



**WAKE COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM**

**APEX FRIENDSHIP HIGH SCHOOL**

**Brian Pittman, Principal**

7801 Humie Olive Road

Apex, NC 27502

wcpss.net/apexfriendships

tel: (919) 694-0500

fax: (919) 694-0525

*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 9<sup>th</sup> graders through their Healthful Living class and 12<sup>th</sup> graders through their English IV class. The following letter is being sent to all students / families currently enrolled in Healthful Living. Similar information is being shared at all high schools in the district.*

September 2024

Dear Parent or Guardian:

The adolescent years are marked by a roller-coaster ride of emotions—difficult for youths, their parents, and educators. It is easy to misread depression as normal adolescent turmoil; however, depression (among the most common of mental illnesses) appears to be occurring at a much earlier age. Depression—which is treatable—is a leading risk factor for suicide. In addition, self-injury has become a growing problem among youth.

To proactively address these issues, Apex Friendship High is offering depression awareness and suicide prevention training as part of the SOS Signs of Suicide® Prevention Program. 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 impress upon youth that they can help themselves or a friend by taking the simple step of talking to a responsible adult about their concerns
- To help students know whom in the school they can turn to for help, if they need it

This topic is part of the Healthful Living standard course of study. The goal is to educate your child and to give them guidance on how to get help for themselves or a friend. The program has several skits that illustrate real life situations that middle or high school students may experience. The skits show the students how to correctly and safely deal with each scenario. 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 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: \_\_\_\_\_*