



Windber Area School District

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Joseph K. Kimmel
Superintendent

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January 17, 2019

Dear Parents/Guardians:

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.

Today, we are pleased to announce the launch of the "Safe2Say Something" (S2SS) anonymous reporting system. This program, which is mandated under PA state law / Act 44, 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 the S2SS Office of the Attorney General 24/7 Crisis Center, mobile app, or website
- Sustain awareness

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. S2SS encourages students to pay close attention to text, video, and photos while empowering them to act quickly to help a fellow student. This program is being provided through Sandy Hook Promise (SHP), a nation-wide non-profit organization. SHP's programs are in 50 states – with 10,000+ schools and over 5.5 million students and adults trained. The program is age-appropriate and research-based.

We anticipate that S2SS 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. Even with the new S2SS system, we still encourage you to reinforce with your child the concept we have been stressing with them over the years: See Something, Say Something. Students never have to wait to report any incident. Any incident can be reported to any school personnel. Additionally, if students feel a true emergency is occurring, 911 can be used to dispatch police, EMS, or fire services.

If you have questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call or email me directly or have a conversation with any building principal. The link for a parent brochure describing Safe2Say Something is available on our district website, and training for students will occur on January 17.

Sincerely,

Jason M. Hicks, D. Ed.
Middle School Principal/School Safety Director
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www.windberschools.org