



College Prep
GUIDE

COVID and College

Last year’s seniors had a final year like no other, and now they’re starting off their freshman year in uncharted territory as well — still in the midst of a global pandemic.

While colleges and universities are returning more to in-person learning and more on-campus activities, there are more rules to consider.

VACCINATIONS

CNN reports that more than 100 colleges and universities are requiring COVID vaccinations for returning students. Some schools are even offering the vaccine for free on campus. The University of Portland issued a statement that said, “We recognize that not all areas of the country or the world have equity in access to vaccines, and we commit to providing assistance to our students and employees.”

MENTAL HEALTH

A survey by BestColleges.com earlier this year found that more than 90% of college students experienced negative mental health symptoms due to the pandemic. Specifically, the pandemic hit students hard with depression, anxiety and loneliness.

Many college students rely on their peers for emotional



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and academic support and, with the country in lockdown, that was taken away. Nearly half of students surveyed said it was harder to meet classmates and make friends. What that means is that if your student was a college freshman last year, they may need more support this year as they get out and form the bonds they need for support at school.

HUNGER AND BASIC NEEDS

Lockdowns also disproportionately affected struggling college students and their families. BestColleges.com’s survey found that a quarter of students faced financial difficulties and 17% are dealing with or have dealt with food insecurity. The need for food pantries and food assistance on college campuses has been a steadily

growing problem in recent years, and it appears the pandemic hasn’t helped.

CDC GUIDANCE

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention encourages students to get vaccinated and also to stay informed about COVID-19 and the pandemic. That includes knowing the symptoms of coronavirus, including cough,

fever, chills, muscle pain, shortness of breath, sore throat, and loss of taste or smell.

In dorms and apartments, regularly clean common spaces and high-touch surfaces, such as bathrooms and laundry facilities, before and after use. Try to maintain social distancing and wear masks in public areas, following local guidance. Get vaccinated as soon as possible.

Dorm Checklist

Moving out for the first time can be both exciting and terrifying. Once you're out on your own, you notice all sorts of the conveniences of home that you took for granted.

The first thing to do is to make sure of the rules and regulations pertaining to what you can and cannot have in the dorms. Also make note of what the dorm may provide for you (a mattress) and may not (a fridge).

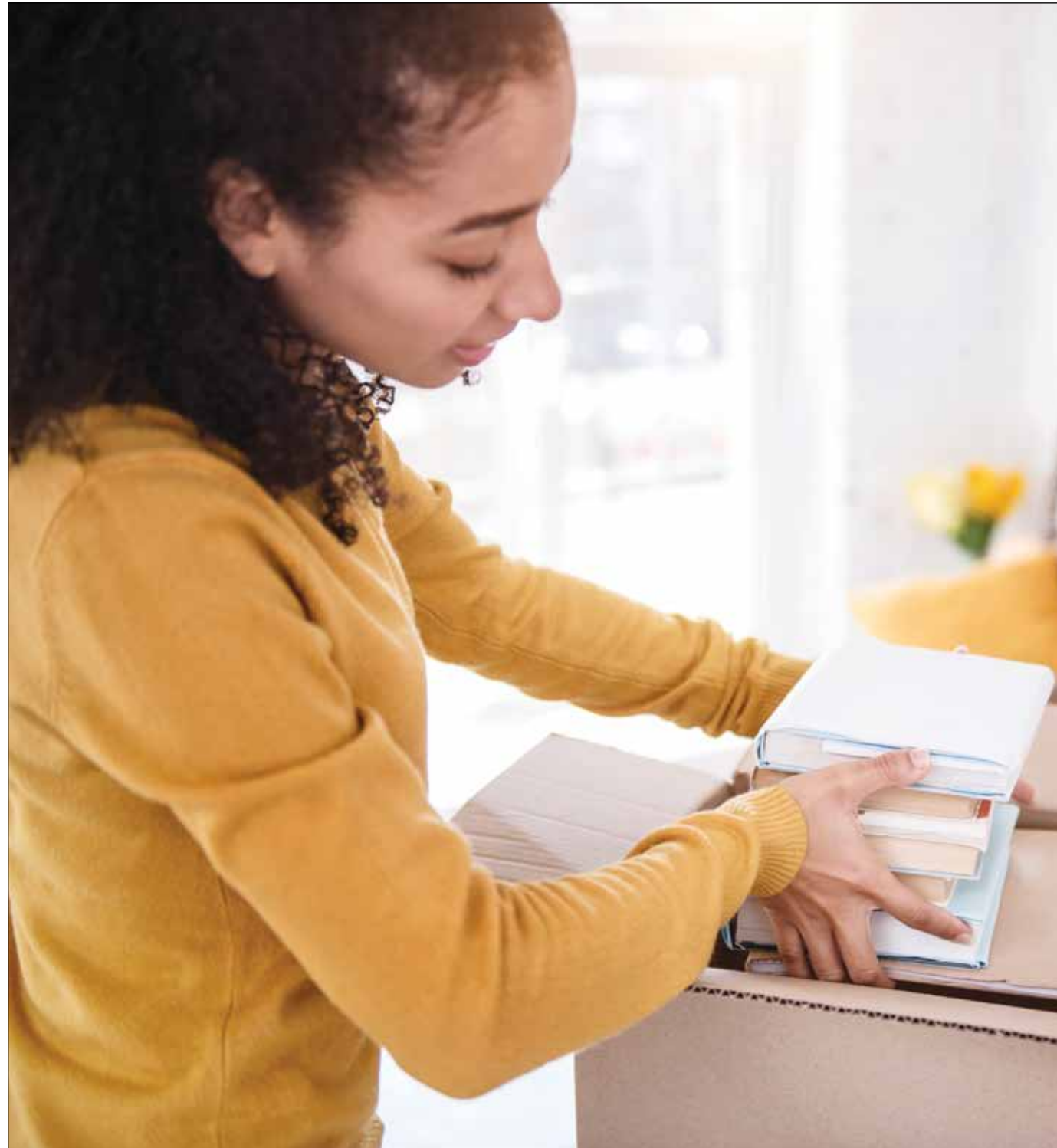
Now let's run down the list of things you probably need to shop for.

BEDDING AND BATH

- Bedsheets, blankets and comforters, probably in a twin XL.
- Mattress pads. Trust us on this one. Probably in a twin XL.
- Pillows and pillowcases.
- Ear plugs, if you're a light sleeper.
- Paper towels and toilet paper.
- Towels, including hand and bath towels.
- Under-bed storage bins.
- Shower shoes for use in a communal shower.
- Basket or shower caddy.

PERSONAL CARE

You may have been used to the floss and your deodorant magically reappearing whenever



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er you needed it. No more. Now it's up to you. Here's a list to get you started shopping for your own personal care needs.

- Bath soap or shower gel.
- Shampoo and conditioner.
- Deodorant.
- Brush, comb and other hair

styling tools.

- Toothbrush, toothpaste, mouthwash and floss.
- Shaving kit.
- Makeup box or kit, lotions and other cosmetics.
- Cotton swabs.
- First-aid kit.

- Nail clippers and a file.
- Handheld mirror.
- Scale.
- Shower mat.
- Medicines.

LAUNDRY SUPPLIES

Next on the magically

appearing list: laundry. Here's what you need to start tending to your own laundry.

- Iron or steamer with an ironing board.
- Laundry baskets and bags.
- Laundry detergent.
- Stain remover.
- Dryer sheets.
- Bleach.
- Lint brush.
- A supply of quarters if your school uses a laundromat.

ROOM DECOR

This is probably the most fun. Put your own spin on your dorm or apartment by buying these things.

- Posters or wall art.
 - Sticky wall mounts and adhesive hooks (bear in mind that nails and tacks may not be allowed).
 - Personal photos in frames.
 - Area rugs or other temporary carpet.
 - Seating for guests.
- Consider things that easily move like beanbags or folding chairs.

- Desk and floor lamps.
- Trash cans.
- Bedside table.
- Desk chair (even if your dorm comes with one, it may not be very comfortable).
- Fan.
- Curtains.
- Bulletin board or whiteboard with dry-erase markers and thumbtacks.
- Closet organizer.
- Step ladder
- Bed risers for creating more storage.
- Over-the-door hangers for coats or towels in the bathroom.

Hot Electronics

Back to school is prime time for buying new electronics.

The season brings a host of cost savings on things like tablets, smartphones, laptops and other high-tech wizardry. Here are some hot gadgets to look for during this back-to-school season.

MONITORS

Fancy new computers mean new monitors, and today's monitors are a far cry from the tiny glass boxes of years past. Most monitors these days are flat screened, and have more in common with the television on your wall. They even come in 4K and curved versions to satisfy the most tech-savvy students.

WIRELESS HEADPHONES

Wires are so last decade. And now, with virtual learning and online meetings not going anywhere anytime soon, a quality pair of headphones is a must.

True wireless earbuds fit in your ear and usually come with a charging case. They're so portable that they can be easily lost otherwise. Often, users control the earbuds by tapping on the bud itself. Make sure you choose a pair that works with all your devices, is easy to control, and has the battery life to do everything you need it to during the day.

For younger users, true wireless headphones may be too easy to lose. Opt for an over-the-ear pair of wired head-



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phones until your student is old enough to keep track of headphones themselves.

ROUTERS AND WIFI

It seems like students can't live without WiFi, but picking the right hardware to make a difference can be tricky. The

most stable connection, of course, is Ethernet, but ew, wires. Look for a model with 802.11ac, the current mainstream connection choice according to PCMag, and for a WiFi-6-capable router if you can find it. If you're covering a larger home, look for a mesh

WiFi system or invest in extenders that can get your signal to more places.

PRINTERS

Distance learning brought printers back from the brink as students had to churn out worksheets, essays and more.

Look for all-in-one models that can also scan. If your students are older and printing long reports, consider a laser or bulk-ink inkjet. The regular inkjets may be cheaper off the shelf, but you could spend a fortune on ink. Pay attention to cost-per-page printing figures.

Substance Abuse

Collegiate culture is drowning in references to booze-soaked parties, experimenting with drugs and generally partying hardy.

For many young people, going off to college is their first taste of freedom, and a little exploration is to be expected. But it's up to you as a parent to keep the lines of communication open with your student and to keep them from overindulging. Too much drink or any illegal drug use can have serious consequences. Make sure your student knows the ropes before the first day of class.

CRITICAL FIRST FEW WEEKS

The first few weeks of the semester are the most critical to the academic success of a new college student, Long Beach State University says. Alcohol and drug use can throw a wrench into a student's transition into college and derail their academic success (and quite possibly their future).

Talk to your student early and often about the consequences of alcohol and drug use. Keep lines of communication open and address their feelings and opinions seriously.

RULES ON CAMPUS

Different states and juris-

dictions have different rules about drinking and recreational drug use. It's important that both you and your student understand the rules at home and the rules where they'll be going to school. Also know that different campuses and even buildings on campus may have policies that differ from the surround-

ing municipality. For instance, it may be legal to drink at 21 in the town where the college is located, but alcohol may be prohibited on campus. Make sure to go over the rules for all the places your student is likely to spend time and make sure they know the consequences of breaking them, not just from you but also

from their school and city.

TIPS FOR THE TALK

First of all, make sure it's not just one talk, but an ongoing conversation. Evaluate and be willing to talk about your own views on alcohol and drug use. Set a good example with your behavior, and establish multiple lines of

communication, including regular calls and texts. Listen to your student but don't judge and don't jump to conclusions. Let them explain themselves and have an open and frank conversation. If your student feels you disapprove, that may prevent them from coming to you in the future.



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Textbooks 101

College textbook prices have soared in the last 10 years, and every student knows about the steep cost of buying their books every semester.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics says that college textbooks increased in price by 88% from 2006 to 2016. On average, the College Board says, students spend around \$1,230 on textbooks and supplies every year. But there are some ways to cut the costs.

GO ONLINE

With the COVID-19 bringing many classes online, students were loathe to spend money on a huge textbook if most of the class was going to happen virtually.

“The fact that students are being pushed into digital learning has a knock-on effect of pushing them into digital textbooks,” said Daniel Levine of the Avant-Guide Institute. “And spending more time in front of screens gives them more opportunity to discover hidden digital resources.”

SYMPATHETIC PROFESSORS

On many campuses, students have an unexpected ally in the fight against high textbook prices — their professors. Brian Galvin, the chief academic officer for Varsity Tutors, said that open educational



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resources were growing even before the pandemic.

“As classes move online and students attend far from the campus bookstore, progressive professors may well see this as a great opportunity to shift to OERs and away from the traditional textbooks,” he said.

While the pandemic may also bring more professors into the open resource fold,

bear in mind that the stress of teaching and researching during a global catastrophe may also mean that your professor doesn't have the time they need to properly evaluate new materials. Be prepared to find a way to get the texts you need.

WAYS TO SAVE

Instead of forking out cash

on textbooks you may or may not be able to sell back at the end of the semester, look into bookstores and services that will allow you to rent textbooks or access them online.

You could also look for used books in good condition, comparing prices at bookstores around campus. Your professors may be willing to help you find older editions that will

cost you less money and still give you the resources you need for academic success.

Last but certainly not least, you can band together with students in your cohort or class to pool your money and share textbooks. Make sure you've got students you can trust, however, and ask your professor what they think of the plan before proceeding.

Talking about Consent

Setting physical boundaries when it comes to intimate relationships and partners is awkward, but it's also the best way to make sure no one is pressuring anyone to do anything they don't want to do.

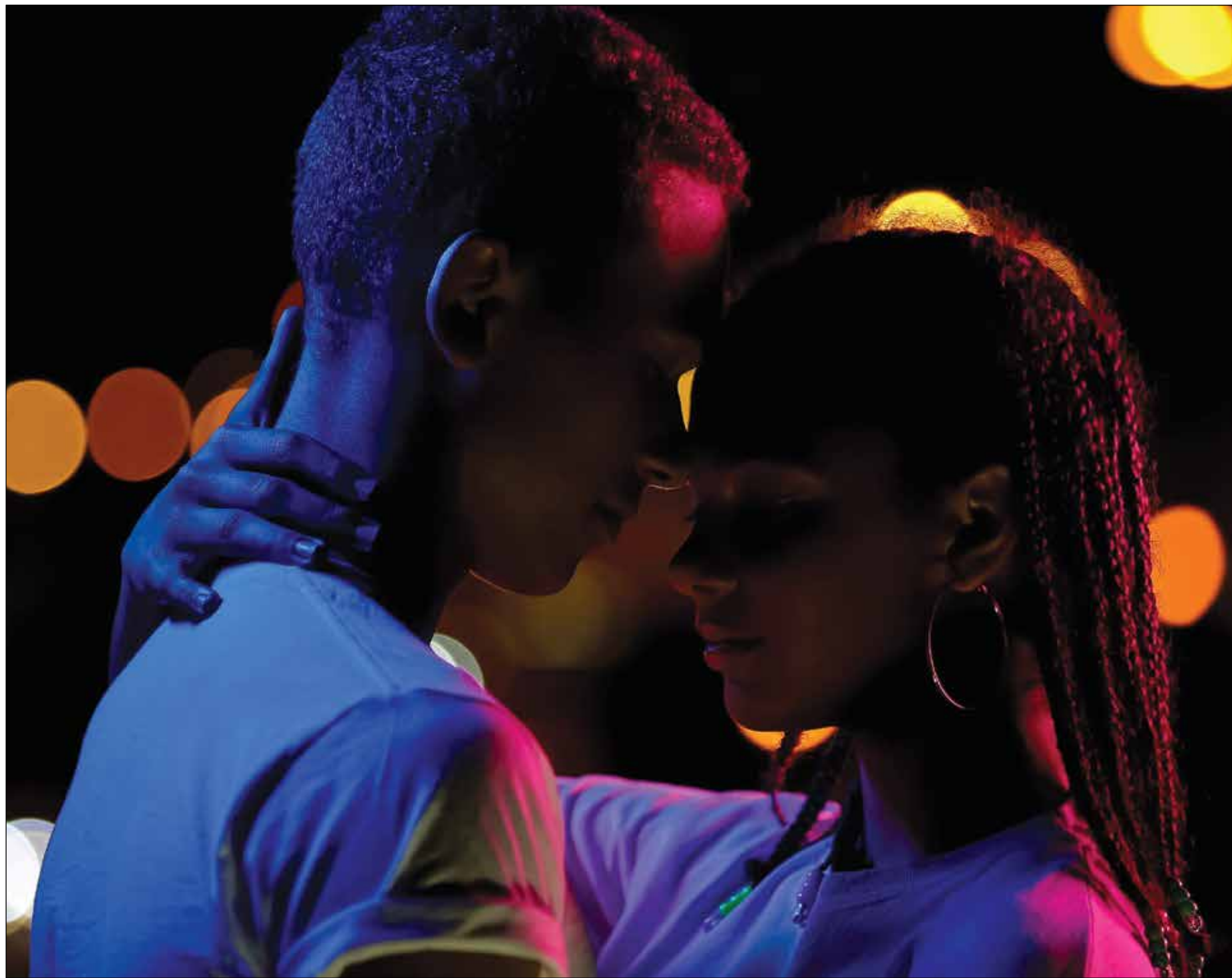
Consenting and asking for consent means that everyone is clear about their wants and needs and that partners are respecting each other's limits.

As parents, it's important that we have these tough conversations with our kids and help them to have these conversations with their partners. Children who understand consent are more likely to have healthy, respectful and safe sexual experiences.

WHAT CONSENT MEANS

Asking for consent, Planned Parenthood says, is as simple as saying, "Can I (action)?" Or "Do you want me to (action)?" And listen to the answer. Pay attention to your partner's body language and tone. If your partner says yes, then you can proceed. If your partner says no, then you don't have consent. Those are pretty clear lines, right?

Here's where it gets tough. If your partner says yes but their body language says no, or if they don't seem sure, you do not have consent. Check in



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before continuing. Say things like, "I want to make sure you want to do this," or "It's OK if you're not into this."

TALKING ABOUT CONSENT AT ANY AGE

Big talks are hard, but little talks over time add up. Talk to

your children when you see a scene on TV or in a movie. Look for teachable moments everywhere, even in fairy tales, like when Prince Charming kisses a sleeping Sleeping Beauty, says the Australian parenting website Raising Children.net.au.

For younger children, couch consent in terms of personal boundaries. Teach your children to say no to hugs, tickles or kisses if they don't feel comfortable. You can also teach them about setting boundaries in general, pointing out that it's OK to tell a friend no if they're

uncomfortable in any situation, sexual or not.

For older children, you can get more in depth about sexual consent and certain situations. If you see someone drinking on television, that might be a good time to talk about consent while under the influence.

Finding the Right Roommate

One of the best experiences in college is living with a roommate or two or three or 10.

Some college roommates end up lifelong friends, some end up as stories we tell again and again. Here are some tips for finding the perfect college roommate.

MAKE A PLAN

Start out your roommate search by making a plan. Think about the people you hang out with and enjoy the most. Watch how those people live their lives and consider carefully what you like about them. Think about your priorities in a living environment and compare how those people tick those boxes. Do you prefer cleanliness? Are you messy? What are your sleep habits? Look at every facet of your life and write down the characteristics that are important to you.

GO ON A ROOMIE DATE

Don't be afraid to talk to potential roommates. Ask tough questions and remember they are just as nervous as you are about the whole thing. Don't rely on a parent, older sibling or your RA to help you with this, though, the final decisions are (as they should be) up to you. You can ask for advice, but remember this is your life and your roommate. You're the one that



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will have to live with them.

POTENTIAL QUESTIONS FOR A ROOMMATE

Here are some questions you might ask someone you're considering for a roommate, courtesy of Dickinson College.

- Discuss your sleeping habits.
- Talk about what tempera-

ture you like in your room.

- Discuss your sense of humor.
- Discuss your schedules and what time you typically come home.
- Talk about how to handle late-night situations.
- Discuss noise level in your space.
- Talk about preferences for

TV, movies and music.

- Bring up any pet peeves you might have.
- Talk about whether you're messy or clean.
- Work out where and how you'd like to study.
- Discuss what belongings you are willing to share and under what circumstances.
- Do you smoke? What

about alcohol and drugs?

- Talk about your religious and spiritual values and how they impact how you live.
- Discuss any habits you might have (3 a.m. yoga) that your roommate may need to know about.
- Set ground rules for visitors, especially overnight guests.