



Dear Harborside Parents,

At our last PTSO meeting, I shared with our parents that I was concerned about things that we sometimes hear kids talking about in school. 90% of our kids seem to always do the right thing and make outstanding choices. However, there are also kids that I fear make decisions that expose them to dangerous situations. Sometimes these situations are sensitive in nature and therefore difficult to talk about in large groups. Our PTSO agreed also that parents are almost always the best people to talk about some of these topics with their own children.

We agreed that maybe 1 time per month, I would send home a suggested topic for people to talk about with their students. I am sure that many of them think that I am a dork, or old fuddy duddy, or whatever for doing this, but I feel like teenagers sometimes make dangerous or unhealthy decisions in the absence of adult guidance. We have great kids at Harborside, but kids sometimes high school students almost think that they are invincible. There seems to be an attitude amongst all teens that "this will not happen to me."

Because of my worries, please accept these messages that come home as simple suggestions that people might ask their students about. I am in no way suggesting that your child is participating in any of these activities, but I am saying that I worry about teens in Kenosha who might be. Maybe your child is aware of others that are participating in these things. Maybe it is upsetting to them simply to hear about these situations and they would appreciate some adult guidance, but do not know how to ask.

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Pete's Tough Topic for today!

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When your student tells you that they are heading off to a friend's house for the evening, do you really know where they are going? Do you know if the parent of the "host house" is home? If they are staying overnight, did you walk them to the door to say hi to the other parent as you dropped them off or talk to them on the phone? Are you sure that the kids will be staying at that house all night?

One student at the PTSO meeting last week told our group that he was at 2 parties last weekend where there were no parents present. In fact, it is quite likely the adult owners of the houses did not even know that there child was having friends over. At these 2 parties, alcohol was not mentioned as an issue, but at many parties – alcohol plays a big role.

Questions then arise:

- What kids there have a car?
- If your kid is there, and they decide to visit another party, who is driving them to that other place?

- What if they decide to go as a group to get something to eat, who is driving the car that your son or daughter might get into.

Pete's suggestions:

- Make sure that a parent is home at the other house before allowing a student to spend the night.
 - Make sure it is a family that you trust. *(Some families adopt the philosophy that they would rather have kids drink in their own home rather than sneaking around and driving while under the influence.)*
 - Are you aware of the liability that the host family incurs if a party with alcohol is held at your house?!?! It can put families in amazingly difficult situations. Parents are liable.
 - Please talk to your children about the dangers of alcohol. Alcohol related deaths are one of the leading causes of death for teenagers. It is even dangerous for kids that do not drink. Do they know what to do if their friend has been drinking and he is their only ride? Do they know for sure, "Do not get into that car!" Are they bold enough to take their friends keys from them?

(We admit – "Pete" does not know all – that is why we are letting you handle these conversations at home. Thanks for listening to our concerns.)

Pirate Pete