Herndon Middle School

901 Locust Street

Herndon, VA 20170

Dear Parent or Guardian,

The adolescent years are marked by a roller-coaster ride of emotions—difficult for youth, their parents, and educators. It is easy to misread depression as normal adolescent turmoil. Depression, however, (among the most common of mental illnesses) appears to be occurring at a much earlier age. Depression—which is treatable—is a leading risk factor for suicide. In addition, self-injury has become a growing problem among youth.

On November 7th and 9th during HawkTime, 7th grade students will view a 20 minute video which describes some concerning behaviors and how to help friends and other students who may exhibit signs of depression. At the conclusion of the video, students will also complete a survey to screen for mental health issues. School counselors and clinical staff will be available to address any concerns raised following the viewing and screening. The program has proven to be successful at increasing help seeking behaviors by students concerned about themselves or a friend. It is the only school-based suicide prevention program listed by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) on its National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices that addresses suicide risk and depression, while reducing suicide attempts.

Please contact your student’s school counselor if you have any further questions or concerns regarding this. Parents interested in previewing the video or exit pass can do so at 6:30 pm on October 30th in the auditorium at Herndon MS.

If you do **NOT** wish your student to participate in the Wellness Screening please complete the form on the reverse side of this letter, and return it to Herndon Middle School attn: Karyn Niles, Director of Student Services by November 5th. If we do not hear from you, we will assume your child **has permission** to participate in this program.

We appreciate this opportunity to partner with you, our community, as we work to ensure a safe and productive school year for all of our students.

Sincerely,

Karyn Niles

Director of Student Services

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| Karyn Niles | **Director of Student Services** | keniles@fcps.edu |
| Danielle Mascoll | **7th Grade Counselor A-L** | dfmascoll@fcps.edu |
| Elyana Genovese | **7th Grade Counselor M-Z** | eagenovese1@fcps.edu |
| Sara Broady | **8th Grade Counselor A-L** | sjbroady@fcps.edu |
| Meghan Azzara | **8th Grade Counselor M-Z** | meazzara@fcps.edu |
| Kelley Wells | **School Psychologist** | kmwells@fcps.edu |
| Patricia Humphrey | **School Social Worker** | pthumphrey@fcps.edu |

**PARENT FORM TO OPT-OUT OF SCHOOL-WIDE WELLNESS SCREENING Fall 2018**

Herndon Middle School is conducting a wellness screening on **November 7th & November 9 th, 2018** with all 7th grade students. This free, voluntary and confidential screening is offered to help students assess whether or not they have symptoms consistent with depression, and to identify students at-risk of suicide. The screening will occur during the first half of the school day. Students may be opted out of this screening at a parent/guardian’s request.

In order to opt your student out of this screening process, please complete this form and return it to: *Karyn Niles, Director of Student Services,* at Herndon Middle School by **November 5th, 2018**

**This form should only be completed if you do NOT want your student to participate in this screening.**

I, (Parent/Guardian name), do **NOT** give permission

for

(Student Name) to complete the wellness screening

at Herndon Middle School conducted by the Student Services staff.

Signature of Parent of Guardian

Date

This form may be returned:

1) In Person to: Karyn Niles, Director of Student Services

2) Via Email to: KENiles@fcps.edu