



EAST HELENA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

School District No. 9

P.O. Box 1280 * East Helena, MT. 59635

Superintendent/ Administration Office (406) 227-7700

Eastgate Elementary School (406) 227-7770 * Prickly Pear Elementary (406) 227-7720

Radley Elementary School (406) 227-7710 * East Valley Middle School (406) 227-7740

East Helena High School (406) 227-7730

"Success For All"



PARENT/LEGAL GUARDIAN OPT OUT FORM FOR STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH RISK SCREENING

Dear Parents/Guardians:

East Helena Public Schools is committed to supporting our students in these difficult times. National and local data shows a significant increase in depression and anxiety among young people since the start of the pandemic. To better support our students, we regularly screen for mental health concerns and work with families to support students and address those concerns through school and community based assistance. We have partnered with the Rural Behavioral Health Institute and Shodair Children's Hospital to facilitate screening in a more timely and organized fashion. Screening will take place on **February 10, 2022 for 6th Grade** students and **February 17, 2022 for 7th Grade** students at EVMS. Here is some additional information:

- Participation in the screening is encouraged, but completely voluntary. Students can ask to stop at any time, and parents can opt their student out of the screening if desired (See below).
- The screener has been used in other middle and high schools in Montana and elsewhere.
- This mental health and suicide risk screening will be managed by Mr. Kevin VanNice, our EVMS Counselor, with assistance from district and local counselors, health care, and mental health professionals.
- This screening is routine and similar to our other health and dental screenings,
- The screening will be used to identify students who need additional mental health support at school or in the community.
- Screening may identify a small percentage of students who are struggling with urgent, difficult issues such as suicidal thoughts or behaviors, but who have not said or shown outward signs. In these few cases, the school will attempt to immediately contact parents or guardians and will continue that effort until successful.
- If necessary, the school will immediately alert an interagency team of professionals trained to support a student in an emotional health crisis.

- Screening is safe and effective. It detects mental health issues but does not cause them. Past participants taking computerized mental health and suicide risk screenings reported they appreciated being asked the questions.
- The computerized tool uses a branching survey, so the screening is more accurate and takes less time to complete than paper versions. Most students will finish the screening in about 5-10 minutes.
- Student privacy will be protected through use of a random code system. Only the school counselor and administrator will have access to those codes. Results will be shared **ONLY** with the student, parents or guardians.

For more detailed information about the project, please contact Brenda Stoltz or Kevin VanNice at EVMS, 227-7740.

Cut here and return to EVMS Office by February 4, 2022 **ONLY IF OPTING OUT!**

You do not need to respond unless you would prefer that your child **not** participate in the screening.

If you would prefer that your child **NOT** participate in the screening, please fill out the following information below, and return to EVMS by **Friday, February 4, 2022**.

☐ I do **NOT** want my child to participate in the mental wellness screening.

Printed Full Name of Student

Grade _____

Parent or Guardian Signature

Date

Please print your name on the line above (only one parent or guardian needs to sign).