohol and drug use expectations. As students might be feeling more independent with college looming, it is important to help your student successfully navigate some prom-related temptations and possibly some new peer pressures.

### 2. Agree on Your Teen's Plans for the Night

Communicate curfews and meet your child when they arrive home. Don't



allow for large unaccountable time frames as that can foster dangerous situations. If there is to be a private family-hosted after-party, connect with the host parents on the level of supervision and confirm alcohol will not be available.

### 3. Support Plans for Safety

Make sure you know or meet your child's prom date before the event. Encourage driving arrangements of a limo or older sibling to reduce the possibility of distracted driving. Create a shared signal with your child that can be used if a pick-up is needed some time during the night. Research has proven that discussions between parents and students before the prom about possible scenarios increases safe decision-making.

### 4. Monitor Pre-Prom and Post-Prom Activities

Consider hosting a pre-prom reception where no alcohol is served. Don't approve after-prom plans at the beach or distant location. Late night driving exponentially increases the likelihood of accidents.

### 5. Encourage School-Sponsored Post-Prom Events

Schools that host after-prom parties have dramatically decreased post-prom accidents and issues. Consider providing school sponsored transportation to the prom and back to after-prom as another key to a safe and fun night.

With some simple guidelines and a reminder of parents' expectations, prom can be memorable and magical for all.

