



RULES ARE COOL

Rules

Rules are guidelines you learn from life.

Any rules made should not be against Australian law.

Families usually make rules to help them live together as best they can. These rules can be different in different families.

It is best that the rules are understood and agreed by all in the family.

Over time you build up your own personal rules. These often come from your family, school and other influences. These are guides to what you value and hold strong inside. They can help guide you through life.

Law

Laws are rules that everyone must follow.

Laws are made by governments. Courts decide what laws mean and how they apply.

Law gives people legal authority to do things. For example, police, bus drivers, teachers and parents have authority under law. They also have responsibilities under law.

Laws must be fair for everyone. Being fair means that everyone should have an equal chance and can have their say.

If laws are unfair then people can join together to try to get the government to change the law. This should be done peacefully and openly.

Everyone has legal rights.

With all rights come responsibilities. As we get older and grow from a child into a teenager into an adult, we get more legal rights, but we also have more responsibilities. For example, you can get Learners and 'P' Plates and use alcohol at certain ages. These rights have to be carried out responsibly otherwise they can harm you and others and this might lead to the law punishing you.

Freedom and Responsibility

We live in a free country! Freedom means everyone has rights, but it doesn't mean we can do whatever we like. **With all rights, come responsibilities.**

As young people become older they often want to have more freedom and independence.

Independence and freedom come with responsibility.

Parents' role and right is to teach their children how to take responsibility for their own life and become more mature. This usually means parents setting clear boundaries about what their children can do.

These boundaries change as young people earn trust. Parents often start by giving their children a small amount of responsibility and freedom and increase this as young people prove they can be trusted.

During teenage years, young people are preparing to become adults. It can be a time where parents and their children begin to build a more adult relationship.

Rights within families

In Australia you are an 'adult' after turning 18 but some rights are allowed by the law at earlier times.

The law gives people greater freedom as they get older.

Parents have the right to be the legal guardian of a child until the child is 18.

People have the right to live in safety, free from physical, emotional and sexual abuse and neglect. Laws have been made to try to protect children if there is a danger of abuse.

Parents have the right to set boundaries and give reasonable discipline – within the law. Parents may not use unreasonable force. Hitting can cause injury and lead to action by the Child Safety Department. The State can act to make sure children are protected from harm through *Child Protection laws*. These laws make the welfare and interests of a child most important.

The older children get, the more the boundaries need to be negotiated or agreed between children and parents.

Responsibilities within families

Everyone must obey the law. The level of responsibility depends on your age.

In the Australian criminal justice system a child under 10 cannot be charged for a crime. A child 10 to 14 will only be charged by the police if they can prove the child understood the act was wrong.

Children are dealt with in the Children's Court up till 18 in most States except for Queensland where it is 17. After this you are treated as an adult and dealt with in adult courts.

Children's courts usually give lesser penalties than adult courts because of the age and lack of experience of a young person.

Parents have a responsibility to

- provide their children with necessities such as food, clothing, medical treatment, housing and care, at least until they reach 18;
- Make sure their children go to school at least until 15;
- Guide and develop their children in a safe and supportive way.

If parents separate, they both must pay to make sure the child is cared for. They can agree this between themselves or through the Child Support Agency. Issues such as where the child lives are worked out by a parenting plan or consent orders agreed by the parents and may be approved by a court. If the parents can't agree then it is decided by a court. Usually parents have to first try to resolve or fix their disputes by themselves or through a family dispute resolution service.

Alcohol

Every right comes with a responsibility. If you have a right to drink alcohol, you have a responsibility to do so wisely and not harm others. Alcohol can cause death and serious damage to people and property.

If you are under 18, it is against the law:

- To enter licensed premises unless allowed by law;
- Buy, drink or have alcohol with you in licensed premises;
- For another person at licensed premises (or on a street or place near the licensed premises) to sell or give you alcohol;
- To pretend you are 18 or over;
- To have alcohol with you or drink it in a public place; and
- For another person at a public place to give you alcohol.

In the 'Boys Don't Talk' story on the DVD :

Margi's Mum tells her to be home at 5. Margi takes off her jacket and hides it after she leaves home. Joseph's Dad gives him the keys to his car and P Plates, saying be home at 5. Joseph buys alcohol in a bottle shop after he leaves home.