

The Maynard Public Schools are committed to a superior academic experience for Maynard's students that prepare them to be productive citizens in an interconnected technological world.



MAYNARD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

www.maynardschools.org

3-R Tiger Drive

Maynard, Massachusetts 01754

May 28, 2019

Dear Parent or Guardian of 7th Grade Students,

We are writing to inform you of an initiative in our schools relating to the use of alcohol, marijuana and other substances. Health survey data consistently demonstrates that a small number of middle school students have used these substances and by the end of high school, many more students report substance use. As trusted providers in the school, we are uniquely positioned to discuss substance use among young people, identify early use, its related risks and intervene when appropriate.

In order to help prevent students from using substances, Fowler School will be incorporating an interview-based screening for 7th grade students into our annual state mandated universal health screening process. The Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) focuses on substance use prevention, early detection, risk assessment, brief intervention and a referral process that can be utilized in the school setting. It is approved by Massachusetts Department of Public Health and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Confidential verbal screening sessions will be approximately 5-10 minutes and conducted in private, one-on-one sessions using the CRAFFT screening tool. All students will receive some educational information during the SBIRT screening. Students who are not using substances will have their healthy choices reinforced by the screener. The screener will provide a brief negotiated intervention to students who report using substances or are at risk for future substance use. With consent, referrals may be made for high risk students to school mental health professionals for further assessment and "next steps".

M.G.L. Chapter 71, Section 97(c) "any statement...made by a pupil during a verbal substance use disorder screening shall be considered confidential and shall not be disclosed by a person receiving the statement...except in cases of immediate medical emergency". In this case, the screener and student will determine next steps together. No written results with identifying information are kept in any school record.

As with any school screening, you have the right to opt your child out of this screening. Please contact Carol Riccardi-Gahan, via email cgahan@maynard.k12.ma.us by June 3, 2019. Additionally, students may opt out at the time of the screening. Screening will be conducted during the next three weeks. 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.

Sincerely,

Carol Riccardi-Gahan, Director of Student Services

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