

September 26, 2019

Dear 7th Grade Longfellow Parent or Guardian:

The Student Services Department at Longfellow Middle, including school counselors, social worker, and psychologist, collaborate throughout the year to address the mental health needs of students so they can access the educational curriculum and reach their full academic potential. Depression is one of the most common mental health illnesses and has become prevalent at the middle school level. It is easy to misread depression as normal adolescent turmoil. While treatable, depression is a leading risk factor for suicide. In addition, self-injury has become a growing problem among youth.

Longfellow Middle School is proactively addressing this issue through the implementation of the Acknowledge, Care, Tell (ACT) Prevention Program, which is used in middle schools throughout Fairfax County Public Schools. The program involves three components: a lesson about mental health, an informational video titled, *Time to ACT*, and an individual wellness screening. This will take place during Health and PE classes on **November 6-7, 2019**. The wellness screening is confidential and designed to help students identify if they may have **characteristics** consistent with depression **and to allow clinical staff to screen students who may be at risk for depression or suicide**. The screening **does not provide a diagnosis** but encourages students to seek help from a trusted adult if they have concerns about themselves or a friend **and allows clinical staff to identify at-risk students**.

There will be a parent preview of the ACT (Acknowledge-Care-Tell) Mental Wellness Screening on **Friday, October 18th from 1 to 2pm** in the Longfellow Lecture Hall. Please check in to the main office when you arrive. You may also view the materials on the ACT website by logging into the Longfellow Parent Portal. To access the Parent Portal please use the following credentials:

Parent Portal: <https://sossignsofsuicide.org>

Username: longfellowms-par

Password: longfellow

If you have any questions about the screening, please feel free to contact your child's counselor. In addition, please visit the Student Services page on the Longfellow website for resources related to mental wellness.

If you do **NOT** wish for your child to participate in the **screening**, please return the attached form no later than November 1, 2019. If we do not receive a form from you, we will assume your child has permission to participate in this program.

Sincerely,

Carole Kihm
Principal
Longfellow Middle School

ACT Opt-Out Form

This form only needs to be returned if you DO NOT want your child to participate in the wellness screening.

If you wish to opt your child out of participating in the wellness screening, complete this form and return it to Longfellow Middle School by **Friday, November 1, 2019**.

I, _____, opt my child _____
(Parent or Guardian- PLEASE PRINT) (Student Name- PLEASE PRINT)

out of participating in the wellness screening at Longfellow Middle School.

Signature of Parent or Guardian

Date

This form may be returned to the Longfellow main office, emailed to school social worker, Jeff Hewett Jbhewitt@fcps.edu or faxed to (703) 533-2672.