

September 30, 2019

Dear 7<sup>th</sup> 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 18, 2019 from 1:00pm to 2:00pm** 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 do **NOT** wish for your child to participate in the program, please click here to access the [opt-out form](#) on the Longfellow homepage.

Instructions for returning the opt-out are on the form. If we do not receive a form from you, we will assume your child has permission to participate in this program.

**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.

Sincerely,  
Carole Kihm  
Principal  
Longfellow Middle School