

Dear Parent/Guardian,

The purpose of this letter is to inform you that your child will be engaging in classroom lessons mandated by Florida legislation for the remainder of the school year in the following areas: mental health education, child trafficking education, and substance use and abuse prevention.

Mental Health:

State Mandate:

“Tallahassee, Fla., July 17, 2019 – During the State Board of Education meeting, the Board voted to require school districts to annually provide a minimum of five hours of instruction to grades 6-12 students related to youth mental health awareness and assistance.”

Implementation:

Students in grade six will receive all of the mandated education through the M/J Grade 6 Health Course. 7th and 8th grade students will receive this through myLearning Mental Health Course which includes targeted lessons from Everfi Mental Wellness Basics curriculum which is in alignment with the required components of the state-mandate. The content of the curriculum includes:

Lesson 1: Mental Health Basics

- Define mental health.
- List behaviors and factors that maintain and contribute to positive mental health.
- Define stress and explain how it interacts with mental health.
- List behaviors and factors that threaten positive mental health.

Lesson 2: Recognize warning signs and know how to respond

- Identify the warning signs of mental health issues.
- Identify how to help yourself or a friend who is struggling.
- Experience an inspiring story of overcoming symptoms of significant mental health disorders.

Lesson 3 -Healthy Coping Skills

- Identify emotional, intellectual, physical, and social factors that can support or impact mental health.
- Explain how coping strategies can impact mental health.
- Identify how negative self-talk can impact mental health.
- Identify appropriate coping strategies to use to best enhance mental health.
- Increase awareness of coping strategies and the ability to apply them effectively.

Lesson 4 – Getting Help

- Identify how coping strategies can impact mental health.
- Identify appropriate coping strategies to use to best enhance mental health.
- Increase awareness of coping strategies and the ability to apply them effectively.
- Identify ways to minimize the stigma of mental health illness.

Lesson 5 – Substance Abuse Prevention

- Learn how substance abuse and/or alcohol can impact brain development & use.
- Identify strategies to say no without being lame.

A waiver is not permitted for this state-mandated instruction. However, if you have concerns about your child reviewing this content, please reach out to the student services team at your child's school.

Child Trafficking:

State Mandate:

“Tallahassee, Fla., September 30, 2019 – The State Board of Education unanimously approved a new rule requiring instruction in child trafficking prevention for students in grades K-12. With this approval, Florida will be the first state in the nation to address the need for instruction in child trafficking prevention. The new rule also establishes procedures for school districts to plan and document delivery of the required instruction.”

Rationale:

Florida is third in the nation for numbers of reported cases of human trafficking, and the average age of trafficked youth is 11 to 13 years old. In 2018, there were 767 human trafficking cases reported in Florida. Of those cases, 149 were minors. Up to 70 percent of sex trafficking and exploitation begins with predators connecting with youth online. According to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, one out of eight endangered runaway youth is likely a victim of human trafficking.

Implementation:

Students in grade six will receive all education through Grade 6 Health Course. 7th and 8th grade students will receive this through classroom instruction with school counselors using the Safer, Smarter Teens program.

Substance Use and Abuse:

State Mandate:

“Tallahassee, Fla., August 21, 2019 –Today, Commissioner of Education Richard Corcoran applauded the State Board of Education for requiring accountability in the delivery of age appropriate substance use and abuse health education for students in grades K-12. This initiative builds on similar requirements for mental health education adopted by the State Board of Education last month. The new requirement takes effect this school year.”

Rationale:

“The State Board of Education is committed to putting the needs of students first,” said Chair Andy Tuck. “We firmly believe that a balanced education that includes instruction on substance use and abuse is absolutely essential to a student’s lifelong success.”

Implementation:

Students in grades 6-8th will have two options to receive this education. The first option is school participation in Red Ribbon week in the fall semester. The second option is education with the use of Everfi (7th-8th) or HealthSmart curriculum (6th). The option is to be determined by the school administration.

If you have any questions related to this letter, you may contact your school’s administration and/or student services team. For more information on the state mandates please visit: <http://www.fldoe.org/>