



Parent/Caretaker Communication

Dear ALA Johnston Families:

As a school system, we are committed to creating and sustaining a comprehensive, coordinated effort to improve the overall safety and well-being of our students, educators and administrators.

To do this, we believe this 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. This is in accordance with § 115C-105.51. Anonymous tip lines and monitoring and response applications. This is in accordance with § 115C-105.51. Anonymous tip lines and monitoring and response applications.

Today, I am happy to announce the launch of the “Say Something Anonymous Reporting System” (SS-ARS). This program, which fulfills the mandate requirement under 115C-105.51 of NC Law, teaches students, teachers, and administrators how to recognize warning signs and signals, especially within social media, of individuals who may be a threat to themselves or others and *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
- Respond to and manage the submitted tip via multi-disciplinary educator and administrator teams
- Sustain the curriculum and awareness via student clubs, in-school activities and call-to-action weeks

Our students often are 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 program is being provided and sustained at no cost to us through Sandy Hook Promise (SHP), a national non-profit organization. More than 7.5 million students and adults have been trained in their signature, evidence-based *Know the Signs* programs that includes *Say Something* Anonymous Reporting System (SS-ARS). They have an exceptional track record, reputation, and level of expertise in working effectively with kids, parents, and teachers to improve school safety and culture.

We anticipate that SS-ARS will help stop school shootings, suicides, and gun threats; it will help reduce bullying and cyberbullying; help intervene upon cutting, drug use, racial conflicts, and other violent and victimization acts.

If you have questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call or email me directly.

Sincerely,
ALA Johnston