



The Northbridge Public Schools

Town of Northbridge

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Dr. Catherine Stickney, Superintendent
Kathleen Perry, Director of Pupil Personnel Services

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December 14, 2017

Dear Families and Community Members,

You may be aware that there was a video and information circulated through social media regarding drug use at Northbridge High School.

Firstly, I feel it is vital for you to know that we take this situation and any situation involving student safety very seriously. This is extremely concerning. We learned of this video over a week ago and took swift, immediate disciplinary action. We worked very closely with the Northbridge Police Department. We have no evidence that this is wide-spread within our building. Staff members are assigned to supervisory duties around the building to ensure students are safe and following school rules. Such egregious behavior is not overlooked or ignored. We are committed to continuing to monitor and support our students in a safe and productive school environment.

I would like to share with you the steps we take to provide education and support for our students regarding chemical health and safety.

- Our Health classes provide direct instruction on the perils of drug use and abuse. We work closely with our School Resource Officer to integrate actual life-experiences into our units. Officer DeJordy has visited multiple Health classes this year with individuals who are Northbridge graduates in recovery to speak to the students regarding these issues.
- We are one of the first districts in the state to initiate the SBIRT screening by which the nursing staff meets with every student individually in grade 7 and 9 to speak with them regarding their life choices and risky behaviors.
- Our School Adjustment Counselors meet regularly with students who require assistance for social emotional concerns that could lead to risky behavioral choices.
- We work closely with the Northbridge Police Department to collaborate on issues that arise affecting our students.
- We work closely with Family Continuity and You, Inc. to provide support and assistance to our students and families struggling with chemical issues and family trauma.
- I meet regularly and am an active planning member on the Northbridge Coalition. We provide quarterly activities to engage families in supporting the community in a wide range of activities, including community forums around substance abuse and presentations from Learn to Cope and the Shine Initiative.
- We sent home literature regarding chemical health and addiction last fall, courtesy of the Missin' Matt Foundation.

Excellence - Accountability - Collaboration: "Every Student, Every Classroom, Every Day"

It is the policy of the Northbridge Public Schools not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, age, or homelessness in its educational programs, services, activities, or employment.

- We have increased the frequency of our Chemical Health Nights from once annually to once for each season.

We are not turning a blind eye to the epidemic at hand. We are vigilantly working to ensure we deter any such activity at Northbridge Public Schools. We will continue to respond swiftly to allegations and include community resources as appropriate. However, we cannot do this work alone. We need to call upon parents and the community to support us in discussing such issues with your child as age-appropriate. Encourage them to seek out administration if they believe there is activity that violates school policies. Utilize the Anonymous Alert system and provide as much actual evidence as possible. Contact the Northbridge Police Department if you have information regarding drugs circulating in the community.

We are committed to supporting our students in becoming successful adults. As a reminder, just because you may hear about something and believe nothing has been done, please know that we are not at liberty to discuss such situations publicly.

Our next Northbridge Coalition event is scheduled for January 25th and will address the topic of homelessness. More information will follow. I urge you to become involved with the coalition as we try to address a wide range of topics that affect the community.

Rest assured that we understand that this situation is obviously concerning; it has been addressed, and we will continue to monitor all allegations closely with the Northbridge Police Department.

Please feel free to contact your building principal if you wish to learn more about the specific instruction regarding healthy lifestyles that take place at your child's grade level or if you wish to learn more about specific safety protocols in place.

Sincerely,
Dr. Catherine Stickney

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