

Conard High School

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*Diversity is our Strength
National Exemplary School*

October 23, 2009

Dear Parents,

It came to my attention this morning, through a video that an alert teacher saw, and notified us of, that during the past week, some students have been engaging in a behavior they refer to as the "Passing Out Game", also known as "The Choking Game". During this "game", individuals intentionally cause themselves to pass out in order to get a "high" or "euphoric" feeling. This is done by depriving the brain of oxygen for long enough to pass out. Methods for achieving the sensations include: kneeling down on one's hands and knees combined with intentional hyperventilation, holding the breath, wrapping something around the neck to cut oxygen flow such as hands or a rope. Unfortunately many students seem to be unaware of the extreme dangers associated with this behavior and the potential for death. I am afraid that if we do not alert our children to the risk that this entails, it will continue, and could result in tragedy.

The following are warning signs that someone is "playing" this "game" (as detailed by the CDC, www.cdc.gov/features/chokinggame/): discussion of the game or its aliases, bloodshot eyes, marks on the neck, wearing high necked shirts (out of context), frequent, severe headaches, disorientation after spending time alone, increased and uncharacteristic irritability or hostility, ropes, scarves, and belts tied to bedroom furniture or doorknobs or found knotted on the floor, and pinpoint bleeding spots under the skin or the face.

All of us at Conard want to be sure that, in partnership with our students and parents, we keep our kids safe. We are committed to their health and well being. At the end of the day today, our teachers shared this information with students and encouraged them to be aware, to keep each other safe, and to let a trusted adult know if they fear that one of their friends is engaging in any risky behavior. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact either school administration or your child's guidance counselor.

Sincerely,

Thomas Moore
Conard Principal