



Dear Parents,

We would like to welcome your child to the Shenandoah Valley and the city of Harrisonburg. Our area boasts one of the most beautiful landscapes as well as a strong economy, diverse culture, low crime rates and high-quality schools. The population of the city is growing by approximately 1000 people per year and is currently over 47,000 including JMU's population of over 17,000. Harrisonburg is a wonderful place to live, work and play. However, please be aware that crime does occur throughout the city as well as in the college area. We ask that you talk to your child about personal responsibility to do the right thing but more importantly to not become a victim. Remind him/her to not become complacent.

The college years are a time of learning and growing and having fun. As you know alcohol consumption is an issue in college towns. The state of Virginia has some of the most stringent alcohol laws in the country our police officers must uphold those laws as well as our city ordinances (listed below). The Harrisonburg Police Department practices a zero tolerance policy for underage possession of alcohol and will charge those in violation. We want to reassure you that the law enforcement officers are not there to harass the students but to ensure their safety. Alcohol consumption increases the risk of victimization and that is an underlying problem in our community. A large group of intoxicated people is a ready made pool of potential victims for those who come to our area specifically to prey on young, drunk, careless college students. Ask your son or daughter to be responsible and follow some simple steps:

- Stay in groups when walking on and off campus
- Be aware of your surroundings and who you are socializing with
- If you choose to take the risk and consume alcohol – do it responsibly – do not become a target
- Leave all but one credit card at home and carry minimal amounts of cash
- Get to know your police officers; they are there to help you. Don't be afraid to report a crime or ask for help.

James Madison is a selective University and you and your child should be commended for being accepted. We at the city police department want to encourage your child to take advantage of all that Harrisonburg has to offer. Please contact us if you have any questions or concerns or would like us to speak with your child.

Sincerely,
Diane Roll
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