



Cynthia Carbone, MEd, MSN, RN, Director of Health, Wellness and Nursing

Dear Parent or Guardian of a 7th or 9th grade student:

This year all Massachusetts school districts are required to include a substance use preventive screening as part of their annual mandated universal health-screening program. Our district will use the Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) protocol with students in grades 7 & 9. The SBIRT protocol facilitates a one-on-one conversation between each student and a school nurse or counselor in an effort to prevent or at least delay the start of using harmful substances, such as alcohol and marijuana. This program focuses on reinforcing healthy decisions and addressing concerning behaviors around substance use with the goal of improving health, safety and success in school.

We will use the CRAFFT II screening interview, which is the most commonly used substance use screening tool for adolescents in Massachusetts. All screenings will be conducted in a confidential setting in private one-on-one sessions with one of the nurses or counselors trained in SBIRT screening. Students who are not using substances will have their healthy choices reinforced. The screener will provide brief feedback to any student who reports using substances, or is determined to be at risk for future substance use. What your child tells the screener is confidential, and will not be shared with any other person without prior written consent of the student, parent or guardian, except in cases of immediate medical emergency or when disclosure is otherwise required by state law. No written record of the results of this verbal screening are kept with information that identifies any individual student. Screening results will not be included in your child's school record.

The student's parent or guardian may opt-out of the screening by written notification any time prior to or during the screening. Students may also opt out at the time of the screening. Please feel free to contact us should you have any questions or would like your child to opt-out of the screening.

Together, schools and parents CAN make a difference for the youth in our community. One way to prevent youth substance use is to talk with your child about your thoughts and expectations regarding substance use. You can view the CRAFFT tool and other SBIRT resources on www.masbirt.org/schools website.

Regards,

Dr. Stephen Zrike, Jr.
Receiver/Superintendent

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