



WARE MIDDLE SCHOOL
239 West Street-Ware, MA 01082
(413) 967-6903 (Office) - (413) 967-3182 (Fax)
Ms. Lisa Candito-Principal

January 17, 2017

Dear Parent or Guardian:

We are writing to inform you about an evidence-based screening that will be implemented at the Ware Middle School during the 2016-2017 school year, as required by MA Law (Chapter 52, Acts of 2016), *An Act relative to substance use, treatment, education and prevention*. The Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) program will be incorporated into our annual state mandated screening. The goal of this screening program is to reinforce healthy decisions, and to assist student's in getting support if needed for substance use related problems.

In a national survey, 28% of teenagers reported that drugs, alcohol, and tobacco are the most important issues that they are facing. Nearly nine out of ten students reported that their classmates use drugs, drink, and smoke during the school day¹. Research has also proven that our brains are not fully developed during adolescence and substance use in the early years substantially alters brain functioning for a lifetime².

The WMS nursing and counseling staff will be providing an interview- based screening for 6th grade students about the use of alcohol, marijuana, and other drugs. Screenings will be brief (approximately 5 minutes) and conducted by our school nurse confidentially in private one-on-one sessions. We will be using the CRAFFT screening tool, which is the most commonly used substance use screening tool for adolescents in MA. A copy of the CRAFFT screening tool is attached to this letter for your review. Students who are not using substances will have their healthy choices reinforced by the screener. The screener will provide brief feedback to any student who reports using substances or is at risk for future substance use. If needed, we will refer students to our counseling staff for further evaluation. The results of the screening will not be included in your student's school record, nor will results be shared with any staff other than the SBIRT Team. This program focuses on prevention, and does not generate disciplinary action. Your student will be handed back their completed screen, which has helpful information for teens on the reverse side.

As with any school screening, you have the right to opt your child out of this screening. Please contact via phone or send a note to Amelie Avgoustakis at (413) 967-6903 ext. 3556 if you wish to opt out or have any questions. All screening is voluntary and students may choose not to answer any or all of the screening questions. Screenings will start in February.



WARE MIDDLE SCHOOL
239 West Street-Ware, MA 01082
(413) 967-6903 (Office) - (413) 967-3182 (Fax)
Ms. Lisa Candito-Principal

We encourage you to talk with your child about substance use. For ideas on how to start these conversations, please see the back of this letter for helpful links. Please also check on the school website for more information regarding substance use and help available for our youth. Together, schools and parents/guardians CAN make a difference for the youth in Ware.

Sincerely,

Amelie Avgoustakis BSN RN
School Nurse, WMS

Dr. Marlene DiLeo
Superintendent WPS

Lisa Candito
Principal, WMS

Jacqueline Jock
Adjustment Counselor WMS

¹ National Center for Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University, 2012.

² Adolescent Brain Development and Drugs, PMC 2012, Jul 18. Ken C. Winters and Amelia Arria

Helpful Links for Parents/ Guardians:

“7 Ways to Protect Your Teen From Alcohol and Other Drugs”
<http://files.hria.org/files/SA1011.pdf>

Underage Drinking Prevention Parent Resources from SAMHSA
<http://www.samhsa.gov/underage-drinking/parent-resources>

Marijuana Talk Kit
<http://www.drugfree.org/MJTalkKit/>