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Parents' prom concerns topic of meeting

BY JOAN RANSBERRY
Staff Writer

As prom night approaches, Markham District High School is taking a sobering step to eliminate alcohol and drug use.

With more than 400 students expected to attend the prom at Markham District High School Friday, parents are invited to attend a meeting focusing on drugs and alcohol.

The meeting, free to parents from across Markham, will be held at the Church Street school Wednesday at 7:30 p.m.

"Prom season increases concerns," school principal Kelly McLeod said. "Our mandate is to help parents talk to their children about drug and alcohol use."

Parents often face the dilemma of trying to determine if their children are using alcohol and drugs, Ms McLeod pointed out. "This meeting will help answer some of the questions," she said.

A drug recognition expert from the York Regional Police, officers from the police service's Street Beat program, a counsellor, a member of the

school council and a representative from Mothers Against Drunk Drivers will make up the panel.

TALK TO CHILDREN

"Parents will be given a chance to learn how to effectively communicate with their sons and daughters," Ms McLeod said. "As well, parents can find out what is being done at school and in the community to address drug and alcohol use."

When hosting the prom, school officials encourage the students to take responsibility. Those attending the prom

are required to attend a forum about alcohol and drug use.

"Also, the students and parents are required to sign a waiver," Ms McLeod said. "The students are reminded that the (school) board's zero-tolerance policy carries through to the prom. Students are also told that anyone found drinking or using drugs will be escorted away from the venue."

School officials know young people can make a fatal mistake by using drugs and alcohol on a night that should be one of happiness and celebration, she said.

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