

SBIRT Parent Letter and Consent

Dear Parent or Guardian,

As your child's caregiver, we know that you desire the best resources for your child and the young people in our community. The Worcester Regional Schools Youth Survey data demonstrates that a small number of Worcester students try tobacco, alcohol, marijuana and other drugs in middle school. By the end of high school, many more students report substance use. Research shows the younger a person is when they begin using alcohol or drugs the more likely they are to abuse substances in the future. Recent research also indicates that our brains are not fully developed during the teen years and substance use during this time can significantly alter brain functioning for a lifetime.

In order to help prevent students from starting to use substances, or intervene with early use, Sullivan Middle and Burncoat Middle School staff will be providing interview-based SBIRT (Screening, Brief Intervention, Referral to Treatment) screening for 7<sup>th</sup> grade students about the use of tobacco, alcohol, marijuana, and other drugs. Our goal is to have a preventive conversation with each 7<sup>th</sup> grade student that will help to identify early risk behaviors and support healthy choices. The screening team will include the School Nurse and the Nurse Practitioner from the Health Center. Student screenings will be brief (5-10 minutes) and conducted confidentially in a private, one-on-one session. Students who are not using substances will have their healthy choices reinforced by the screener. The screener will provide brief counseling to any student who reports using substances, or is at risk for future substance use. If needed, the student will be referred to our school adjustment counselors or guidance counselors for further evaluation and support. Whatever your child discusses with the screener is confidential, however we will contact you if your child's health or safety is at risk. Results of the screening will not be included in your student's school record nor shared with any staff except the SBIRT screening team. We will use the CRAFFT-II Screening Tool, the most commonly used substance use screening tool for teenagers in Massachusetts, consisting of 4 questions. Screenings will take place during the 2016-2017 school year, during non-core academic classes.

You have a right to opt your child out of this screening. If you have any questions please call your school nurse; if you wish to exclude your child from this screening, please sign this letter and return to the school nurse by (DATE). Additionally, screening is voluntary and students may choose not to answer any or all of the questions.

One of the best ways to prevent youth substance use is to talk with your child about substance use. For ideas on how to begin these conversations, please refer to the *Family Checkup* resource included with this letter. Together, schools and families can make a difference for our youth in Worcester. Thank you for your time and interest with this very important prevention initiative.

School Principal: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

School Nurse: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

\*I **DO NOT** want my child to participate in SBIRT Screening

Parent/ Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_