

Date: _____

Dear Parents/Guardians of ninth grade students,

Your student is now enrolled in Social Issues, a one-semester course required for graduation. 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 their health and well-being. The material taught in this course is required by the State of California (specific sections of California Education Code are listed below).

As this class deals with sensitive issues, the State of California also requires that parents give permission in writing in order for their student to be enrolled. Likewise, parents who do not wish their students to be exposed to this material can choose to have their child removed from the course. Those students will then be given an alternative curriculum and will work independently.

Social Issues is in no means meant to teach your child values or morals, but rather to help provide them with the skills necessary to make healthy decisions and act in a way that reflects their personal beliefs. While covering the topics listed 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 requires that students are given information about their rights (Ed. Code §201). Guest speakers have included members of the Mill Valley and Twin Cities Police Departments. The ACLU of Northern California booklet *We Have Rights Too...But What Are They?* and *When You Become 18*, a publication-pamphlet funded by the Foundation of the State Bar of California, are used as a resources.

Wellness (Ed. Code §51550) This is the main thread of Social Issues, covering areas such as 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 to dealing with these topics. Resources include students from Peer Resource and REACH (a Marin County based peer educators group run through the Marin AIDS Project), Community Violence Solutions, survivors of domestic violence, school counselors, Quests and Quandaries by Carol Hotchkiss, and Helping Teens Stop Violence by Allan Creighton and Paul Kivel.

Drugs and Alcohol (Ed. Code §51260) State law requires that students be given up-to-date information about the effects of drugs including illegal drugs, tobacco and alcohol. Emphasis is on decision-making and refusal skills. Guest speakers have included members of Alcoholics Anonymous, the American Lung Association, Peer Resource, REACH, and on-site drug and alcohol counselors.

Sexuality (Ed. Code §51550, §51551) State law requires that students receive information on sexuality, birth control methods, and prevention of sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS education. Emphasis is on identifying one's own values, decision-making and refusal-skills. Resources include speakers from Peer Resource and REACH, SPECTRUM, Planned Parenthood, and the Marin AIDS Project. *Please note that the Condom Availability and Training program is a separate program as that program is*

not connected with Social Issues. If you do not want your student to participate in that program, you must give that specific negative consent in writing. By signing this form you are neither giving nor refusing permission for that particular program. Generally, that form is sent to you with the summer mailing.

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 or to discuss materials and topics covered in the class with me.

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

Name: _____ Voicemail: _____ x _____

Email: _____

To acknowledge that you have received and read this letter, that your child is enrolled in Social Issues and that you are aware that there are topics concerning and related to the areas listed above, please sign the permission form below and as your student to return it to me.

Sincerely,

Tamalpais Union High School District Social Issues Teacher

I give permission for my student, _____, to be enrolled in Social Issues.

I do not give my student, _____, permission to be enrolled in this unit of the Social Issues class. My student will receive an alternative, independent assignment and not be part of this unit.

Name of Parent/Guardian (please print)

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date