

High School Health Education Suicide Prevention Curriculum Permission Slip

Dear Parent and/or Guardian,

It is easy to misread depression as normal adolescent turmoil; however, depression (among the most common of mental illnesses) appears to be occurring at a much earlier age, and the past decade has seen teen suicide rates double. To proactively address this issue, Frederick County Schools will be teaching lessons related to suicide and depression. The lessons were taken from a suicide prevention program titled Signs of Suicide Prevention Program (SOS). It is a school-based suicide prevention program supported by SAMSHA that addresses suicide risk and depression, while reducing suicide attempts. It is important to note that FCPS will not be conducting screening assessments associated with this program in the classroom.

In addition you may also go to: <http://mentalhealthscreening.org/programs/youth> to read an overview of the program. You may also contact your student's school health teacher if you have additional questions.

The goals of the program are to:

- Decrease suicide and suicide attempts by increasing knowledge and adaptive attitudes about depression among students
- Encourage individual help-seeking and help-seeking on behalf of a friend
- Link suicide to mental illness that, like physical illnesses, requires treatment
- Reduce stigma associated with mental health problems as they become topics for discussion that are integrated in the health curriculum and conditions that are responsive to treatment
- Increase self-efficacy and access to mental health services for at-risk youth and their families

For students, the goals are to:

- Help youth understand that depression is a treatable illness
- Educate youth that suicide is not a normal response to stress but rather, a preventable tragedy that often occurs as a result of untreated depression
- Inform youth of the risks associated with alcohol use to cope with feelings
- Increase help-seeking by providing students with specific action steps to take if they are concerned about themselves or others and identifying resources available to them
- Encourage students and their parents to engage in a discussion about these issues
- Encourage peer-to-peer communication about the ACT help-seeking message



Please complete and return the following section only:

As the parent/guardian of _____, I _____
Student name Printed parent/Guardian name

- GIVE my permission**
- DO NOT give my permission**

to participate in the High School: SOS (Signs of Suicide) Suicide Prevention Program

Signature of Parent/Guardian **Date**