

Dear Parents or Caregivers,

During the week of September 20th-24th, your child will be taking part in Ending the Silence for Students. This 50-minute presentation is a prevention and early intervention program that engages students in a discussion about mental health and suicide prevention. The program is delivered by a trained two-person team, one of whom is a young adult who is successfully living with a mental health condition. The presentation includes personal stories, educational slides, and videos, with the key points being:

- Learning the warning signs of mental health symptoms
- Facts and statistics of mental health conditions
- Suicide awareness and prevention
- How to get help for themselves or a friend with emphasis on the importance of telling a trusted adult

As a parent/caregiver, we know it can be hard to know how your child is feeling. Today, many teens and adolescents turn to online channels to express themselves, their thoughts and hopes, and their anxieties and personal feelings. Ending the Silence encourages students who may be struggling with mental health symptoms or thoughts of harming themselves to reach out for help by talking with a trusted adult. Virtual students will be given the option to meet with a counselor in a separate meeting or breakout room if they are not ok; additionally, a counselor and school staff will be attending the virtual meeting and will be prepared to assist students as needed.

Following the presentation, your child(ren) will be asked to complete an anonymous survey. This survey is designed to identify what we're doing well and what needs improvement. Occasionally, students may make comments in these surveys that may be of concern; those comments are shared with a school counselor. Virtual students are asked to provide a phone number for the location at which they can be reached in case of emergency; this allows the school counselor to follow up with the student to determine if assistance is needed. Please advise your student to use all 0s for their phone number if they or you are not comfortable providing this information.

We encourage you to talk to your child about Ending the Silence and ask them to share what they are learning. Not only will this conversation help you to recognize any signs in your own child, but it demonstrates to them that you also take this subject seriously and can be one of the trusted adults your child turns to if they or someone they know may need help. **Please contact your child's teacher if you have any concerns or prefer that your child be excused from the presentation.**

We also offer a 60-minute presentation for parents/caregivers that provides additional information on how to approach your child if you think they may be struggling with mental health symptoms or thoughts of self-harm as well as how to work with school staff. Please contact your child's teacher or school administration if you would like to see *Ending the Silence for Families* offered at your school.

Sincerely,

Lynne Conto