

Notification from: **Melican Middle School (MMS)**

January 14, 2022

Dear Seventh Grade Parents/Guardians,

I am writing to let you know that our school counselors will begin conducting a substance use screening for all 7th graders over the next few weeks. All Massachusetts public schools must include a verbal substance use preventive screening as part of their yearly mandated universal health-screening programs. Our district will use the *Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT)* protocol with students in Grade 7. Students will individually be asked several questions about their substance use by a trained school professional. This will be followed by a one-on-one conversation between each student and the school counselor. The purpose of this effort is to prevent, or at least delay, alcohol, marijuana, nicotine, or other drug use. The SBIRT program reinforces healthy decisions and addresses concerns about substance use with the goal of improving health, safety and success in school.

We will use the [CRAFT+N screening tool](#), the most commonly used substance use screening tool for adolescents. All screenings will be held in private one-on-one sessions with one of our specially trained school counselors. Students who are not using substances will have their healthy choices reinforced. When any student reports using alcohol or other drugs, or seems at risk for future substance use, the screener will ask follow-up questions, provide brief feedback and have a brief conversation with that student. Most screening sessions last approximately 5-15 minutes, and students are able to decline participation at any time.

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 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 put with any other information that identifies any child and will not be included in your child's school record. If you want to opt your child out of the screening you can contact us at any time before or during the screening. Your child may also opt out at the time of the screening. Please feel free to contact us with any questions, or if you would like your child to opt-out of the screening. Together, schools and parents CAN make a difference for the youth in our community. One way to prevent youth alcohol and other drug use is to talk with your child about your thoughts and expectations about alcohol and drug use. You can view the CRAFT+N tool and other SBIRT resources on www.masbirt.org/schools website.

If you have any questions about this program, please contact me or the Coordinator for Social Emotional Learning, Jennifer Lipton-O'Connor at jlipton@nsboro.k12.ma.us. We look forward to continuing to work together to support the well-being and health of our students.

Respectfully,

Michelle T. Karb, Principal

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