



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.” The instruction must include:

- a. Awareness of signs and symptoms;
- b. Process for getting or seeking help for themselves or others;
- c. Awareness of resources (i.e., Fortify Florida app and the National Suicide Prevention Hotline: 1-800-273-8255); and
- d. What to do or say to peers struggling with mental health disorders?

**Implementation:**

Students in grade six will receive all of the mandated education through the M/J Grade 6 Health Course. 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students will receive this through English Language Arts using the Everfi Mental Wellness Basics curriculum.

**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. 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> 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 6-8<sup>th</sup> received this education through the school’s participation in Red Ribbon week in the fall semester.

If you have any questions related to this letter, you may contact our school counselors at 727-774-7400. For more information on the state mandates please visit: <http://www.fldoe.org/>

Sincerely,

Shelley Carrino  
Principal