

# Newtown Middle School



**Jim Ross**  
Principal

**Brian Walsh**  
Assistant Principal

11 Queen Street  
Newtown, Connecticut 06470-2172  
(203) 426-7642

Dear Parent / Guardian,

This year, school staff are working to teach students about mental health and how to seek help if they are worried about themselves or a friend. We are using a program called *SOS Signs of Suicide*. The program teaches students about this difficult topic and encourages them to seek help.

**The CT Public Act 97-61 mandates that schools teach suicide prevention.** SOS has been used by thousands of schools over the past few decades. Studies have shown that it effectively teaches students about depression and suicide while reducing the number of students' self-reported suicide attempts.

Through the program, students learn:

- that depression is treatable, so they are encouraged to seek help
- how to identify depression and potential suicide risk in themselves or a friend
- to ACT (Acknowledge, Care and Tell a trusted adult) if concerned about themselves or a friend
- who they can turn to at school for help, if they need it

Students will watch age-appropriate video clips and participate in a guided discussion about depression, suicide, and what to do if they are concerned about a friend. Following the video, students will complete a response slip which asks whether they would like to talk to an adult about any concerns. School staff will follow up with any student asking to talk.

**Following the video, students will also complete a brief depression screening tool. This tool cannot provide a diagnosis of depression but does indicate whether a young person should be referred for evaluation by a mental health professional. If you do not wish your student to complete a written depression screening questionnaire, please complete the following form.**

We encourage you to visit [www.sossignsofsuicide.org/parent](http://www.sossignsofsuicide.org/parent) for information on warning signs for youth suicide, useful resources, and some of the key messages students will learn.

We are including:

- An infographic for you to reinforce the ACT message at home
- An info sheet with resources
- Local community resources for mental health

If you have any questions or concerns about your child's participation in this program please contact me **at 203-426-7642** or at [rossj@newtown.k12.ct.us](mailto:rossj@newtown.k12.ct.us) or feel free to speak with any of our school counselors.

Sincerely,

Jim Ross, Principal  
Newtown Middle School  
[rossj@newtown.k12.ct.us](mailto:rossj@newtown.k12.ct.us)

# Newtown Middle School Parental Opt-Out for Depression Screening Form SOS Signs of Suicide® Prevention Program

Please complete, scan or return SIGNED Parental Opt-out Form by **Friday, March 28th** to Lisa Petrovich at [petrovichl@newtown.k12.ct.us](mailto:petrovichl@newtown.k12.ct.us) or to the Counseling Office.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, **DO NOT** give permission for  
[Name of Parent/Guardian]

\_\_\_\_\_  
[Name of Student] [Grade]

**to complete the Depression Screening form that will be given as part of the SOS Signs of Suicide® Prevention program.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
[Signature of Parent/Guardian]

\_\_\_\_\_  
[Date]

\_\_\_\_\_  
[Telephone Number]

\_\_\_\_\_  
[Email]