



30 January 2019

Dear Parents/Guardians of Year 12 students

The Formal is fast approaching and Year 12 students are understandably excited about the occasion. Mr Bishop will soon be speaking with students regarding the arrangements for what promises to be a great night. In the coming weeks, we will again remind students about some of the details including etiquette, table manners, timing their arrival, photographs and other such important things.

We have made it clear to students that there should be no post Formal functions. The College does not condone such activities and we strongly request that this not occur. While we do not expect any breach of this request, it will be extremely disappointing if such an event has been planned, and even more disturbing if alcohol is available for open consumption by our students, most of whom are underage.

As Principal of this College, and a parent myself, I have grave concerns about this possible scenario. Let me explain why. The research is very clear about the significant damage that alcohol can have on a developing adolescent brain. Read this article from Drug and Alcohol Research Training Australia for further details:

<http://darta.net.au/wordpress-content/uploads/2017/03/PARENTS-2017-ALCOHOL-AND-DEVELOPING-BRAIN.pdf>

In addition, there is the legal aspect. The following extract is taken from the Queensland Government website for the Office of Liquor and Gambling Regulation.

*In the State of Queensland providing alcohol to underage children where there is no responsible supervision is not only dangerous, it is illegal. The purpose of the new irresponsible supply law is to address the problem associated with minors consuming alcohol at private premises. In some circumstances, parents and other adults are supplying liquor to minors without responsible supervision. What constitutes responsible supervision? Responsible supervision cannot be provided by any adult - it can only be provided by a parent, step parent, guardian or adult who has parental rights and responsibilities for the minor.*

*There are two offences:*

- *for an adult who is not a responsible adult for the minor, to supply liquor to a minor in a private place, and*
- *for a responsible adult for a minor to supply liquor to the minor in a private place, without responsibly monitoring the consumption of the liquor.*

*Penalties are high – get caught providing alcohol to an underage child for consumption without responsible supervision and you can face penalties of up to \$10,444. These penalties do not just apply to parents – older friends and siblings are liable too! So you are kidding yourself if you think you are not responsible.*

So apart from the legal and financial consequences (up to \$10,444 per offence), there are also significant moral obligations that we as parents have to each other, our children and their welfare.

Quite frankly, simply being aware of and accepting the situation does not remove the legal responsibility from the ‘host’ of such an event, or any other irresponsible supplier of alcohol. I fear for the risk being assumed by the host of any such an event, but more so for the welfare of our students. I am quite sure that many parents are not fully aware of the legal circumstances surrounding such a function, although I am sure many of you are not comfortable with the tension between your own moral values and allowing your child to attend.

Please note that I am not on a mission to discover whether such an event has been planned, nor do I wish to know. That’s not the point. My intention in writing is not to spoil the fun for our students, but simply to ensure that you, as parents, are fully aware of the new laws introduced in 2008, designed to address the problems associated with minors consuming alcohol at private premises. This is why the College does not condone post Formal parties. Perhaps this letter gives you the reason you have been seeking to say ‘no’ to your child.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. Sly', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dr Mark Sly  
**PRINCIPAL**