February 28, 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian,

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. Starting March 16th, our district will use the Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) protocol with students in Grade 7 at Wareham Middle School. The SBIRT protocol facilitates a one-on-one conversation between each student and a school nurse or counselor in an effort to prevent 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 members of the SBIRT team. 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 an 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.

You may opt out of the screening by notifying us in writing prior to the screening, which will commence on March 16th. Students may also opt out at the time of the screening. Please feel free to contact us should you have any questions. A brief presentation for the students regarding this initiative will be held the week of March 9th.

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 II tool and other SBIRT resources on the www.masbirt.org/schools website.

Sincerely,

Tracie Cote, Principal

SBIRT screeners:
Sue Akins, School Nurse, extension 6108
Kristin Gorman, Guidance Counselor, extension 6122
Melissa Hokanson, Guidance Counselor, extension 6200