



Ridgedale Local School District

3165 Hillman Ford Road

Morral, Ohio 43337

Dear Parent or Guardian,

August 24, 2016

The adolescent and teenage years are marked by a roller-coaster of emotions—difficult for youths, 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 risk factor for suicide. In addition, self-injury has become a growing problem among youth.

To proactively address these issues, Ridgedale is offering depression awareness and suicide prevention training through the *Signs of Suicide Middle and High School Program*. This program has been developed by the highly regarded non-profit organization and used by thousands of schools nationwide since 2000. It has proven successful at increasing help-seeking by students concerned about themselves or a friend and is the only school-based suicide prevention program to show a reduction in suicide attempts in a randomized, controlled study.

Our goals for participating in this program are straightforward:

- *To help our students understand that depression is a treatable illness*
- *To explain that suicide is a preventable tragedy that often occurs as a result of untreated depression*
- *To provide students training in how to identify serious depression and potential suicidality in themselves or a friend*
- *To impress upon youth 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 to for help, if they need it.*

If you do NOT wish your child participating in the SOS School Program, please return a note or email to the attention of Mrs. Smith by September 19th. If we do not hear from you, we will assume your child has permission to participate in this program.

Sincerely,

Mr. Brian Napper

Mrs. Jodi Smith

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