

Thursday, 15 November 2018

## Don't be afraid to say 'no' at 'Schoolies'

**Kids Helpline is reminding young people what 'YES' and 'NO' sound like in a bid to keep consent at the forefront of decision-making at 'Schoolies'.**

Kids Helpline Virtual Services Manager Tony FitzGerald said Schoolies is a time where giving and receiving consent is vitally important to staying safe and making sure everyone enjoys their Schoolies' experience.

"Schoolies is an important positive celebration for thousands of young people graduating across Australia but the experience can turn negative when actions are taken without consent," Mr FitzGerald said.

"Kids Helpline is encouraging young people to make decisions they're comfortable with, prioritise safety and not be afraid to say no to what others might say is 'pretty gnarly' or okay in a party environment.

"Consent is a clear agreement between people, it's a choice that's made without pressure or guilt and is understood, enthusiastic and certain.

"This can include anything from decisions to drink alcohol, undertaking risky activities that can affect your physical safety, through to deciding to engage in sexual activity. Some of these activities can have both personal and legal consequences.

"For example, we all know that in addition to personal risk, laws exist about alcohol and drug taking. In Australia, it's also a criminal offence to engage in sexual activity with someone if they haven't given consent, or if they're unable to give consent due to severe intoxication, coercion, not being of legal age or not understanding what's going on.

"When engaging in sex you have a responsibility to make sure everybody is okay with what's going on, and have the absolute right to say 'no' if you feel uncomfortable."

Mr FitzGerald said being safe most certainly doesn't mean you have to be boring.

"We want young people to have a great time and enjoy Schoolies, but make choices that help them keep control of their situation and stay safe," he said.

### Kids Helpline's Top 5 Tips for making positive decisions at Schoolies

1. Always make sure everybody is consenting before engaging in sexual activity – silence or lack of resistance does NOT equal consent
2. Prioritise safety! Avoid balconies if you've been drinking and lock doors, especially at night
3. It's okay not to drink or take drugs, even if all your friends are
4. Go with your gut – if you're uncomfortable with a situation, opt out
5. If you're worried about anything at any time of the day or night, you can call **Kids Helpline 24/7** on **1800 55 1800** or visit **[kidshelpline.com.au](https://kidshelpline.com.au)**

Kids Helpline is also challenging teens to be more aware of the impacts their actions have at schoolies with a 'Which TV/Movie Character Will You Be This Schoolies?' Quiz: <https://www.playbuzz.com/kidshelpline10/which-tv-movie-character-will-you-be-this-schoolies>

More information for young people about making positive and safe decisions around things like drugs or alcohol and staying safe in a party environment can be found at [www.kidshelpline.com.au/teens](https://www.kidshelpline.com.au/teens). For tips and info on sex and consent go to <https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/what-consent>

Kids Helpline is Australia's only free, private and confidential 24/7 phone and online counselling service specifically for children and young people aged 5 to 25 years. FREE call 1800 55 1800 or [www.kidshelpline.com.au](http://www.kidshelpline.com.au)

Kids Helpline would like to remind media to include [Kids Helpline](#) contact details during or at the end of broadcast coverage and articles to direct children and young people who may need support.

-ENDS-

#### INTERVIEW/PHOTO OPPORTUNITIES

Tony FitzGerald, Kids Helpline Virtual Services Manager  
Kids Helpline counsellors  
Kids Helpline VNR available on request

#### MEDIA CONTACTS:

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