

# Hoosac Valley Regional School District

49 PARK STREET STREET

ADAMS, MA 01220

(413) 743-2939

*Perseverance Respect Integrity Diversity Empathy*

## Substance Abuse Verbal Screening

Like many states, Massachusetts is currently experiencing an epidemic of opioid addiction. Youth substance use remains a significant public health concern for students, families, schools, and communities, and state and local leaders have prioritized preventing addiction and educating students about the dangers of substance misuse. One of the initiatives now in effect, as a result of efforts by the Baker administration and legislative leaders, is to require the use of a verbal screening tool to screen students for substance use disorders at two grade levels (7 & 9) in public schools. *An Act Relative to Substance Use, Treatment, Education and Prevention* was signed into law on March 14, 2016, as Chapter 52 of the Acts of 2016. [Mass. General Laws chapter 71, section 96](#), as amended by [St. 2016, c. 52, s. 15](#), requires each school district to develop and file with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) a policy regarding substance use prevention and the education of its students about the dangers of substance abuse.

Our school's health staff will begin a health screening called SBIRT which stands for Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment. SBIRT is used to screen for alcohol, nicotine, tobacco, and other drug use. This health screening is required by Massachusetts law.

Students in grades 7 and 9 will take part in this screening which takes about 5-10 minutes, using the CRAFFT II screening tool, the most commonly used substance screening tools for adolescents. School health staff will have one-on-one conversations with students. They will ask students about alcohol, nicotine, tobacco or other drug use over the past year. Staff will then talk with each student about how to support their overall health, safety, and success in school. If the student needs more assessment or support, the health staff may work with the student.

### Please note:

- Screening results **will not** go into the student's school record;
- Screening results **will not** be shared without the permission of the student or their parent/guardian. However, results may be shared in the case of immediate medical emergency, or when required by state law;
- SBIRT is asking a short set of questions, **it is not** a blood/urine test, drug test or a test of any body function.

As with any school health screening, you can opt your child out of this process. Students themselves may also choose not to take part. If you **do not want** your child to participate in this screening, please contact:

Phil Grover, school nurse for grade 7, at [PGrover@hoosacvalley.org](mailto:PGrover@hoosacvalley.org)

Traci Gelinas, school nurse for grade 9, at [TGelinas@hoosacvalley.org](mailto:TGelinas@hoosacvalley.org)

**TOGETHER**, schools and parents/guardians **CAN** make a difference for the youth of Hoosac Valley Regional School District.