

With dances and after parties on the horizon, we wanted to remind parents of the important part they play in keeping kids safe. After-dance parties are a major part of the high school social scene, however without proper planning and careful supervision parties can be a disaster. Alcohol poisoning, car accidents, injury and death are just a few of the potential outcomes of illegal substance use among youth. Parents are the most important influence in their kids' lives, and many parents don't realize they play such a crucial role in guiding good choices. Our children want to know that they are cared for, by their parents and their communities.

Here is a reminder of the state laws that deal with underage drinking. Under 30-86 of the Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.) it is against the law for anyone to provide alcohol to a minor (under the age of 21). Penalties include up to 18 months imprisonment and fines up to \$1,500.00. It is also against the law under 30-89 of the C.G.S. for someone to allow alcohol possession by a minor, or for failure to halt possession by a minor, even if they did not actually provide the alcohol to the minor. The penalty for this is a \$136.00 fine. Also under 30-89 it is against the law for any person under the age of 21 to possess alcohol on any public or private property. Under the freedom of information act, these incidents can be reported in local media outlets, including the names of any accused aged 18 and above. In addition to the risk of criminal liabilities there is also the risk of civil liability that can arise when providing drugs and alcohol to underage people.

When families provide safe and healthy havens for the social and emotional growth of their children and their children's friends, young people learn to meet the challenges of adolescence and young adulthood, and tragedies are prevented. If you are hosting a party set ground rules: don't allow smoking, alcohol or other drug use, know your legal responsibilities, share this information with your child, and remove any family alcohol from areas where young people will be. When your child is going elsewhere: call the host parent to be sure there will be supervision and that alcohol and/or other drugs will not be allowed, know how your child will get to and from the party, be awake upon his or her return, or have your child wake you. For more tips on teen parties, please visit www.thecommunityofconcern.org website, or read the Community of Concern booklet that was provided to all middle and high school students by Wilton Youth Council.

For more information, please feel free to contact the Wilton Police Department at (203) 834-6260 or Wilton Youth Services at (203) 834-6241.

Sincerely,

Officer Richard Ross, School Resource Officer

Colleen Fawcett, LCSW, Wilton Youth Services