

01/11/2024

Dear Families,

Ohio's 133rd General Assembly enacted House Bill 123, the "Safety and Violence Education (SAVE) Students Act," regarding school security and youth suicide awareness and education and training. This law requires school districts to provide: 1 hour of training in Social Isolation, 1 hour of training in Safety Training and Violence Prevention, and 1 hour of training in Suicide Awareness and Prevention using an evidence based program for every student in grades 6-12.

We have chosen to implement a mental health and depression awareness program called *We All Have Mental Health, Level II: Depression Awareness for our 6-7 grades and Level III: Depression Education & Suicide Awareness* for grade 8. These programs were developed by a highly respected mental health education and advocacy organization, Erika's Lighthouse: A Beacon of Hope for Adolescent Depression.

The program goals include:

- Raising awareness of good mental health.
- Raising awareness of the signs of depression and risk and warning signs of suicide.
- Reducing the stigma surrounding mental health issues.
- Encouraging help-seeking skills and, if necessary, additional support services.

These fact-based, student friendly and hopeful programs promote the messages we need our students to hear - Everyone deserves to have good mental health, depression is common and can be serious, but there is hope and help. You are not alone.

Our school wants all of our students to be healthy, both physically and mentally. We encourage students to take control of their mental health and learn how to seek help for themselves or a friend if needed. One of the biggest challenges to mental health is teen depression, a very common, yet widely overlooked mood disorder that will impact 15–20% of young people before they reach adulthood. It is also a risk factor to suicide.

We look forward to working together to better inform students of important issues, like depression, and provide the tools students need to navigate challenging times.

All these programs are donor-funded and no-cost to schools like ours. For more information on this program, please visit erikaslighthouse.org.

Please feel free to call or email with any questions or concerns or if you wish to opt your student out of this learning experience.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Sarah Montgomery
Elementary/Middle School Counselor
419-687-8200 x22109
smontgomery@plymouthk12.org

