

# NORTHEAST METRO TECH HIGH SCHOOL HEALTH OFFICE

(781) 246-0810, EXT. 1624/1620 - FAX (781) 246-9323

SY 2015-2016

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Northeast Metro Tech High School is working to promote awareness about the risks of abusing prescription medications and using marijuana. For many students, adolescence is the first time students at the high school level may find themselves facing decisions individually or with peers in relation to experiencing with drugs and alcohol. While Northeast is working hard to inform our students about these risks, parents/guardians are on the front lines to protect and educate their children about the dangers of substance abuse.

Using marijuana and the misuse/abuse of prescription drugs is a rapidly growing issue among adolescents throughout the country. Most of these prescription medications can be found right in a medicine cabinet in your home. Therefore, by educating yourself about these substances, there are some simple things you can do to help protect your child:

1. **Stay Engaged with your child:** Communication is a key factor to assess your child's emotional well being. By finding ways to regularly talk to your child, you may help them cope by using healthy ways to handle their stress.
2. **Take Precautions at home:** Keep any medications at home in a locked cabinet out of sight. If your child is prescribed a medication, monitor them taking these medications at home. Also, keep a constant count of the amount of tablets/capsules and the amount of prescription bottles at home. (If any medication is missing, address this with your child and take necessary steps to provide support)
3. **Know what to look for:** (See Reverse Side for more information)
4. **Take Action:** Know your resources! Pick a few times a year to properly dispose of any expired or unused medications in your home. Talk to your pharmacist or call your local police department for further instructions about proper medication disposal. You can also visit the FDA website [www.fda.gov/ForConsumers/ConsumerUpdates/ucm101653.htm](http://www.fda.gov/ForConsumers/ConsumerUpdates/ucm101653.htm) for more information.

Attached, you will find our *Northeast Medication Policy* for students who are prescribed medication along with our *Rules and Regulations* regarding substance use in the school setting. We hope this gives you more information concerning our steps to keep your child safe. Northeast is dedicated to providing a protective environment for your child to achieve his or her optimal level of growth, learning, and wellness.

**If you have any questions or concerns regarding this letter, please contact us:**

**School Nurses:** Amanda Santarpio & Paula Walfield, 781 246 0810 ext. 1624/1620

**School Resource Officer:** Michael Pietrantonio, 781 246 0810 ext. 1303

**Dean of Students:** Cathy Bryant & Jack O'Brien, 781 246 0810 ext. 1630/1639

**Administrator of Student Services:** Tracey O'Brien, 781 246 0810 ext 1637

Sincerely,

Northeast Metro Tech Nurse Office

## **WHAT TO LOOK FOR:**

\*\*\*PLEASE BE AWARE THAT THE MISUSE/ABUSE OF PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS MAY LEAD TO PERMANENT ORGAN DAMAGE, STROKE, HEART ATTACK, OVERDOSE, and EVEN DEATH

**Stimulants (Adderall, Concerta, Ritalin):** These medications are used to treat Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder or Narcolepsy. WHAT TO LOOK FOR:

*Shaking      Sweating      Dilated Pupils      Fast/Irregular Heart Beat*  
*Elevated Body Temperature      Seizures      Paranoia/Nervousness*  
*Hyperactivity      Loss of Appetite      Unexplained Weight Loss*

**Sedatives/Depressants (Ativan, Xanax, Ambien):** These medications are used to treat anxiety, panic attacks, and sleep disorders. WHAT TO LOOK FOR:

*Loss of coordination      Slowed Reflexes*  
*Slurred Speech      Respiratory complications*  
*Extreme tiredness      Confusion*

**Opioid Analgesics (Percoset, Vicodin, OxyContin):** These medications are prescribed to treat moderate-to-severe pain. WHAT TO LOOK FOR:

*Sleep Deprivation/ "Nodding Off"      Slow or unsteady gait*  
*Constricted "pinpoint" pupils      Lack of Awareness/Alertness*  
*Droopy Eyes      Slowed reflexes/Slow responsiveness*  
*Slurred Speech      Confusion*

**Marijuana : WHAT TO LOOK FOR:**

*Bloodshot/glossy eyes      Sluggishness      Increase in Appetite/Binge Eating*  
*Slowed Reflexes/Response      Paranoia      Intense Panic/Feelings of Anxiety*  
*Dry Mouth/Throat      Impairment of Memory      Altered Perception & Judgment*  
*Altered Motivation      Reduced Ability to Perform Tasks*

**\*With Any use/misuse/abuse of these substances LOOK FOR ANY EXTREME OR SUDDEN CHANGES SUCH AS:**

*Mood Changes (These can be sudden)      Loss of Interest in Routine Activities*  
*Lying      Irritability      Nervousness      Sudden decline in grades*  
*Changes in Eating Habits      Change in Finances      Withdrawn from others and activities*

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT <http://www.drugfree.org/>