April 5, 2024

Madison families,

MCS is committed to providing our students and staff with a safe learning environment. Another resource we have implemented to help us protect our students and empower them to speak up is the **Say Something Anonymous Reporting System (ARS) we recently launched.**

This program teaches students, teachers, and administrators how to recognize warning signals and threats, on social media, in school, or in their community, 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 students and adult participants to:

- Recognize the signs and threats of at-risk behaviors
- Take every sign and signal seriously and act quickly to get help by talking to a trusted adult, OR
- Report it anonymously to the Say Something ARS 24/7/365 Crisis Center via a mobile app, website, or telephone hotline
- Respond to and manage the submitted tips using a tip management system overseen by a designated school team
- Sustain the curriculum and awareness via student clubs, in-school activities, and call-to-action weeks

Our students are often aware of the problems their peers are facing, so we must empower them to recognize 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 look out for one another as these digital conversations are taking place. Say Something ARS teaches them what to look for in text, video, and photos while empowering them to act quickly to help a fellow student. The program also teaches students to recognize at-risk behaviors in friends and classmates at school and in their local community.

The Say Something ARS program is provided by Sandy Hook Promise (SHP), a nationwide non-profit organization. SHP's programs are in 50 states with over 21 million students and adults trained. They have a track record, reputation, and knowledge of how to work effectively with kids, parents, and teachers to improve school safety and culture. The program is age-appropriate and research-based. To date, Say Something ARS and other SHP prevention programs have helped stop multiple school shootings, suicides, and gun threats, The program has reduced bullying and cyberbullying, and intervened upon cutting, drug use, and other violent acts. We know this program will do the same for our district.

As of this week, students and staff have been trained on the Say Something Anonymous Reporting System. We invite you to learn more about this by reviewing the Frequently Asked Questions included with this letter from Sandy Hook Promise.

If you have questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call, or email me directly.

Sincerely,
Dr. Teresa Brown,
Superintendent

***Say Something* Anonymous Reporting System**
Frequently Asked Questions

1. **What is the purpose of the *Say Something* – ARS?**

   The *Say Something* Anonymous Reporting System is a platform and safe space for students and concerned adults to provide information about individuals threatening or displaying at-risk behaviors for potential violence or self-harm.

2. **Is Sandy Hook Promise a political organization?**

   Sandy Hook Promise is comprised of two organizations:

   1. the Foundation, which is a 501c3 nonprofit organization that develops and delivers community based "Know the Signs" programs and research, and
   2. the Action Fund, which is a 501c4 organization focused on writing and passing nonpartisan state and federal legislation promoting gun safety, youth mental health, and violence prevention education for schools.

3. **Is *Say Something* - ARS focused on gun control?**

   No. The *Say Something* - ARS does not have stake in gun control nor 2nd amendment rights.

4. **Is the Tipster able to track the progress of the tip?**

   The "Tipster" cannot track the progress of a tip. The Tipster can only report the concern and then the district/school team, and 911 dispatch officials (as needed) assess, intervene, and get help if needed. No communication is made back to the Tipster unless more information is required.

5. **How does the *Say Something* – ARS ensure there are no false tips about a student?**

   Like all tip lines we are subject to prank tips. Of all tips received by the Crisis Center about 3% are deemed to be a prank/hoax tip. The Crisis Center has a thorough vetting process for validity and standard protocol of how false tips are handled.

6. **What are some of the most common tip events reported through the Crisis Center?**

   - Vaping & Substance Abuse
   - Anxiety & Depression
   - Cutting
   - Bullying/Cyber-Bullying
   - Suicide Threat/Ideation
   - Planned Fights & School Violence

7. **What protocols are in place to allow for protection of an at-risk student?**

    This program has been adopted by your school district and therefore falls under its existing policies and procedures and/or student handbook guidelines. We strongly recommend that you review these documents and meet with officials to learn more about student protections.

8. **How are the reports tied to a child's permanent school record?**

    School districts own all tip data, and the data is protected by the same state and federal laws as existing school records.

9. **Can parents/guardians use the system to report threats/concerns?**

    Yes. Parents or guardians can report any threats or concerns they may have heard from their child or be witnessing themselves. There are three ways their concerns can be reported**;** through the *Say Something* app (free to download through the App Store and Google Play store), the website at SaySomething.net, or by phone at 1-844-5-SAYNOW (or 1-844-572-9669).

10. **How does the *Say Something* – ARS ensure tracking and accountability of the school administration, law enforcement and the Crisis Center itself?**

    The *Say Something* - ARS does not have governance over school districts nor local law enforcement. Tips and its related information are passed to the district/school and 911 (as needed) to act upon at the local level. Once passed, these entities address it as they normally would with any issue, anonymous or not, that is shared with them. In terms of the SS-ARS Crisis Center and its Crisis Counselors, we have well-defined protocols and procedures that are regularly reviewed and refined as needed.