

Dear Parent/Guardian of Social Issues Students:

Your student is now enrolled in Social Issues, a one-semester course required for graduation from the Tamalpais Union High School District. This course is important for all young adults who are in the process of developing skills and strategies to help them make choices to promote health and well-being. Because this class deals with sensitive issues, the California Education Code requires that parents be notified of the instruction.

The goal of Social Issues is to help provide students with the skills necessary to make healthy decisions and act in a way that reflects their personal values and beliefs. While teaching the topics below, teachers emphasize resiliency, decision-making, and refusal skills in order to help students deal with the social pressures they are currently facing and will face throughout their lifetime.

Below is a brief description of the main topics covered in the course and resources that have been used in the past. Please note that individual elements of the curriculum may vary from teacher to teacher. Please refer to the Course of Study or contact the teacher with specific questions.

Student Rights	State law seeks to increase students' understanding of their rights and the rights of others in order to promote tolerance and sensitivity. Guest speakers have included members of local police departments. The ACLU booklet <i>We Have Rights Too</i> and the State Bar booklet <i>When You Become 18</i> are used as resources. (Ed Code 201)
Wellness	This is the main thread of Social Issues, including mental and physical health, dealing with stress, depression, eating disorders, preventing domestic violence, school violence, etc. Identity, self-esteem, and decision-making are key components in dealing with the course topics. Resources include students from Peer Resource and REACH (a Marin County peer educators group run through the Marin AIDS Project), Community Violence Solutions, survivors of domestic violence, and school counselors. Materials may include <i>Quests and Quandaries</i> and <i>Helping Teens Stop Violence</i> . (Ed Code 52000, 51890, 8990)
Drugs and Alcohol	State law requires that student be given instruction on the effects of illegal drugs, tobacco, and alcohol. Emphasis is on decision-making and refusal skills. Instructional material includes <i>Class Action</i> , <i>Toward No Drug Abuse</i> , and <i>Project Success</i> . Guest speakers have included members of Alcoholics Anonymous, American Lung Association, Peer Resource, REACH, and site-based drug and alcohol counselors. (Ed Code 51260)
Sexuality	State law provides that districts may offer comprehensive sexual health education. Instruction shall be medically accurate, objective and appropriate. Topics include methods of preventing pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS, and relationships. Emphasis is on identifying one's own values, decision-making, and refusal skills. Resource speakers come from Peer Resource, REACH, Planned Parenthood, Huckleberry Youth, Spectrum, and Marin AIDS Project. (Ed Code 51890, 51933)
Teen Suicide	School psychologists, counselors, and site-based therapists will teach students how to recognize and respond to signs of depression and suicide. Materials used may include <i>Signs of Suicide</i> , an evidence-based prevention program that is well-researched and endorsed by multiple national psychological and educational organizations. As part of this program, children are asked to

complete short questionnaires about depression and suicide. Parents will be notified if a child is determined to be at high risk of suicide. The S.O.S. program has proven successful at encouraging students that are concerned about themselves or a friend to seek help.

We encourage your participation in your student's school life. You will be invited to participate in some school and homework assignments and are welcome to visit the class and to view and discuss materials and topics covered in the class.

Parents and guardians have the right to excuse their child from the sexual health education and HIV education portions of the Social Issues class (TUHSD Board Policy 6142.1, 6142.2, 6146.1). This instruction will be provided within this 18-week course. Parents can choose to have their child removed from the classroom during these units of instruction. Those students will be given alternative curriculum and work independently. Should you wish to excuse your student from this instruction, please notify the District in writing, either by response to this email or a letter to your student's Social Issues teacher.

If you have any questions about the content of the course or want more specific information about the resources used, please contact me at:

Voicemail (415) 945-6200 ext. 6280

Email: dplescias@tamdistrict.org

Sincerely,

David Plescias

Social Issues Teacher, Tamalpais Union High School District