

## **Guidelines for Setting Rules and Limits for your Grade 8/9 Teen.**

Setting rules and limits for your grade 8 or 9 student is not always easy. Remembering that teens need and want limits will sometimes give you that support you need when you start second guessing yourself. Rules and limits help keep your teen safe.

The following are intended only as guidelines to setting rules and limits best suited to *your* family and the unique temperament of your teen. (Yes, yours is special.)

### Social Activities

- It is perfectly reasonable to expect that a grade 8 students tell parents where they are at all times. Parents should know *where* their Grade 8 and 9 student is, *who* they are with, and *what* they are doing. If the plan changes, they must check with you to get permission and confirm there is no change in expectations regarding transportation, pick-up and curfew.
- Grade 8 and 9 students should be home by dark on weekdays with adjusted hours on weekends. Grade 8 and 9 students should not be 'hanging' out on the street without a specified destination or activity.
- Ideally grade 8 and 9 students should be driven by an adult for supervised activities that occur after dark. Grade 9 students should not be using public transit after dark.
- Grade 8 and 9 students should only attend parties on the weekend and should only attend parties that include adult supervision. Curfews should be clear and set ahead of time: for example, be home by 10:00pm on a Friday or Saturday night.

### Homework

- Homework can be expected to take up to 2 hours to complete. Grade 8 and 9 students should have no TV, computer, video games, or phone use until homework is completed. Set guidelines for use, for example, no more than one hour per day on the computer.

### Technology

- Grade 8 and 9 students should keep Internet-connected computers in an open area of the house and not in their bedroom or in a closed room. 94% of Canadian students in Grades 8 and 9 say they go online at home. Please refer to <https://mediasmarts.ca/parents> (a Canadian public education program on Internet safety)

- Cell phones are a reality of young peoples' lives today. For many parents working later shifts, they are a wonderful parenting tool. Make sure to remind your teen that the phone exists primarily for *your* benefit: they have a phone so that parent and teen can be in contact. Be clear that failure to answer it or abusing the privilege of having it can result in loss of use.
- Your teen should not be taking their cell phone into their bedrooms at night. The temptation to text and talk to peers is intense.

### Health

- Grade 8 and 9 students require approximately 9 hours of sleep per night; set bedtimes consistently. Do not let bedtime on weekends run later than midnight. If you do, you are sending a jetlagged student to school on Monday and Tuesday.
- There should be no computer use or video games permitted at least one hour prior to bedtime. Both activities prevent the kind of pre-bedtime calming rituals that help us to fall asleep. The light from the computer screen or the television stimulates the brain in a way that makes our bodies respond as if it is day time.
- Finally, if your teen in any grade was too ill to go to school today, they are too ill to go out this evening...even if they managed to pull it together for last period.

Remember: Rules and limits are best consistently enforced. Consequences for breaking the rules and limits should be in place ahead of time. Discuss with your teen what will happen if he or she doesn't follow through. Allow them to have input into the discussions, but you make the decision. Remember that a consequence needs to be one you are able to supervise and does not unreasonably tax you and your time.

If you have any questions about your teen's attendance, or you want to confirm things like school letting out early or starting late, call the school counsellor. Visit the school website for information about things your student may not realize are helpful: Homework Clubs, Peer Tutoring, teacher's websites and their office hours for extra help.