



## **Ridgedale Junior / Senior High School**

**3165 Hillman Ford Road  
Morral, Ohio 43337**

September 7, 2018

Dear Parent or Guardian:

The teen years are marked by a roller-coaster ride of emotions that is difficult for teens, their parents, and educators. It is easy to misread depression as normal adolescent turmoil; however, depression appears to be occurring at a much earlier age. Depression (which is treatable) is a leading factor for suicide. In addition, self-injury has become an increasing problem among youth.

To proactively address this issue, Ridgedale is offering depression awareness and suicide prevention training through the *Signs of Suicide Middle and High School Program (SOS)*. This program will be administered by trained professionals from the Marion Area Counseling Center starting in late October and through the end of November to students in grades 7-12. This program has been used by thousands of schools nationwide since 2000 and has proven to be successful in reducing suicide attempts. It is the only school-based suicide prevention program to show a reduction in suicide attempts in a randomized, controlled study.

Our goals in participating in this program are straightforward:

- \* To help our students understand that depression is a terrible illness
- \* To explain that suicide is a preventable tragedy that often occurs as a result of untreated depression.
- \* To provide students training on how to identify serious depression and potential suicidality in themselves and/or a friend
- \* To impress upon teens that they can help themselves or a friend by taking the simple step of talking to a responsible adult about their concerns
- \* To help students know whom, in the school, they can turn for help

The Freshmen and 7<sup>th</sup> Graders will be given the initial middle and high school program consisting of a short video and survey. This will take approximately 25 minutes and will be done during the meeting time on a Wednesday. All other students (8<sup>th</sup> Grade, Sophomores, Juniors, and Seniors) will simply take the survey to determine if they are currently at risk. This will take approximately 15 minutes and will be done on a Friday at a time determined by Mr. Sparling to minimize the disruption to their learning.

**If you do NOT wish your child to participate in the SOS Program, please call (740-382-6065 ext. 404), email ([bsparling@ridgedaleschools.org](mailto:bsparling@ridgedaleschools.org)), or send a note to Mr. Sparling before October 22. If we do not hear from you, we will assume your child has permission to participate in the program.**

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important matter and your continued support of the Ridgedale Schools. Please feel free to contact the school with any questions and/or concerns about this or any other school related matters.

Sincerely

*Greg Rossman*

Greg Rossman  
Principal

*Brian D Sparling*

Brian D Sparling  
Dean of Career & College Readiness

*Kathleen Martin*

Kathleen Martin  
Guidance Counselor