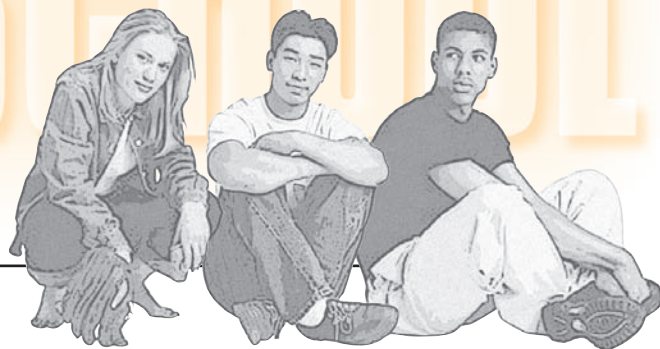


HIGH SCHOOL PARENT



Teens behind the wheel— staying ahead of the curve

Ask a 15-year old in New York how long it will be before he or she can drive and don't be surprised if the answer comes back measured in weeks, days, and even hours. Few teens can disguise their excitement at the prospect of driving. In our car-dependent society, a driver license is a rite of passage, a symbol of adulthood. Little changes a teen's life as suddenly and as profoundly as a driver license.

Learning to drive is a good thing

With all of the negative news concerning teen drivers, parents may be tempted to look solely at the risks associated with driving—but, driving is not all bad. Having an extra driver in a household can lessen the hassle of chauffeuring kids to and from after-school activities. And face it, it can be handy to send your teen to the store to pick up those few extra things you need for dinner. Learning to drive is the natural course of things for almost anyone who lives in a rural or suburban community. Most parents learned to drive (and survived), and their children can learn to do the same.

Don't minimize responsibility

Too often, the evening news recounts the tragic tale of teens involved in a fatal car accident. Inexperience behind the wheel and a willingness to take chances is a dangerous combination. Toss in drugs or alcohol and it suddenly creates an even deadlier concoction.

The facts concerning teen driving are sobering. Even though nearly nine out of 10 teens describe themselves as safe drivers, motor vehicle crashes are the number one cause of death among young drivers. In fact, drivers age 15-20 are twice as likely to die in a fatal auto accident than other drivers. When teens slip behind the wheel, they must understand that they are responsible for the welfare of both their passengers and occupants of other cars on the highway.

The \$\$\$ of driving

A new driver adds a considerable expense to the family budget. Will the new driver compete to use the family car, or will you need to purchase another vehicle? Will your teen contribute toward the purchase, maintenance, or operation of the car? Do those new costs mean your teen may have to sacrifice sports or other school activities for a part-time job? Beware that a car

can become a huge time and financial obligation. More than one student have seen their grades or social lives suffer.

A parent's role

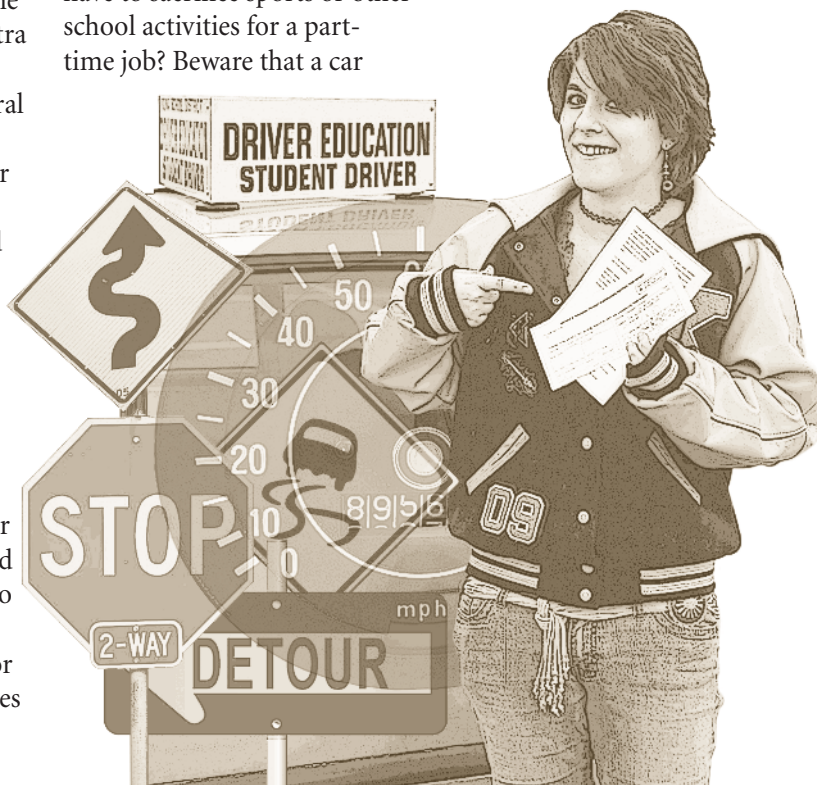
As a parent, you will play an active role in the driving process. New York law requires your written consent for your 16-year old to apply for a driving permit or license. Minors cannot enter into legal contracts such as loans, vehicle purchases, or insurance, etc. without your consent. And of course, your child is a precious commodity. With so much at stake, you will want to be involved. Consider the following:

- ▶ **Plan ahead.** Establish your ground rules for getting a license, using the car, etc. before your child asks to take the permit test.
- ▶ **Know the law.** That includes both the rules of the

road and the legal restrictions on new drivers.

- ▶ **Refresh your own driving skills.** Most teens will learn to drive from their parents. Before you take on the role of driving instructor, make certain your driving practices are up to snuff.
- ▶ **Have your child take Driver Education if offered in your school.** Driver Ed courses provide students with class time to learn about driving safety and then gives them practice time on the road. If your school does not offer Driver Ed, consider a driver instruction school. In all cases, your child must take and pass a state-certified pre-licensing course (frequently referred to as a five-hour course) to apply for a license.
- ▶ **Emphasize safety.** Driving is a privilege that brings new freedom, but with the freedom comes new responsibility. A single lapse in attention or judgment can have irreversible and tragic consequences.

Looking for more information? You can find New York State driving regulations, manuals, driver permits and licenses, and much more on the Department of Motor Vehicle Web site section for new drivers at www.nydmv.state.ny.us/license.htm#newdrivers. Most of their online material is also available in printed form at your local DMV office. The Governors Highway Safety Council and Ford have a great Web site filled with safe-driving tips at www.drivingskillsforlife.com.



Parents, breathe easy

IF YOUR TEEN DRIVER KNOWS THE RULES

Is your teen ready to hit the road for the first time? Or does he or she already have a firm hand on the keys? If so, you may be full of stress at the thought of what could happen behind the wheel on the weekends, at school or over the summer. The first step to relieving that anxiety starts with knowing the rules and making sure your teen driver does, too.

Driving is a privilege

The path to a driver license is not a one-way street. A teen may obtain a permit or license, but that license – especially in the early months of driving – can be taken away. Accidents or traffic violations are grounds for the state to revoke a license. **Parents also have the right to revoke their consent to allow their child under the age of 18 to drive.**

It's important for teens to know that driving is a "privilege" and not a "right." You may have consented to your child getting a driver license, but that doesn't mean you can't withdraw your permission – at anytime. For example, your teenage son may promise to keep up his grades in exchange for being allowed to get his driver license. Then in the excitement of his newfound freedom, he may forget about school and not hold up his end of the bargain. What can you do?

All you have to do is sign the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles Withdrawal of Consent form and submit it to any DMV office. It allows you to withdraw your permission for your child to have a Class DJ license, Class MJ license, learner's permit, and/or learner's permit for a motorcycle. The form is available online at www.nydmv.state.ny.us/forms/mv1w.pdf or from any DMV office.

Driving and parking at Schalmont HS

Schalmont Central School District provides bus transportation for all students and encourages all students to make use of the service. During their junior and senior years, students have the opportunity to request driving and parking privileges at Schalmont High School. There is no charge to park at the HS, but these privileges are awarded only with parents' consent.

How do parents provide consent? Juniors and seniors must first pick up a Student Use of Vehicle Contract packet, which is available online at www.schalmont.org/HS/studentdrivers.htm and in the HS main office. This packet explains all of the rules that students must abide by to park on HS grounds. The enclosed contract must be completed and signed by both the student driver and a parent/guardian, who is providing consent, before

being returned to the HS resource officer, Rich Kranick. The student driver is then issued a parking sticker that must be displayed on the rearview mirror of the vehicle that will be parked on school property.

Driver education resources

The HS resource officer often speaks to students about traffic safety. The district also offers driver education courses at the HS based on the availability of certified driving instructors and students' interest. Schalmont students interested in summer driving courses should contact Easy Method Driving School at (518) 377-6386 or visit the school online at <http://www.easymethoddrivingschool.biz/>.

Some of the rules covered in the Student Use of Vehicle Contract packet:

- ▶ Student drivers are expected to be on time for homeroom, which begins at 7:40 a.m.
- ▶ Student drivers are not allowed to leave school grounds before 2:15 p.m. unless they receive administrative permission to do so.
- ▶ Unauthorized vehicles are not allowed on school property during school hours. Since parking stickers are not transferable, a student driver must promptly notify the school resource officer if he or she is no longer using the vehicle authorized on the "Student Use of Vehicle Contract."
- ▶ Student drivers must abide by state and local traffic laws at all times on school property. For example, speeding tickets can be issued to students who exceed the 15 mph speed limit on school property.
- ▶ Student drivers may not return to their vehicles or move them during the school day without administrative permission.
- ▶ Student drivers can face disciplinary consequences for allowing fellow students to be unauthorized passengers in their vehicles.

These rules are designed to ensure the safety of students, faculty, and staff, and to reduce congestion on the HS campus. Student drivers who do not abide by the rules, are tardy or absent without permission, or have discipline referrals can lose the privilege of driving and parking at the HS.

Mark your CALENDAR



NOTE: All events at Schalmont High School unless otherwise noted.

May

- 15 HS Concert, 7 p.m.
- 16 HS Junior Prom @ Riverstone Manor, 7 p.m.
- 20 BUDGET VOTE, 6 a.m. – 9 p.m. Hockey Assoc. Cookout
- 22 HS/MS Interim Reports Issued
- 23-26 NO SCHOOL, Memorial Day
- 27 Board of Education Meeting @ MS LGI, 7 p.m.
- 29 HS Senior Awards Ceremony, 7 p.m. HS Alumni Wall of Distinction Induction
- 30 Senior Banquet @ Pinehaven Country Club, 6 p.m.

- 10 Hockey Assoc. Meeting @ Rotterdam Library, 7 p.m.
- 11 Athletic Assoc. Meeting, 7 p.m.
- 12 Friends of Music Meeting, 7 p.m.
- 17-26 NYS REGENTS TESTING
- 23 Board of Education Meeting @ MS LGI, 7 p.m.
- 26 LAST DAY OF SCHOOL Graduation Rehearsal @ Proctor's Theatre, 1 p.m.
- 27 Graduation @ Proctor's Theatre, 7 p.m.

June

- 3 Marching Band Banquet, 6 p.m.
- 6 Senior Ball @ Franklin Plaza, 7 p.m.
- 9 Board of Education Meeting @ MS LGI, 7 p.m.

DON'T FORGET to sign up to receive the latest high school news through Schalmont's School News Notifier at www.schalmont.org!