

October 20, 2016

Dear Parent or Guardian:

As part of Haverhill's approach to substance use, Haverhill Public Schools will partake in SBIRT screening for our 7th grade students district wide. SBIRT stands for Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment. It is an evidence based prevention model used by health care providers for the early identification and potential treatment of someone with an addiction. As important, **this confidential interview opens the dialogue between a student and a counselor or health care provider or other trusted adult.** SBIRT screening is being rolled-out in schools across the Commonwealth as directed by *An Act Relative to Substance Use, Treatment, Education and Prevention*, signed into law March 14, 2016 as [Chapter 52 of the Acts of 2016](#).

On November 3, 2016, each 7th grade student at J.G.Whittier will meet briefly with a guidance counselor/nurse/clinician for a private confidential screening. We will utilize the CRAFFT screening tool. This one-to-one interview will be approximately 5 minutes long. Students not using any substances will be praised for their healthy choices. The screener will provide feedback to any student who reports experiences with substances, or is identified as at-risk for future substance use. If needed, the student will be referred to the district substance use counsellor or one of the school nurses, for further evaluation. **Results of the screening and conversation will not be shared with parents, or staff members not part of the SBIRT team, unless the information shared indicates the child is in immediate danger to self or others.** The SBIRT team is composed of nursing staff, guidance counselors, adjustment counselors and substance use counselor/liaison.

All students will be educated regarding the screening, the fact that the information will be confidential unless the student is found to be at danger to self or others, and the option for the student himself or herself to opt out of the screening by declining to participate when he/she meets with his/her screener. As a parent, you may opt your child out of the **screening** as well. If you choose to not have your child screened, please contact Katie Vozeolas, BSN RN NCSN, Supervisor of Health and Nursing for Haverhill Public Schools and SBIRT Coordinator for the district at 978-478-8579 or kvozeolas@haverhill-ps.org by Monday October 31, 2016 at 2:00pm.

One way to prevent youth substance use is to talk with your child about your family's thoughts and expectations regarding substance use. Research shows parental influence is the #1 reason young people decide not to drink alcohol. For ideas on how to begin these conversations, please refer to the Haverhill Public Schools website: <http://www.haverhill-ps.org/school-health-services/addiction-counseling-services/>. Together, schools and parents CAN make a difference for the youth of Haverhill.

Sincerely,

Karen Doody, RN

Mary Rastauskas M.Ed, RN

Brian Gill
J.G.Whittier School Principal

Jami Dion, MEd
Director of Guidance

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