

Chardon Police

Chester Police



Geauga Sheriff's Office

Russell Twp. Police

Dear Parents of West Geauga and Chardon High School Students:

It's almost that time of the year, when you may already be preparing for your child's Graduation and possibly hosting a party. As you begin making all the plans necessary, to include types of food, invitations and guests, please remember that one of the most important discussions to have is about the presence and responsibilities of having alcohol available.

If you plan on hosting a graduation party that is just for your child and their friends, please remember that the legal drinking age in Ohio, for the consumption of an alcoholic beverage is 21. Purchasing, possessing or consuming alcohol prior to your 21st birthday is a first-degree misdemeanor. The maximum penalties associated with this offense are six months imprisonment or a \$1,000 fine or both.

Adults and teens alike face harsh penalties if underage drinking is in their home or on their property. Not only can a minor be charged with possession of alcohol, other minors who serve alcohol to minors, as well as adults that allow them to drink at their residence or on their property can and will also be charged.

*There are parents that will consider hosting a party for their child and their friends, with alcohol. They will be of the opinion that it's safer for the kids to drink at home than to drink somewhere else, but it's **absolutely not true and it is very much illegal.***

If you are hosting one of these Graduation Parties, consider these suggestions:

- Establish rules. Your child needs to know what you expect and why you are setting rules. Let your child know how you will respond to problems.
- You and your child should understand State laws about curfew, alcohol and other drugs. It is illegal to offer alcohol to guests under the legal drinking age or to allow guests to use drugs in your home, or on your property. You may be brought into court on criminal charges and/or fined monetary damages in a civil lawsuit, if you furnish alcohol to minors.
- Decide what part of the house will be used for the party. Choose an area where guests will be comfortable and where you can maintain supervision.
- Limit party attendance and times. Small groups are easier to handle.
- Other parents will appreciate time limits that enable teenagers to be home at a reasonable time and make clear that uninvited guests are not allowed.

- Make sure you (or another responsible adult who understands your ground rules) will be present for the entire party.
- Help keep supplies of snacks and nonalcoholic beverages on hand for guests.
- Do not allow guests to come and go. This guideline will discourage teenagers from leaving the party to drink elsewhere and then return
- Be alert to signs of alcohol or other drug use by teenagers at the party.
- Be willing to call the police if unwanted guests refuse to leave.
- Be willing to notify the parents of any teenager who arrives at the party drunk or under the influence of another drug to ensure his/her safe transportation home and never let anyone drive under the influence of alcohol or other drugs, even if it means taking their keys.
- If adults and minors will be at the party and alcohol will be made available to the adults, make sure that it's kept where you can keep a close eye on it. Avoid putting anything else in that same area, such as food or soft drinks. This way there would be no reason for anyone, other than an adult to be in or near that area.

Please have a safe and enjoyable Graduation Season and lets all do our part to set positive, legal and responsible examples for our children, their friends and other parents

Sincerely,

Mark A. Purchase

Chief Mark A. Purchase
Chester Township Police Department

Scott Hildenbrand

Sheriff Scott Hildenbrand
Geauga County Sheriff's Office

Scott Niehus

Chief Scott Niehus
Chardon Police Department

Timothy Carroll

Chief Timothy Carroll
Russell Township Police Department