



Ralph C. Mahar Regional School District

507 South Main Street

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Scott Hemlin, Principal

Leslie Moody, Assistant Principal

February 1, 2024

Dear Parent or Guardian:

As your child's caregiver, we know that you desire the best resources for your child and the young people in our community. RC Mahar's Prevention Needs Assessment data consistently reports that a small number of our middle school students try alcohol, marijuana and other drugs. The data also suggests that by the end of high school, many more students report substance use.

In order to help prevent students from starting to use substances, or intervene with early use, RC Mahar nursing and counseling staff will be providing a verbal interview-based screening for all 7th grade students about the use of alcohol, marijuana, and other drugs. This screening utilizes the most commonly used substance use screening questionnaire for adolescents in Massachusetts, the CRAFFT. A copy of this screening tool is located under Health Services of the RC Mahar website Departments tab (choose the Red button Health Services Union #73) or a copy can be obtained from the School Nurse. Legislation requiring schools to conduct this screening can be viewed at <https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2016/Chapter52> (see Sections 15, 63, 64, 66).

Student screening sessions will be brief (5-10 minutes) and conducted confidentially in a private, one-on-one session by the School Nurse, Guidance Counselors, School Psychologist and School Adjustment Counselors. Students who are not using substances will have their healthy choices reinforced. The screener will provide brief feedback to any student who reports using substances, or to any student who is at risk for future substance use.

The results of this screening will not be included in your student's school record. Also, in accordance with M.G.L. c. 71 Sect. 97, the results will not be shared with any other person without written consent from the student except in cases of immediate medical emergency.

As with any school screening, you have the right to opt your child out of this screening. Please contact Susan Jillson, School Nurse, at 978-544-2542, option 5, or email sjillson@rcmahar.org by **Tuesday, February 13th**, if you wish to do so. Additionally, screening is voluntary and students may choose not to answer any or all of the screening questions. **Screening will take place between February 26th and March 15th.**

One way to prevent youth substance use is to talk with your child about your family's thoughts and expectations regarding substance use. Research shows that parents' influence is the #1 reason young people decide not to drink alcohol. For ideas and resources **please visit www.theantidrug.com** . Together, schools and parents CAN make a difference for our youth.

Sincerely,

Scott Hemlin, Principal

Leslie Moody, Assistant Principal

Susan Jillson, BSN, School Nurse

Caitlin McKenna, Coordinator, Student Services