

Dear Parents and Guardians of Highland High School,

School districts all across the country are experiencing an increasing acceptance of substance abuse among the students. Although most of the identified abuse has involved alcohol and marijuana, some students have been abusing inhalants, and over the counter medications or prescription drugs to get high.

We are concerned because this problem affects all of our students whether they use substances or not. As a school system we greatly discourage these high risk behaviors by providing educational opportunities, referrals to counselors and recommendations for treatment, on site inspections with drug-sniffing dogs, random drug testing of athletes, and enforcement of the school disciplinary code. With the backing of the community and organizations such as Medina County Drug Abuse Commission, Share Cluster, and families we can protect our young people to encourage positive behaviors by getting involved with community and school activities of interest, sports, and clubs.

We have found that substances can affect anyone. Regardless how active, athletic, or academically sound a child appears, they may still be using drugs or alcohol. Some classic signs displayed by teens using are: drop in grades, lack of interest in activities formerly loved, drastic change in dress or hygiene, a new group of friends, and /or withdrawal from the family. Others continue to function at a high level and do not send up any red flags. Substance abuse can be devastating to a teenager's future and can lead to addiction.

What we can do to protect our young people is to take a proactive approach, educating ourselves, and allow and provide natural consequences for young people's behaviors. Protect the children in your neighborhood by not enabling high risk behaviors. Only by working together as a total community can we solve this problem.

Any questions or concerns please let me know.

Respectfully,
Claudia Johnson
Prevention Counselor



HELPFUL PREVENTION WEBSITES FOR PARENTS AND STUDENTS

1. www.drugfreeamerica.org
2. www.acde.org/parent/Default.htm
3. www.theantidrug.com/pdfs/version3General.pdf
4. www.theantidrug.com/
5. www.nida.nih.gov/
6. www.pta.org/commonsense
7. www.ohioparents.org

HOW TO HANDLE TEEN GATHERINGS IN OUR HOME

TIPS FOR PARENTS

- Provide parental supervision for the duration of the gathering. Check on the teens frequently and randomly. Don't go to bed while teens are in your home.
- Establish a beginning and ending time for the gathering.
- Admit only those invited.
- Publicize beforehand that this gathering will be alcohol-free and drug-free. Advertise that a person will be denied entrance if he/she is in possession or under-the-influence of these substances.
- Make sure the alcohol (or drugs) you have for your consumption is not available to teens.
- Deny anyone who leaves the gathering entrance at a later time.
- Don't hold gatherings that are open to everyone. Don't publicize with flyers. You are asking for large numbers of people at your home, and you may be asking for more trouble than you want.

- If a person becomes intoxicated at your gathering despite all your prevention efforts, call the person's parent(s) and ask the parent(s) to retrieve the child. Do not let the child drive home; personal liability could result. If the parent refuses to retrieve the child, tell the parent you will ask the police to resolve the problem.

LEGAL LIABILITY ISSUES FOR PARENTS

- As a parent, you may not, under any circumstance, serve alcohol to your child's friends if they are under the age of 21, even with their parent's permission.
- You cannot knowingly allow a person who is under 21 and who is not your child to remain in your home or on your property while consuming or possessing alcohol.
- If a parent breaks this law, he/she can face a maximum jail sentence of six months and/or a fine of \$1000. Parents also open themselves to civil law suits if the drinker damages property or injures himself or herself or someone else.
- Officers can confiscate any money or property used in committing the offense.
- Of course, the use of illicit drugs is illegal for persons of all ages. Any parent who allows illegal drugs to be used on their property is subject to criminal charges and/or civil action.

**PLEASE SEE HIGHLAND HIGH SCHOOL PTO WEB SITE
AND ADD YOUR SIGNATURE TO THE *PARENTS SHARED
CONCERN* FORM BY HOSTING DRUG-FREE GATHERINGS.**

www.highlandschools.org/highschool/parents.pdf