

WINSLOW HIGH SCHOOL

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September 16, 2019

Dear Winslow High School Community:

As a school, we are committed to creating and sustaining a comprehensive, coordinated effort to improve the overall safety and well-being of our students and educators. To do this, we believe we must involve community-wide programs and initiatives involving parents, teachers, administrators, local law enforcement, mental health & wellness professionals and elected officials to take meaningful action to protect our students.

On Tuesday, September 24th, WHS will be launching the **“Say Something Anonymous Reporting System” (SS-ARS)**. This program teaches students, teachers, and administrators how to recognize the warning signs and signals, especially within social media, of individuals who may be a threat to themselves or others and to *Say Something* to a trusted adult OR use its anonymous reporting system. Specifically, the program educates participants to:

- Recognize the signs and signals of at-risk behaviors – especially within social media
- Take every sign and signal seriously; act quickly to get help by talking to a trusted adult OR
- Report it anonymously through SS-ARS 24/7 Crisis Center, mobile app, or website

Our students are often aware of the problems their peers are facing, so we must empower them to know the danger signs and give them the tools to help each other with the assistance of trained and caring adults. As you know, most conversations are taking place on social media, therefore it is critical that we teach our students to be looking out for one another as these digital conversations are taking place. SS-ARS teaches them what to look for in text, video, and photos while empowering them to act quickly to help a fellow student.

The SS-ARS is being provided through Sandy Hook Promise (SHP), a nation-wide non-profit organization. SHP’s programs are in 50 states – with 7,000 schools and over 3.5 million students and adults trained. They have a track record, reputation, and knowledge of how to work effectively with kids, parents, and teachers to improve school safety and culture. The program is age-appropriate, and research based. They also have funding to provide and sustain the program at NO COST to the school. To date, SS-ARS and other SHP prevention programs have helped stop multiple school shootings and suicides; reduced bullying and cyberbullying; intervened upon cutting, drug use, racial conflicts, and other violent and victimization acts. We know this program will do the same for our school.

I am enclosing a brochure about the say something initiative for more information. If you have questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call or email me directly.

Sincerely,



Chad M. Bell
Principal
859-2425

OVER THE LAST 25 YEARS...

research has revealed that in most acts of gun violence, at least one friend was told in advance that an act of violence might take place



In 4 out of 5 school shootings, the attacker had told people of his plans ahead of time.



WARNING SIGNS

7 out of 10 people who complete suicide told someone of their plans or gave some type of warning or indication.

Imagine if one of those people took action. How many tragedies could be prevented? How many lives would be saved?

Young people show warning signs and share information before they become violent, attempt suicide or make threats. The problem is not everyone knows how to recognize these signs or how to take action.

With Say Something, students, teachers, parents and entire communities are learning how to interpret warning signs and signals and take immediate action. Our hope is to help build a culture of looking out for one another and reporting possible threats of violence when someone sees, reads or hears something - especially within social media.

Social media posts are a primary source of signs, signals and threats from youth, followed by conversations happening in hallways, in the lunchroom and in classrooms.

In fact, in a recent study:

- **37% of threats** were sent electronically using text messaging, email or other online resources
- **28% of threats** were posted over social media

ABOUT SANDY HOOK PROMISE

Sandy Hook Promise (SHP) is a national, nonprofit organization based in Newtown, Connecticut. SHP is led by several family members whose loved ones were killed in the tragic mass shooting at Sandy Hook School on December 14, 2012. We strongly believe that gun violence is preventable - whether the violence is based on self-harm or harm to others - and assert the best way to prevent tragic actions is to identify, intervene and get help for people who may be at-risk.

We know that the vast majority of people we are helping will not become violent. While our prevention programs will help that small percentage that can do so much damage, we are also helping many, many other students and children who need assistance.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

About Sandy Hook Promise and our other school and community-based prevention programs and training, please visit: sandyhookpromise.org

Make the Promise and together we can protect children from preventable gun violence.



Sandy Hook
PROMISE

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SAY SOMETHING

PARENT GUIDE
for PARENTS OF YOUNG ADULTS
IN GRADES 6-12

WHAT IS...

SAY SOMETHING

SAY SOMETHING teaches students, educators, parents and community leaders to:

- 1. LOOK** for **WARNING SIGNS** SIGNALS & THREATS
- 2. ACT IMMEDIATELY.** *take it SERIOUSLY.*
- 3. Say something** to a TRUSTED ADULT

Sometimes students are afraid to speak out because they think they will be considered a snitch or be alienated or physically hurt. This is why Say Something teaches children the difference between telling on someone and saying something to get help.

Caring for each other is a value we promote in school and beyond, both in face-to-face interactions and online.

We are sending this brief guide to parents because we hope that the conversation will continue at home and throughout the community.

HERE'S HOW YOU CAN HELP...

- **Make Say Something part of your family culture.** Make an intentional effort to ask questions about each other's day and include questions about each other's experiences online.
- **Talk to your child about warning signs, signals and threats.** Share what warning signs, signals and threats might look like as well as experiences you have had and ask your child to do the same.
- **Model best practices.** Parents are important role models. Think about your own habits and make sure to display good digital citizenship.
- **Be observant and keep an eye on your child's communication.** Talk to your child about Say Something and learn to recognize signs in your own child's expressions and what issues they may be communicating.
- **Build your digital literacy skills.** Become familiar with features on popular social media sites that allow you to report threatening or worrisome behavior. Learn about steps you can take with your child to get help. Ask your child to share what they know with you.
- **Share strategies with your child to ensure they "Say Something" and take immediate action.** Discuss the pledge with your child and ask how you can help them maintain their pledge to "Say Something."

- **Discuss the difference between saying something and telling on someone.** Explain that telling on someone is purposely trying to get someone in trouble but saying something is getting someone help.
- **Share your story.** Tell your child a story about a time that you took action and it made a difference. What happened? How did you feel afterwards?
- **Be there for your child.**
 - Remind your child that you are always there for them if they need someone to talk to.
 - Help your child identify other trusted adults in school, the community and church and plan to take immediate action.
 - Let your child know that if they come to you with a concern, you will take the concern seriously. Assure them you will act immediately to get help.

RESOURCES: For more resources on this topic, visit the following websites for additional tips and more information:

- Common Sense Media: Parent Concerns
- Nemours: Teaching Kids to be Smart about Social Media
- CDC Injury Prevention and Control: Division of Violence Prevention.
www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/index.html
- National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) Preventing Youth Suicide: Tips for Parents & Educators

SAY SOMETHING

teaches youth and teens, grades 6-12, how to recognize signs & signals—especially on social media—from individuals who may want to hurt themselves or others. Say Something teaches them how and why to go to a trusted adult to get help.

Students and their peers are actively involved in communities offline and in social media, but sometimes they don't understand what they are seeing.