

Parent's Question	Poor Response	Positive Response
My daughter turned in her roommate form and clearly said she was "no smoking." She just met her roommate smoking outside the building! What are you going to do to fix this problem?	There are too many students this early in the semester with room assignments to be switching people. We can switch roommates in 3 weeks, when all those unhappy students switch at once, and then pick a new roommate. There is no smoking in the rooms, anyway...so it shouldn't be an issue.	Well, let's see what we can do. I usually like to talk to the student first to see if we can work out a solution that both of them can agree to. Sometimes they don't fill out the forms correctly or are in the process of trying to cut back their smoking, and claim they aren't smoking. Often, students can work these problems out once they get to know each other. If possible, we like students to try out their existing roommate situations for a few weeks before making a change.
My son tells me you haven't had hot water in the dorms for the entire month of November. I pay a lot of money for him to go to this school, and I want to know why this problem hasn't been fixed yet.	<p>We can't fix a problem if they don't tell us about it. You should have your son call the facility people about that. We can't read their minds and know every time there is a problem.</p> <p>If you still have a problem with it, tell your son to take it up with my Dean. I'm not responsible for the building's hot water supply; I'm just an RD.</p>	<p>We have had several complaints about the boiler in that building. I know the residential life staff has made multiple calls to facilities about these problems. Another part of the problem is probably your son's room location being on the top floor, away from the boiler. This is one of the harder places to have consistent water temperatures.</p> <p>We have been encouraging parents to talk to the parents' council to bring the problem to the attention of the president. Can I put you in connection with this group?</p>
There is an enormous alcohol problem on my daughter's floor. Every weekend, there is vomit on the bathroom walls. She says no one cares and will help. This needs to stop!	Drinking is a real problem on campus, particularly on your daughter's floor. She needs to call campus safety and report her friends when they are drinking instead of going to the party with them. We aren't the police.	I'd be happy to help her. I'm sorry that she gave you the impression we weren't concerned about this. I have office hours where I can meet with her to try to work out a solution to this problem. Each floor has an RA who should be keeping an eye on these kinds of problems. If the RA isn't there, we always have an RA on duty who should be doing rounds.

Top 20 Common Questions from Pushy Parents

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My daughter says the RA staff yells at her for having her music turned up too loud. My daughter studies hard and needs some time to unwind. You need to tell that other student RA to get off my daughter's back.	Well, sorry, those are the rules. If your daughter is playing her music loudly and disturbing the other residents, she is lucky that all that has happened is her RA talking to her. The next step is a fine, and after that, she'll be looking at finding another place to live. A residence hall is a community; it isn't all about your daughter's needs.	I am certainly sorry if she has been spoken to harshly by her RA. We spend a great deal of time training the staff, and they should never be yelling at students. I understand how hard your daughter studies, and we all need to relax to unwind. One of the challenges we have is trying to mix so many different people into a small living space. There are pretty clear rules about quiet hours after 11 pm, and this might be where your daughter is running into problems. I'd recommend having your daughter come talk to me during this week, and I can sit down with her and the RA to try to straighten out this problem. Would that work for you?
My son wants to start a paintball club on campus, but he was told he cannot. I was told at orientation that students were encouraged to start clubs and organizations. Why is this a problem?	Ummm, we prefer that your student isn't running around shooting the other students. Paintball is a kind of violent idea, given the shootings at V-Tech and NIU. I'm not surprised the request was denied – I would have done the same thing.	Hmmm, I don't know much about paintball. From what I do know, they would need to find a safe place to play, and there are some restrictions about having weapons on campus. Could I meet with your student to discuss their ideas for a club and how we could work with them? There may be a local paintball field or other group they could connect with.
My son was drinking in his room, and he is underage. I admit that. But then the police were called? He now has a court date and this is ridiculous! College is about experiencing things, not having the police show up in your room!	There is no alcohol on campus, and your son was handled like any other student who violates our policy. When they break the rules, there are consequences. It's as simple as that. Sorry if they haven't had that experience of being held accountable before now.	This isn't an easy situation. The college has a duty to make sure our students are safe, and when they are drinking beyond the point where we believe they are intoxicated, our policy says we have to involve the police. While this can cause problems with the court system, we want to make sure they are safe. Would it be possible for you to speak with our alcohol educator to discuss the reasons behind our policy? This might help you understand why the police were called.

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My daughter needs to be off the meal plan because they have a food allergy. They talked to the housing director, and their request was denied. I don't understand this. This is a medical necessity and needs to be handled.	There isn't much I can do about that. Each student pays into the meal plan, and that's a requirement that can't be changed. Clearly, their medical issue isn't serious enough to have an exception to our policy. There isn't anything else I can do.	I can understand how frustrating it can be to go through all those steps and have the answer not be the one you want. I'd need more information about the documentation you provided to them and how the decision was made to help you. If you could bring those things to me, and we could sit down with your daughter and talk about how the decision was reached and what your next step would be in terms of an appeal or working with food services to accommodate her eating needs.
There is a \$100 fee because of the number of fire alarms set off in my son's building. This is not a fair way to share this cost, and there is no way I am paying this.	That's our policy to fine the entire building if a student pulls a fire alarm and we can't identify them. If you have a problem with it, you can take it up with the town's fire marshal.	I can relate to the frustration of being charged for something you didn't do. We tried to come up with a fair policy to spread the fine around the hall to all students when we couldn't identify the person who triggered the alarm. I am also aware that the particular hall has had several alarms this semester, which has made the charges even larger. We do have an appeal process you could go through with your son. I can't guarantee it will be successful, but it might be worth making the appeal. Can I help you get in contact with that person?
What are you doing about the crime problem on this campus? My daughter's iPod was stolen last week, and not only has it not been recovered, but campus safety has not even returned her call yet. This is not what I expected.	That isn't my department. You have to talk to campus safety or the police. We tell students to keep their items locked up, and they never listen. Your daughter probably left her room unlocked, and that is the kind of problem that invites people to steal things. Remind her to keep her door locked.	I'm sorry they haven't called you back. That should not have happened. We have seen an increase in thefts on campus this semester, and we are trying to get a handle on them. We have encouraged students to register their valuables at the start of the semester and to keep their doors locked, even when they are just going to the bathroom or shower. But it's frustrating to not know where things stand. Can I take you over to the campus safety office and see if someone can help and give you an update on where things stand? Will that help?

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My daughter is surrounded by "ethnic" students. We are concerned about her safety and want you to do something about it.	I don't know if you realize that, but your statements are racist. Your daughter needs to get out of her rural experiences and learn that there are all types of people and not all "ethnic students," as you say, are thieves or rapists.	It can be worrisome to have your daughter in a situation where you are concerned about her safety. Part of the college experience is coming into contact with new people, and your daughter may not be as experienced at interacting with them. One of the major goals of residential life programming is to encourage students to spend time getting to know each other and reach out of their comfort zone. Could we start by having you and your daughter meet one of our international staff members in housing? That might help her feel more comfortable getting to know people who are different from her.
My son's roommate has her girlfriend over in their room almost every night. We came for a visit, and there she was. My son needs to study, not play couple's counselor. What are you going to do about this?	It's college and students date each other. There isn't much you can do to change that. They aren't allowed to sleep over in each other's room, so have your son report his roommate to their RA. Then the RA can address the behavior when it occurs. That is all I can suggest.	It can really be an adjustment to living with someone, especially when the other person isn't respectful to your son's study habits. The first thing I'd like to do is see if your son has spoken with his roommate about the situation. Often, students complain to their parents but forget to talk directly to the person they are having a problem with. If he has already tried that, the next step might be for their RA to sit down and talk to them about the conflict. Usually, that is enough to change the behavior. Do you think either of those would work?