

Parent Information Forums Highlight Topics Every Parent of Teens Should Know

It's not your parents' high school any longer. Knowing that the issues that face teens are markedly different than when parents were in school, law enforcement officers will once again be holding forums for parents on topical teen and young adult issues.

School resource officers (SRO) from Chino Police Department and the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department / Chino Hills Police Department work among our students daily and will be providing a close up on campus issues to parents at two forums this month.

The forums are set for Tuesday, Oct. 13 in the Chino High multi-purpose room, and Thursday, Oct. 22 in the Chino Hills High theatre. Both are from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m.

A light dinner of pizza, cookies, and water will be offered beginning at 6:00 p.m. Spanish translation will also be offered.

The Parent Information Forums began in 2010 as a way to introduce parents to the issues that face teens. The resource officers work in Chino Valley Unified School District's junior high and high school campuses. This year's forums have been expanded to include additional topics.

Drug trends in the community will be discussed as well as social media risks and concerns, driver license laws affecting teens, mental health issues among students, lockdown procedures at schools, and resources to help teens and their families with drug and truancy issues, and risky or unlawful behaviors.

The Forum presenters, including Deputies Noel Negrón and Marlene Thompson from the Sheriff's Department, know that many of the issues teen face today are more complicated than when their parents were in high school. Topics at the forums change from year to year depending upon what issues the officers see on their campuses.

"We're hoping more parents will show up to learn about issues affecting their children," said Chino Police Officer John Cervantes, who is assigned to Magnolia and Ramona junior high schools in Chino.

"This is a partnership between the parents, the schools, and our agencies. It takes the group as a whole to guide that child," said Chino Police Officer Dustin Kato, the school resource officer at Don Lugo High in Chino.

Parents need to know about new drug trends including the use of powdered alcohol and concentrated cannabis, Officer Cervantes said.

Although it is not illegal for students to possess "vape" pens, the water vapor devices are often used illegally by teens, said Chino Police Officer Robert Troncoso.

Nick Bird, the school resource officer at Chino High, said students are smoking illegal drugs with the pens, including "hash," a cannabis product composed of compressed or purified preparations of stalked resin glands.

Chino Police Sgt. Rodney Lombard, who oversees the school resource officers in Chino, said the forum will also include information on driving laws that affect teens. For example, while persons under the age of 18 are not allowed to drive with passengers under the age of 20, there are some exceptions. He said a teen driver can get written parental permission to transport their underage siblings.

The dangers of social media will also be discussed at the forums.

“In regards to social media, the world has access to them,” Officer Cervantes said of teens.

“With social media being what it is, it’s virtually impossible to know what your child is doing,” Sgt. Lombard said. “Most kids have a social media alter ego. They have to remember the images (they post) are there for eternity.”

Officer Kato said the resource officers noticed at past information forums that parents are not aware of resources in the community to help them and their teens. The school resource officers hope the upcoming forums will help address that.

The forums began as a result of the high number of student expulsions based on drug-related offenses on campus. To date, nearly 1,000 parents have attended the forums. The forums won an Excellence in Communication California Gold Award in 2012 for the CVUSD Communications Office.

At the October forums, San Bernardino County Probation officers will discuss programs their department offers to help families of students who are in trouble or at risk of getting in trouble. Among those is the Youth Accountability Board, “a collaborative program between the Probation Department and community partners, working together with families to divert first time and low risk juvenile offenders from requiring further intervention by the criminal justice system,” according to the department’s website.

The Probation Department also offers Day Reporting Centers in the county, including one in Rancho Cucamonga, that provide prevention and intervention classes in drug, alcohol, truancy, anger management, shoplifting, graffiti, and parenting.

An organization that has partnered with educators to offer school-based counseling in the Inland Empire, is also expected to be at the Parent Forums, offering information on alcohol and drug abuse prevention and intervention.

Parents are asked not to bring their children to the presentation portion of the meeting because of the mature nature of the topics. Supervised childcare will be offered in a separate room during the presentation.

Chino High is located at 5472 Park Place, Chino and Chino Hills High is at 16150 Pomona Rincon Road, Chino Hills.