

Substance Abuse Policy 2016

In 2016 Governor Baker signed into law *An act relative to Substance use, Treatment, Education and Prevention* in response to the opioid epidemic. The following policy reflects Seven Hills commitment to keep our students informed of the dangers of drugs, alcohol and tobacco, teach resistance skills, and include the families as partners in that process by providing evidence based programming to our students in grades K through 8.

Programs in early learning, primary, and elementary years will focus on social emotional learning strategies. Students will use Open Circle and through proactively developing skills for recognizing and managing emotions, empathy, positive relationships and problem solving, students will learn in a safe, caring, and engaging environment. They will learn the problem solving process, learn about dangerous and destructive behaviors, active listening, effective communication skills, and a sense of belonging. Parents are trained in the beginning of the school year to use Open Circle language to be able to use it at home as well, and periodic newsletters go home to families to inform them of the skills their children are learning and discussed at parent events, showcases and conferences.

In the Elementary and Junior Academy, programs will address increasing resistance skills, communication skills, knowledge about the consequences of drug use, and knowledge about the prevalence of drug use. These students have many evidence based programs available to them. Seven Hills utilizes The Peers Making Peace program, a conflict resolution program, designed to help students manage conflict in their everyday lives, we also utilize Restorative Justice and Circle Forward. Restorative Justice fosters many skills: empathy, communication, the development and building of relationships, positive discipline instead of punitive, a whole-child approach, a whole-school approach, mindfulness based learning and accountability. Students will also have classes that focus on specifically learning about the dangers of drugs and alcohol using an evidence based program that will be chosen by a committee of staff, students, and parents, and taught in their Health/Guidance classes.

Seven Hills also partners with The District Attorney's Office and the Sheriffs office to bring many of their Community Outreach programs to our Junior Academy students annually.

Parents will have all of this information available to them as well as a resource center set up at our Open House at the beginning of the school year each year. A Guidance web page will also be set up and maintained by our Guidance Director with links to resources for families.

Our School Safety and Discipline Policy on page 28 of our *Staff and Family Handbook* outlines the definitions of drugs, alcohol and tobacco offenses, a level 3 infraction, at Seven Hills. It also outlines the range of outcomes for students involved in a level 3 infraction of this nature.

In addition students will be referred for outpatient counseling through our guidance department. Seven Hills partners with clinicians that come to our school and provide on-site therapeutic services to our students, crisis intervention counseling, family based counseling, and assistance to many of our families with community based resources.

This policy will be submitted for review by our board of trustees and upon acceptance, re-submitted for review and revision every two years. Staff will be trained annually on this policy at the start of the school year.

Submitted By Lisa Moore, MA, C.A.G.S 10/2016