

Talking Points

a family guide to discussing responsible decision-making



UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTH CAROLINA



Dear Carolina families,

This past May, I was extremely proud to congratulate 7,476 confident South Carolina graduates as they stepped into bright futures. This August, I look forward to meeting your children and future Carolina graduates. In preparation for the incoming class, our campus is bustling with renovations. Additionally, our dedicated faculty and staff are working extremely hard to prepare an environment that will offer your student both academic and personal success.

Research indicates that the first six weeks in the lives of new students set the tone for their future. Many experience tension as they learn to balance new freedoms and responsibilities. As a parent, I also understand that it is a time of transition for each family. Pride in your student's achievements is mixed with apprehension about their wellbeing. I want to personally assure you that your student's security, health, and academic success is our top priority. That is why I'm asking for your help.

As your student prepares to join us in the fall, please take the time to discuss with them the importance of making healthy and informed choices. Your student could face tough issues such as underage drinking and drug use, and they need to be prepared. Conversations with you concerning healthy relationships, safety in an urban setting, and bystander accountability will set a critical foundation for future success. Some of these topics can be uncomfortable, so we are providing this topical guide to help you initiate conversations about responsible decision making.

Your support is essential. Together, we can work to create a healthy community of leaders and scholars at Carolina. Thank you!

Sincerely,

Harris Pastides
President

Starting the **conversation**

College is a time of new experiences, new friendships and memories that will last a lifetime. Students enter an environment that is often their first experience living outside the home, and they face many situations requiring good decision-making skills. Sometimes, students don't think about the possible consequences before making decisions about high-risk behaviors, and families can help educate them.

Before your student leaves home to begin their college experience, we encourage you to have conversations about the risks and consequences of engaging in high-risk behavior. Some families say that their students do not need a pre-college conversation like this because they are already educated about drugs and alcohol, but college brings new pressure and freedom that warrant a new series of conversations. Be prepared to establish an ongoing conversation rather than give a one-time speech. The first discussion is likely to be the toughest to initiate. Use this guide to help start your conversations.



Download the **UofSC Parent & Family Programs** mobile app for monthly Talking Points tips, campus resources, and much more!



First **six weeks**

The first six weeks are a critical period for first-year students, and we encourage you to stay connected during this time. Use different communication methods (calls, emails, texts, care packages), and keep them informed about life at home so they will continue to feel connected to your family, even though you may be hundreds or thousands of miles away.

Engage with the Office of Parent & Family Programs on Facebook and Instagram. We'll prompt you to tag your student, which is an easy way to initiate a conversation!



[Facebook.com/UofSCParents](https://www.facebook.com/UofSCParents)
[Instagram.com/UofSCParents](https://www.instagram.com/UofSCParents)

Conversation **Tips**

- Avoid contradictions between your words and your actions.
- Assess and review your own feelings about alcohol and other drug use.
- Talk to parents of other college students who have learned by experience.
- Find “teachable moments” in television programs, books or newspapers that deal with substance use in college settings.
- Speak calmly and openly. You do not need to exaggerate. The facts speak for themselves.
- Listen actively and try to understand your student's point of view.
- Allow your student to express their fears and concerns without interrupting or lecturing.



By the **numbers**

7,689

Number of new students who took AlcoholEdu® during the 2017-2018 year

26

Percentage of students who reported drinking in a high-risk manner prior to arriving on campus

43

Percentage of first year students who reported NOT drinking after arriving on campus

52

Percentage of first year students who drink who report doing shots

29

Percentage of first year students who reported missing a class, performing poorly on an assignment and/or getting behind in school as a result of drinking after arriving on campus

89

Percentage of students who indicated that the AlcoholEdu® course helped them prepare to make responsible decisions about drinking

Making **healthy choices**

As students enter college at the University of South Carolina, they are most likely excited about this important time in their lives (and may have some feelings of anxiety about what lies ahead). Students also face some challenges and transitions associated with the first year of college. One of the challenges all students will encounter at some point during their time in college is the decision to participate in or associate with high-risk behaviors.

High-risk behaviors

Some examples of high-risk behaviors are:

- drinking alcohol under the age of 21.
- chugging alcohol, participating in drinking games or drinking shots.
- drinking alcohol with the purpose of getting drunk.
- driving after drinking alcohol or riding in a car with someone who is under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- not knowing what you are drinking or leaving your drink unattended.
- mixing alcohol with medications, energy drinks or other illegal drugs.
- misusing prescription drugs.

How to encourage low-risk behaviors and healthy choices

Remind your student:

- it is illegal to consume alcohol if you are under age 21.
- to think of the health, academic, financial and legal consequences that can result from choosing to drink alcohol.
- most students are not drinking in high-risk ways. In fact, over 40% of freshmen identify as non-drinkers.

Encourage your student to:

- choose fun, alternative activities that do not involve alcohol.
- make a realistic, safe plan before going out for the night.
- know before going out how they will get home safely.
- eat a meal before drinking.
- drink water between alcoholic drinks.
- have no more than three drinks per day for women, four drinks per day for men.
- always know how much alcohol is in their drink.

Educating students about responsible decision-making

The Office of Substance Abuse Prevention and Education (SAPE) actively educates students about the consequences of engaging in high-risk behaviors so they can make informed decisions. Through collaboration with other service areas and departments on campus, SAPE provides programs, services and resources that support the personal development and academic success of students by promoting low-risk substance use behaviors.

Tailgate on Greene Street: SAPE partners with several organizations to provide an alcohol-free tailgate for every home football game in addition to viewing parties throughout the year.

Peer Education: A diverse group of students are selected to provide education on alcohol, drugs, and addiction to the UofSC campus with the goal of encouraging healthy decisions, promoting low-risk use and reducing stigma. Volunteers and interns facilitate evidence-based activities for a variety of audiences.

Good Choices: Students at UofSC engage in many fun, healthy and low-risk activities both on and off campus. The SAPE website highlights many free and low-cost “good choices” for students to try out during their time at Carolina. Students can follow [@UofSCGoodChoice](#) on Twitter for upcoming events and things to do.

Gamecock Recovery: By promoting a healthy environment and lifestyle for students in recovery, Gamecock Recovery seeks to ensure that all students in recovery can achieve success by creating a nurturing campus and community environment. Programs include a study and hangout space in Strom Thurmond Wellness and Fitness Center 301B, regular social events, on-campus support meetings and weekly meditation.

Visit sc.edu/sape for more information.

UofSC policy on alcohol and drugs

The Code of Conduct establishes the expectations of the university for its students. The Office of Student Conduct aims to hold our students accountable for their actions, both on and off campus.

Sanctions for violations are designed to be educational in nature and encourage students to learn from their mistakes and become better citizens of our community. Not only can students be held accountable through the criminal court and the university simultaneously, but convictions for alcohol (including DUI) and drugs can affect scholarships and financial aid.

Possible Sanctions: Alcohol Violations

- Fine: \$250-350
- Phone call to parents
- Alcohol education class
- One-on-one intervention
- Athletic tickets revoked
- Suspension

Possible Sanctions: Drug Violations

- Fine: \$350
- Drug screenings
- One-on-one intervention
- Group counseling
- Removal from University Housing without refund
- Conduct probation
- Parent or guardian letter
- Suspension

Visit sc.edu/policies/staf626.pdf for the full text of Student Affairs Policy STAF 6.26.

For families

Parents and family members are encouraged to join our comprehensive prevention efforts and assist us in fostering a safe and healthy community. Taking the AlcoholEdu® and SAPU courses yourself is a great way to create more discussion about realistic and interactive skill-building techniques with your student before school begins. Visit sc.edu/sape to get started.

Behavioral Intervention Team

In an effort to design a community of caring that relies on early alerts to distressing and disruptive behavior, the Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT) individually addresses student behaviors that are both disruptive and may include mental health and/or safety issues.

The BIT consists of a group of qualified and dedicated USC professionals whose mission is to:

- balance the individual needs of the student and those of the greater campus community,
- provide a structured positive method for addressing student behaviors that impact the university community and may involve mental health and/or safety issues and
- manage each case individually.

Families who are concerned can submit a BIT referral online at sc.edu/bit.

AlcoholEdu® and Sexual Assault Prevention for Undergraduates requirement

Deadlines

Students entering in fall 2018

Part 1: Aug. 23, 2018

Part 2: Oct. 23, 2018

Students entering in spring 2019

Part 1: Jan. 14, 2019

Part 2: March 20, 2019

AlcoholEdu® and Sexual Assault Prevention for Undergraduates

AlcoholEdu® and Sexual Assault Prevention for Undergraduates (SAPU) are part of our commitment to fostering a safe and healthy community. AlcoholEdu® is an online alcohol education assessment that measures students' perceptions about alcohol use and abuse prior to arriving on campus and after several weeks on campus. SAPU is an online sexual assault prevention and training module that presents realistic and interactive skill-building scenarios. All new undergraduate (freshman, transfer or change-of-campus) students are required to complete AlcoholEdu® and SAPU.

In accordance with federal mandates, these programs serve as one way Carolina students learn about these important topics.

How do students take AlcoholEdu® and SAPU?

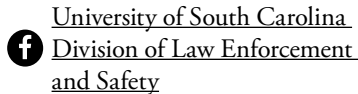
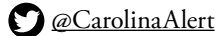
Students should log in to Self Service Carolina and click on the AlcoholEdu® and SAPU box under the student tab. Satisfaction of the AlcoholEdu® requirement is contingent upon scoring 80% or higher on Part 1 as well as completing Part 2 of the course. Completion of SAPU is contingent on completing both Part 1 and Part 2 of the course. Failure to successfully complete both Parts 1 and 2 for each course before the deadlines will result in a hold being placed on the student's registration for their second-semester classes.

Campus resources

Law Enforcement and Safety

803-777-4215 • les.sc.edu

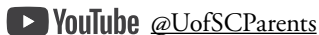
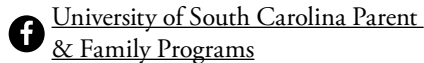
Emergency: 911 or download
the Rave Guardian app



Parent & Family Programs

1-800-868-6752 • sc.edu/parents
scparents@sc.edu

In recognition of the critical role families play in their students' college success, Parent & Family Programs partners with you to help your student succeed.

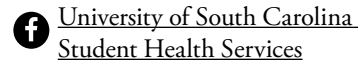


Student Health Services

803-777-3175 • sc.edu/healthservices

Student Health Services provides comprehensive physical and mental health care services right on campus. SHS is committed to evidence-based, patient-centered care to help contribute to a student's success and overall well-being.

*Counseling & Psychiatry
appointments:* 803-777-5223



Substance Abuse Prevention and Education

803-777-3933 • sc.edu/sape

SAPE works to create a diverse campus environment that engages students in healthy, low-risk behaviors related to the use of alcohol and other drugs.



Parental notification policy

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) protects students' academic and disciplinary records from being shared without their permission. There are exceptions to FERPA that permit the Office of Student Conduct to notify parents of the outcome of a student's disciplinary case when it is related to alcohol or drug offenses.

As a practice, the university will request that students call their parents during the conduct meeting for a first alcohol offense. Per policy, the university may disclose the result of a conduct hearing to a parent:

- if the student is under age 21 and the proceeding has resulted in a violation of the university's drug or alcohol policies.
- after the second violation of university policy regarding alcohol.
- following a sanction that places the student on housing or conduct probation (notice that any additional offense may affect the student's ability to live on campus or attend the university) or that results in removal or suspension from University Housing or the institution.
- following any incident in which the use of alcohol or drugs has resulted in hospitalization.

For other types of disciplinary action, parents can request their student sign a waiver (available at sc.edu/osc) to allow staff to disclose the student's disciplinary history or status. For more information, call 803-777-4333.