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PARENT LETTER: PERSONAL SAFETY

The first lesson of the *Safer, Smarter Teens: Be The Change* curriculum features an introduction by

advocate Lauren Book. Lauren shares that she is a survivor of sexual abuse who created the Lauren’s Kids foundation in 2007. As Chief Executive Officer of the Lauren’s Kids foundation, she developed the *Safer,* *Smarter Teens: Be The Change* curriculum to protect and empower students because 95% of child sexual abuse is preventable through education and awareness. In the lesson, Lauren emphasizes the importance of standing up for your personal rights, taking responsibility for yourself, and seeking help in order to keep yourself safe.

The lesson also covers personal rights and responsibilities. Students will learn about the communication skills needed to protect their personal rights. Students will also learn about self esteem and relationships. the importance of maintaining personal boundaries is clarified to help students understand how to preserve the balance of power. Your child will learn how to promote healthy relationships and strategies to deal with unhealthy relationships. Lastly, Lauren introduces the concept of “grooming” to identify techniques an abuser uses to establish and maintain a relationship.

**PARENT CONNECTION:**

These lessons introduce the idea that we all have the personal power within us to make choices and decisions that keep us safe. We can use that power to recognize red flags that alert us to unsafe situations involving ourselves or others.

These lessons are important because early adolescence is a challenging time for both children and parents. As children strive to grow up and be independent – an important developmental step – they don’t yet have the emotional maturity or strategies to handle difficult situations they may encounter. Keeping the lines of communication open with your child is an important part of being one of their trusted adults to whom he or she can turn. Always keep the lines of communication open. Helping your child feel comfortable coming to you to talk about important and difficult issues is essential to ensuring his or her safety.

# LESSON TOPICS:

# Lesson 1 – Personal Rights & Responsibilities, Healthy vs Unhealthy Relationships, and The Problem of Abuse

# Lesson 2 – Dating Violence & Harassment, Safe Use of Technology, and Advocacy in Action

For more ways to talk with your child about making safer and smarter choices, visit SaferSmarterTeens.org. For additional resources, visit LaurensKids.org. To report abuse, call the Florida Abuse Hotline at 1-800-962-2873.

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Florida legislation (6A-1.094124) requires all students, grades 6th -12th, to receive instruction in mental health, child trafficking prevention, and substance abuse. In Volusia County schools, students will plan to receive this instruction through a developmentally appropriate lesson within their class day. Parent Information Sheets will follow the videos providing additional follow up that you may want to discuss or review with your students at home in the form of a Connect Ed message. Lesson topics will include the following:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Introduction to Mental Health, Physical Health & Wellbeing** | General understanding to help reduce stigma |
| **Coping Skills** | Ways to manage and reduce stress and challenges |
| **Signs of Mental Illness** | Understand how to recognize the signs and how to seek help for themselves and their friends, if needed |
| **Seeking Help** | Who to reach out to for help, in terms of a trusted adult or helping professional, and about local and national resources that can be accessed when help is needed |
| **Safety & Substance Abuse** | How to recognize and respond to bullying/cyberbullying, abuse, digital dangers, and substance abuse. It teaches that adults are responsible for their safety but there are things they can do to help adults keep them safe |

Programs used for this year are a combination of the Monique Burr Foundation’s *Teen Safety Matters*® Program and Lauren’s Kids *Safer, Smarter Teens* curriculum, both have which been reviewed and endorsed by national experts and implemented in districts throughout the State of Florida.

You can learn more about these programs at [www.mbfpreventioneducation.org](http://www.mbfpreventioneducation.org) and [www.LaurensKids.org](http://www.LaurensKids.org) and [www.SaferSmarterSchools.org](http://www.SaferSmarterSchools.org) .

When teens are taught safety information, rules to keep them safe, and better understand their own wellness, they perform better in school and enjoy healthier, happier, and safer lives.

**IF YOU “DO NOT” WANT YOUR TEEN TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PROGRAM LESSONS, COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING FORM & RETURN THE FORM TO THEIR SCHOOL.**

The lessons provide students with important information about mental wellness, communicating concerns, and potential dangers they may face. If you do not want your teen to participate, please have these discussions with them or use another program. Please contact the school with any concerns before opting your teen out of the program.

The lessons will be delivered in the classroom by your child’s teacher. Mental Health Counselors and School Counselors will be made available for any students who may be triggered or need to debrief about any of the material. Lessons will rotate classes so as not to impede on the instructional time of one particular subject. Dates and class period include the following:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Period 2 | Safety Lesson 1– (1/19) |
| Period 3 | Safety Lesson 2– (2/9) |
| Period 4 | Mental Health Lesson 1– (2/16) |
| Period 5 | Mental Health Lesson 2– (3/20) |
| Period 6 | Mental Health Lesson 3– (4/6) |

**IF YOU “DO NOT” WANT YOUR TEEN TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PROGRAM LESSONS, COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING FORM & RETURN THE FORM TO THEIR SCHOOL.**

I understand returning this form means **I DO NOT WANT MY TEEN TO PARTICIPATE** in the district instruction on Mental and Emotional Health Education, Substance Use and Abuse Health Education, and Child Trafficking/Safety Prevention Education.

**I UNDERSTAND THEY WILL NOT RECEIVE THE IMPORTANT INFORMATION** contained in the program.

Student’s Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Email: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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