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Dear Parent/Guardian,

We are pleased to inform you of the partnership between Drug Free Sarasota, First Step of Sarasota, Inc. and the School Board of Sarasota County. Drug Free Sarasota is the state-funded substance abuse prevention coalition that is tasked with providing substance abuse prevention awareness throughout Sarasota County via educational initiatives and prevention activities.

This year, we are focused on the expansion of the Drug-Free Youth (D-FY) Initiative. D-FY is a free and voluntary community-based prevention initiative that praises, rewards, and recognizes youth in grades 6-12 who pledge to remain drug, alcohol, and tobacco free for one calendar year. After validating their commitment to remain drug, alcohol and tobacco free with a negative drug screen, youth join the initiative and are entitled to discounts from local business partners and admission to D-FY exclusive events.

D-FY helps to create a movement of peers who share a commitment to making positive choices and living a healthy, drug-free life.

A parent/guardian's consent is required for all youth ages 18 and younger to participate in this initiative at their school. All enrollment events are held once a month during lunch and **require drug testing**. Drug Free Sarasota staff and volunteers are responsible for conducting all enrollment events, including the drug screens. Sarasota School District employees will **NOT** participate in any drug testing. Furthermore, no Sarasota School District staff are made aware of drug screen results as this information is confidential.

D-FY is completely **VOLUNTARY** and there are no meetings to attend. Should your youth want to join this initiative, they must complete and sign the membership application that is attached to this letter and you (parent/guardian) must sign the application as well. We have prepared a Frequently Asked Questions document which is attached to this letter and should answer any questions you may have. If you still have any questions, please feel free to contact Ms. Boykins at kboykins@fsos.org

Warm regards,

Kameron Boykins
Coalition Coordinator

Frequently Asked Questions

1. **How does my youth join the initiative?**
 - a. Bring the completed application signed by both youth **and** parent/guardian to the next enrollment event.
 - b. Enrollment events are held monthly at your youth's school.
 - c. Enrollment events are conducted during your youth's lunch periods in the gymnasium to:
 - i. Enroll students who ride the school bus and would not be able to join after school.
 - ii. Enroll students who participate in extracurricular activities after school and would not be able to join.
 - iii. Discourage interference with the youth's academic schedule.
 - d. Your youth can decide to join before or after they eat lunch.
2. **Does my youth have to be drug screened to join the initiative?**
 - a. Yes, all youth must validate their commitment to being drug, alcohol, and tobacco free by presenting a negative drug screen.
3. **Will school faculty be notified if my child tests positive for substances?**
 - a. No, school staff are **never** notified of student's screening results whether they are positive or negative.
4. **Are parents/guardians notified of positive screening results?**
 - a. Yes, parents/guardians are contacted by the community-based organization and notified of their youth's positive screen and are provided local resources for support.
5. **If my child is taking prescription medication for ADHD will their drug screen present positive?**
 - a. Yes, this is considered a false positive. If the parent has not sent verification of their child's prescription in advance, the parent will be contacted to verify that their child is taking prescription medicine.
 - b. Parents are **always** contacted when there are false positives (prescription medicines) or actual positives (illicit substance use).
6. **What if I do not want my youth to join D-FY?**
 - a. Do not complete and return the membership application.
7. **What if I want my youth to join and they do not want to join?**
 - a. No youth can be mandated to join D-FY, it is a voluntary initiative.
 - b. Any youth who comes to an enrollment event and expresses that they do not want to join, will not be screened to become a part of the initiative.
8. **If I know that my youth is using drugs, can I use the enrollment events as a means to validate my concerns?**
 - a. No, D-FY is a community-based initiative that rewards youth who are drug-free.
9. **What if my youth forgot to bring their completed application to their enrollment event?**
 - a. Enrollment events are conducted monthly at your youth's school. Bring the completed application to the next assigned event.

10. **Can my youth join school-based D-FY without my consent?**
 - a. **No.** If your youth attends an enrollment event at his/her school, they must have a parent/guardian's consent on the application.
 - b. Any youth under the age of 18 must have a parent/guardian's consent.
11. **What if my child is drug, alcohol, and tobacco free and does not want to join D-FY?**
 - a. D-FY is a voluntary initiative for youth who want to be recognized for their positive choices. Not all youth who have made this personal commitment want recognition and we understand this. If a youth does not want recognition and does not want to join, they are not required to complete the application.
12. **Does completing the application enroll my youth in D-FY?**
 - a. No, your youth must bring their completed application to an enrollment event at their school and take a drug screen. Once the youth is screened negative, they will be issued a membership ID card.
13. **How will I know if my youth is a D-Fy member?**
 - a. You can verify your youth's membership by asking to see their membership ID card.
14. **What happens when my youth's membership expires?**
 - a. All youth must renew their membership on an annual basis to remain active participants.
 - b. All ID cards have expiration dates.
 - c. Youth will be prompted by Drug Free Sarasota staff to renew their membership prior to its expiration date.
 - d. Youth complete an updated membership application and take a new drug screen during the membership renewal process.
15. **Are the enrollment and renewals the only time my youth will be drug screened?**
 - a. No, youth maybe asked to participate in random drug screens to verify their commitment to being drug, alcohol, and tobacco free.
16. **Is there a cost for D-FY?**
 - a. The enrollment and renewal process are free for all youth.
 - b. All D-Fy exclusive events are free for active members.
 - c. If a youth loses their ID card, they may be asked to pay a \$10.00 replacement fee.
 - i. This protocol is rarely enforced and is more so used as a means to promote the youth's responsibility.
17. **What if my youth has used illicit substances in the past, are they a candidate for D-Fy?**
 - a. Yes. Any youth who currently pledges to remain drug, alcohol, and tobacco free and presents a negative drug screen are a candidate for D-Fy.
18. **What type of items does my student receive as part of their D-FY membership?**
 - a. Along with discounts at many businesses throughout the county, the 1711 students who enrolled during the 18-19 school year, benefitted from:
 - i. Enrollment packets, including T-shirts, lanyards, water bottles and shoulder bags valued at **\$38,335**
 - ii. Tickets to theater, music events, animal shows and sporting events from our wonderful partner, Tickets for Kids, valued at more than **\$15,000**
19. **How do I support D-FY?**
 - a. There are many ways to support this initiative, to find out more information e-mail: kboykins@fsos.org.