



 COMMENTS

 SHARE

 SAVE FOR LATER

 GIVE THIS ARTICLE



The parent prom: He support y



night

From 'prom pacts' to
here's what to know

SHAWNA COHEN

THE GLOBE AND MAIL

PUBLISHED MAY 3, 2025

MAYA NGUYEN/THE GLOBE AND MAIL

This article was published more than 6 months ago. Some information may no longer be current.

 **15**
COMMENTS

 SHARE

 **SAVE**
FOR
LATER

 **GIVE**
THIS
ARTICLE

Listen to this article

[Learn more](#) about audio



06:22

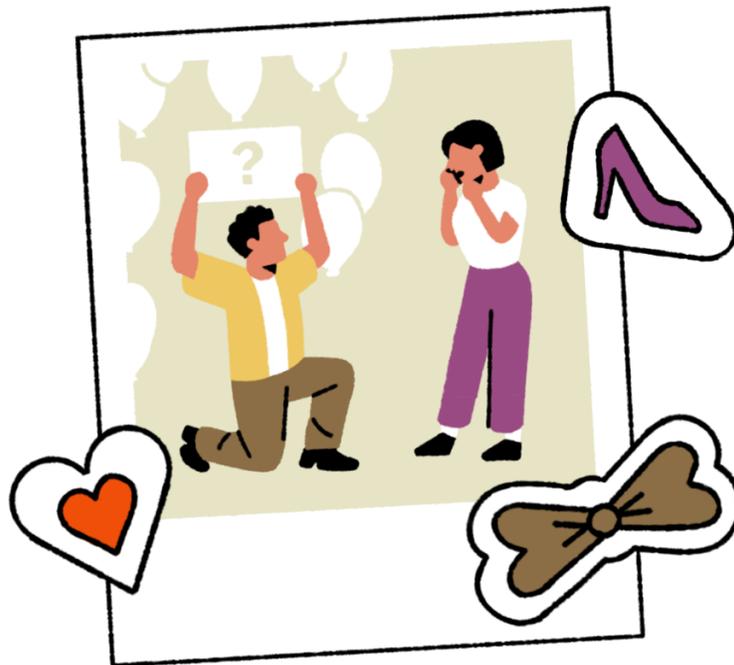
1X

[Read more](#) | [Style guide](#) | [Tips for reducing waste](#)

For anyone who grew up in the eighties, movies like *Pretty in Pink* set the prom gold standard – cool kids, bold kicks and misfit revenge. These days, prom is less teen angst, more “doing it for the ‘gram,” though the pressure can still leave students feeling more askew than Molly Ringwald’s pink lace dress. From what to wear to who to bring, prom planning isn’t for the faint of heart.

For parents, it’s a delicate dance: letting teens soak up the moment while managing curfews and after-parties – or in some cases, the decision to skip prom altogether. Here’s a peek at what’s trending this prom season, and some tips for how to support your child.

Promposals: The new way of securing a date



MAYA NGUYEN/THE GLOBE AND MAIL

A half-mumbled “Wanna go to prom with me?” no longer cuts it. “Promposals” – elaborate, creative ways to ask someone to prom – have become mainstream.

Think doughnuts spelling out “prom” with a sign that reads, “I DONUT want to go to prom with anyone but you!”

Jamie Shoub, a 17-year-old graduating student in Toronto, promposed to his girlfriend, Talia Melnick, in March. Melnick, who co-produced their high school’s annual Dance Fashion Show, was surprised when Shoub held up a handmade poster (“Let me teach you how to dance @ prom”) during the closing dance, as the words, “Talia, will you go to prom with me?” flashed on the massive screen behind the dancers. They hugged onstage as students cheered (the moment is captured on the school’s unofficial promposal Instagram account, with more than 5,400 views).

Despite their popularity, promposals aren’t for everyone and some teens may prefer to ask their date out in private. “It can be hard for kids who aren’t with a partner who’s confident enough to do something so public,” said Jennifer Schwartz, a veteran guidance counsellor with the Toronto District School Board. “It’s a major expectation from a teenager and can induce a lot of stress.”

Prom pacts: A low-key alternative

Many teens opt for “prom pacts,” where two friends agree to be each other’s date – no promposal required. There’s an understanding that things can change if one gets into a relationship and decides to bring a romantic partner instead. Ivy Franklin, a Grade 12 student in Toronto, made a pact with a long-time

friend in January, but by March, she was dating someone seriously and told her friend about the change. “He was disappointed but understood,” recalled Franklin.

Other teens skip dates altogether and attend prom with larger friend groups. Party buses have replaced stretch limos as a favoured way to get to prom, with up to 50 kids travelling together, regardless of relationship status.

Flowers get a modern upgrade

BRADLEY PISNEY/PEXELS/STOCK

Surprisingly, corsages and boutonnieres remain popular despite being a centuries-old tradition. The latest trend is the pocket boutonniere, where florals are attached to cardboard and placed inside the front pocket of a jacket like a pocket square. Some grads are also opting for small hand-tied bouquets over wrist corsages because they look better in photos, says

Ashley MacNeill of Props Floral Design in Halifax. A hit of florals takes the iconic prom photo-op to the next level, often captured at a preparty with a balloon arch or decorative wall as a backdrop.

There's financial assistance for those requiring it

Prom expenses can quickly add up. Tickets can go for up to \$125 but there's also attire, transportation and pre- or after-parties to pay for.

Schwartz, the guidance counsellor, says many schools offer financial support to offset ticket costs. "We know that prom is an important rite of passage. We do what we can to make it accessible to all kids who want to be a part of it." Additionally, students can apply for further support through organizations such as the Corsage Project, a non-profit program in Toronto working in partnership with Children's Aid Foundation of Canada. It provides formal prom attire to students in financial need. Similar programs include the Cinderella Project in Vancouver and the Princess Shop in Saskatoon.

Speaking of prom wear...

One thing that hasn't changed from past generations: Most kids don't want to show up at prom wearing the same outfit as someone else. Some high schools now have unofficial prom wear Instagram accounts where students can post their outfit with the understanding that no one will follow suit. Soon-to-be-graduate Franklin says people at her school began sharing their ensembles in December and there are now more than

130 posts.

Is my teen missing out by ditching prom?

MAYA NGUYEN/THE GLOBE AND MAIL

Schwartz says every year she sees some students make alternate plans – such as a movie night – instead of attending prom. “Some don’t like loud music, some don’t want to dance or they’re not comfortable in a crowd of 300,” she explained.

Annamaria McAndrew, a clinical psychologist at Fairmarc Psychology Centre, has made a similar observation. “There’s this idea that prom is beloved by all teens but that doesn’t reflect reality. It’s an exciting time for a lot of kids but it can also be stressful.”

McAndrew advises parents not to panic if their child is unenthusiastic about prom, suggesting they have an open conversation to learn more: “Say something

like, ‘I noticed you haven’t seemed that excited about buying an outfit for prom or you haven’t talked much about prom. What’s going on? How are you feeling?’ Allow them to open up, without judgment.” She encourages parents to support their child in engaging in some kind of meaningful activity the night of, even if it looks different from prom.

Setting the rules on safety

MAYA NGUYEN/THE GLOBE AND MAIL

In Canada, where the minimum legal drinking age ranges by province or territory between 18 and 19, many students attending prom are not old enough to legally drink alcohol. But according to the Canadian Student Alcohol and Drugs Survey, underage drinking is not uncommon: About 37 percent of Grade 7-12 students who were surveyed in the 2023-24 school year reported consuming alcohol within the past 12 months.

McAndrew suggests parents revisit conversations about alcohol and drugs ahead of prom, equipping teens to make safe decisions and reminding them they can ask for help without fear of punishment. “It’s important for parents to be that source of trusted information while also making sure their child knows that ‘you can come to me no matter what,’” she said. ““Even if you feel like you’ve made a mistake, I will make sure that you are safe if you need me.”” For instance, parents can tell their kid they will come pick them up from the party without questions, while leaving room to discuss what happened afterward.

And while many parents are accustomed to their teens attending parties by the time prom rolls around, it can still cause worry – especially if there are plans for an after-party or “senior sunrise” (kids meeting just before dawn, often staying overnight with friends, to watch the sun rise).

McAndrew recommends families discuss realistic rules, modifying them for the big night if that makes sense. “It might be more like, ‘Usually your curfew is so-and-so and I understand it’s prom, you’re wanting to do this after-party. Is there a way we can create a middle path that feels comfortable to both of us?’”

Do you have a favourite prom memory?

We want to know your favourite prom memories. Were you crowned prom king or queen? Made lasting friendships with your classmates? Spilled fruit punch on your nicest suit? Have some advice for your kids as they prepare for their big night? Share your stories with The Globe.

Description (required)

First Name (required)

Last Name (required)

Email (required)

Location (required)

The information from this form will only be used for journalistic purposes, though not all responses will necessarily be published. The Globe and Mail may contact you if someone would like to interview you for a story.

By checking this box, I confirm the information I submitted is truthful and consent to its publication by The Globe and Mail.

Submit

Sign up for our Morning Update newsletter. Start your day with context and insight on the biggest stories shaping our lives, written by Danielle Groen

[+ SIGN UP](#) | [EXPLORE NEWSLETTERS](#)

[Report an editorial error](#)

[Report a technical issue](#)

[Editorial code of conduct](#)

Take a Break

Check your horoscope to learn how the stars align for you today.

Sharpen your mind with today's Cryptic Crossword.

Refine your strategy and solve the Daily Sudoku.

**Relax and engage with the Daily Concise
Crossword.**

