

# Wallingford Safe Prom Pledge

Wallingford Prom Dates: May 6, May 7, May 13, May 21  
Alcohol & Drug Free Celebration

Prom season is almost here, and Wallingford wants to help our teens enjoy a substance free prom! For the second year, Sheehan and Lyman Hall Juniors and Seniors will have the option to sign the Wallingford Safe Prom Pledge. The Pledge is a promise by students to not engage in risky behavior on prom night, such as alcohol or drug use, texting and driving, etc.

The Wallingford Safe Prom Pledge is a community initiative that was started by parent members of the Lyman Hall and Sheehan PTACs (Parent Teacher Advisory Council), and is supported by the Lyman Hall and Sheehan Classes of 2016 and 2017. Last year, after discussing alcohol related data from the results of the CT Youth Risk Behavior Survey\*, Systemwide PTAC decided to form a subcommittee that was tasked with seeking ways to educate and support other Wallingford parents about the risks of underage drinking. Parents were particularly concerned about increased risk during Prom season, and as a result developed two programs: 1. A parent education presentation "Underage Drinking and the Law, What's at Stake;" and 2. The Wallingford Prom Pledge. The subcommittee currently includes parents from both high schools and middle schools, WPS Superintendent of Schools Dr. Sal Menzo, Director of Wallingford Department of Youth and Social Services Craig Turner, and members of the Coalition for a Better Wallingford.

The Wallingford Safe Prom Pledge seeks to encourage meaningful conversation among teens about the risk of alcohol and substance abuse and why it is not worth it to drink at Prom or after Prom celebrations. This year the program will kick off at both High Schools with a Prom Pledge Advisory at the end of March and beginning of April, which has been developed by the SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions) Chapters at both schools. The program includes small group student discussions about safe behavior, posters, banners, parent communications, tie-ins to related programs such as Mock Crash and Distracted Driving, and drawing prizes for students who sign the Pledge.

Keeping our kids safe, and encouraging safe celebration of events such as prom, is important for all of us as families and as a community. Wallingford proms are in May and we need to be vigilant and do everything we can to encourage and support the safety of our youth. As a community, it is important to tell our teens that we care very much about them and we want them to safely enjoy prom and a healthy life.

*Wallingford Safe Prom Pledge*

I pledge not to use alcohol or other drugs on Prom night because I care about my friends, my family, and myself. By signing below, I pledge to remain free from alcohol and other drugs, never drive under the influence or ride with an impaired driver; and I agree that I will always wear a seat belt. I also pledge not to text and drive.

\* The CT Youth Risk Behavior Survey was administered to students of Sheehan and Lyman Hall high schools in the fall of 2013. A follow-up survey was administered in the fall of 2015, for which results have not yet been released.