

August 2018

Dear Parent or Guardian,

Lanier and FCPS are committed to fostering a caring culture in which all students can learn and thrive. The adolescent years are marked by a roller-coaster ride of emotions—difficult for youth, their parents, and educators to navigate. It is easy to confuse normal adolescent turmoil with depression. Depression, among the most common forms 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.

To proactively address these issues, Lanier Middle School is offering a Wellness Screening to all 7th grade students. The depression awareness, suicide prevention training, and a depression and suicide screening are part of the SOS Signs of Suicide® Prevention Program utilized by the majority of middle and high schools in Fairfax County. *The screening does not provide a diagnosis.* School counselors and clinical staff will be available to address any concerns raised following the screening and work with families to connect with outside resources as needed. 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.

The Lanier Middle School clinical team will be conducting the SOS Program and Wellness Screening for 7th grade students on **Tuesday, October 23rd and Wednesday, October 24th** through Health & Physical Education classes and will follow up with students and families as necessary through the end of the week. The video, which accompanies the SOS program, in addition to the surveys and other literature will be available for you to view prior to the screening. Please contact your student's school counselor if you have any further questions or would like to preview the materials.

If you do **NOT** wish your student to participate in the SOS Middle School program please complete the form on the reverse side of this letter and return it to Lanier Middle School Attn: Kathryn Teague, Director of Student Services. 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,

Kathryn Teague
Director of Student Services

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

Lanier Middle School is conducting a wellness screening on **October 23rd & October 24th, 2018** with all 7th grade students. This free, voluntary, and confidential screening is offered to help students and Student Services Staff Members assess whether or not they have symptoms consistent with depression, and to identify students at-risk of suicide. The screening will occur during your student's Health & Physical Education class and members of the Student Services Department will follow up with families as necessary. 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: *Kathryn Teague, Director of Student Services*, at Lanier Middle School by **Friday, October 5th, 2018.**

This form should only be completed if you do NOT want your 7th grade student to participate in this screening.

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

_____ (Student Name) to complete the depression/suicide screening at

Lanier Middle School conducted by the Student Services Clinical Team.

Signature of Parent of Guardian

Date

This form may be returned:

- 1) Via Front Office to: Kathryn Teague, Director of Student Services
- 2) Via Email to: KCTeague@fcps.edu (Subject Line "Wellness Screening")
- 3) Via Mail to:
Kathryn Teague
Lanier Middle School
3801 Jermantown Road
Fairfax, VA 22030