



**WAKE COUNTY
PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM**

APEX FRIENDSHIP HIGH SCHOOL

Brian Pittman, Principal

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It is always our goal at Apex Friendship High to keep you informed about activities at the school. You may recall that in middle school your student participated in a program called the SOS Signs of Suicide® Prevention Program. This program is also delivered to 9th graders through their Healthful Living class and 12th graders through their English IV class. The following letter is being sent to all students / families currently enrolled in English IV. Similar information is being shared at all high schools in the district.

April 2024

Dear Parent or Guardian:

The transition after high school is marked by the push and pull of dependence and independence, as well as new stressors that include being on one's own, changes in family relations, financial responsibilities, changes in social life, exposure to new people, ideas and temptations, and greater academic demand for those attending college. All of these stressors contribute to a roller-coaster ride of emotions that can be difficult for students and their parents. It is easy to misread depression as normal turmoil; however, symptoms of depression can be serious and are known risk factors for suicide

To proactively address these issues, Apex Friendship High is offering a "refresher course" of the SOS Signs of Suicide® Prevention Program by implementing the SOS Second ACT Program. The original SOS program has been used by WCPSS over the past years. The program has proven to be successful at increasing help seeking by students concerned about themselves or a friend and is the only school-based suicide prevention program listed by SAMHSA for its National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices that addresses suicide risk and depression, while reducing suicide attempts. In a randomized control study, the SOS high school program showed a reduction in self-reported suicide attempts by 40% (BMC Public Health, July 2007).

Our goals in participating in this program are straightforward:

- To help our students understand that depression is a treatable illness
- To explain that suicide is a preventable tragedy that often occurs as a result of untreated depression
- To provide students training in how to identify serious depression and potential suicidality in themselves or a friend
- To introduce students to resources in the community and provide them with information on seeking help in college, the work force, or armed forces.

This program includes administration of a self-scoring depression screening. This tool cannot provide a diagnosis of depression, but does indicate whether your child should be referred for evaluation by a mental health professional. Your child will receive resources to assist you in discussing these important issues. You know your child best and if your child is sensitive to this topic, please contact your child's counselor. ***Any parent request for a student to not participate in this program will be honored by the school.***

Sincerely,

Brian Pittman, Principal
Apex Friendship High School

If you do NOT wish for your child to participate in the SOS High School program, please sign below and return it to Kelly Burden in the AFHS Student Services Office. If we do not hear from you, we will assume your child has permission to participate in this program.

I do not want my child _____ (child's name) to participate in the SOS program
Parent Signature: _____