

Dear parents and caregivers,

As our children mature, they are faced with important life decisions in a number of areas. It can be helpful for young people to think about their personal values and to learn skills like:

- healthy decision-making,
- strengthening their ability to make positive choices,
- setting boundaries with others to support their own values.

The Vancouver School Board and Vancouver Coastal Health offer a three day program focused on those skills. The SACY Teen Engagement Program (STEP) helps young people reflect on their life decisions, and to think about their own values, goals, and future plans.

### **For students:**

During the three day STEP program, students work on areas like:

- Personal values and boundaries
- The characteristics of good friendships
- Critical thinking skills and decision making skills
- Health education related to alcohol, cannabis, and other substances.

We focus on young people's strengths, and take a positive approach that encourages students rather than discourages them. Our approach is interactive and encourages participation and self-reflection. Students are encouraged to explore their own goals and values through activities, exercises and discussion, and have the opportunity to develop plans for making positive choices in their lives.

After the program, students participate in follow up discussions at school with the SACY Youth Engagement Worker. Students have to opportunity to continue working on their goals and to participate in community learning activities.

### **For families**

We want to work together with parents to support students. Some ways we can work together are:

- Meet or talk with SACY staff to answer your questions and explore how STEP can benefit your child.
- You are invited to the STEP portable Tuesday mornings (9:00–9:30) to drop in and visit the program.
- After the program, we will meet together and talk about how it went, and any next steps we can take together to support your child.

At any time you can attend a SACY Workshop for parents. Topics include communication skills for parents, ways to guide teenagers, and understanding teen development and drug or alcohol use.

### **Enrollment**

If your child is offered the opportunity to attend STEP, or if you would like to refer your child to participate in the program, STEP and the school will work together to choose dates that work best for your child's academic schedule. STEP runs three full days a week: Tuesday, Wednesdays and Thursday from 9:30 until 2:00 pm.

For more information, please contact the SACY parent engagement lead:

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