Howard Gardner Community School
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Important Notice: The Dangers of Synthetic Drugs, Including Fentanyl

Dear HGCS Students, Families, and Community Members,

We want to bring your attention to a growing concern impacting communities across the nation: the rise in the use of synthetic drugs, particularly fentanyl. This dangerous drug has been linked to a tragic increase in overdoses, especially among young people. Howard Gardner Community School shares this notice annually with all families, as required by California Education Code section 48985.5.

What is Fentanyl?

Fentanyl is a powerful synthetic opioid that is up to 50 times more potent than heroin and 100 times more potent than morphine. It is often mixed with other drugs, like counterfeit prescription pills, without the user's knowledge. Even a small amount can lead to overdose and death.

The Risks

- **Extremely Potent**: Even trace amounts of fentanyl can be deadly.
- **Untraceable in Other Drugs**: Fentanyl is often mixed into other substances, including prescription-lookalike (counterfeit) pills or recreational drugs, without the user's knowledge.
- **High Risk of Overdose**: Due to its potency, overdosing on fentanyl happens quickly and is life-threatening.

What You Can Do

- **Talk to your children**: Open and honest conversations about the risks of drug use are critical.
- **Be informed**: Know the signs of overdose, which include difficulty breathing, extreme sleepiness, and unresponsiveness.
- **Seek help**: If you or someone you know is struggling with substance abuse, reach out for support. Resources are available, and early intervention can save lives.

Overdose Response

If you suspect someone has overdosed on fentanyl or any other substance, call 911 immediately. If available, administer naloxone (Narcan), a life-saving medication that can reverse opioid overdoses.

Resources and Support

For more information on the dangers of fentanyl and synthetic drugs, or to find help for substance use, please visit the San Diego County Office of Education's Fentanyl and Other Drugs Awareness Resource Guide: https://www.sdcoe.net/about-sdcoe/news/post/~board/news/post/fentanyl-and-other-drugs-awareness-resource-guide#families

HGCS families can also contact the HGCS counseling office at (619) 934-0300, or Care Solace (free and confidential, 24/7, any language) at 888-515-0595 or www.caresolace.com/hgcs.

Stay Safe, Stay Informed

We urge everyone in our school community to stay informed about the dangers of fentanyl and to take proactive steps to protect themselves and their loved ones. Together, we can help prevent unnecessary tragedies.