

SAMPLE Information Letter from Teachers to Parents

Dear Parent/Guardian,

This year in grade 8 according to the revised Ontario Curriculum for Health and Physical Education, your child will be learning the following:

- Students will learn to identify and explain factors that can affect an individual's decisions about sexual activity (*e.g. personal limits, personal readiness, peer pressure, desire, curiosity, awareness of health risks, concern about risk of pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, personal or family values, religious beliefs, cultural teachings, media messages*) and identify sources of support regarding sexual health
- Students will learn about gender identity (*e.g. male, female, two-spirited, transgender*), gender expression, and sexual orientation (*heterosexual, gay, lesbian, bisexual*) and identify factors that can help all individuals develop a positive self-concept
- Students will learn aspects of sexual health and safety, including contraception and condom use for pregnancy and STI prevention, the concept of consent, and matters they need to consider and skills they need to use in order to make safe and healthy decisions about sexual activity (*e.g. self-knowledge, abstinence, delaying first intercourse, establishing and respecting boundaries, showing respect, safer sex, pleasure, communication, assertiveness, refusal skills*)
- Students will learn about the impact of violent behaviours, including aggression, anger, dating violence, and gender-based or racially based violence, on the person being targeted, the perpetrator and bystanders, and learn the role of support services in preventing violence
- Students will learn the attractions and benefits associated with being in a relationship, as well as the benefits, risks and drawbacks for themselves and others, of relationships involving different degrees of sexual intimacy

This information will help to keep your child safe, healthy, happy and informed. At school we teach students research based information and facts, we do not teach our values or beliefs surrounding these topics. We encourage you to talk to your children at home about what they are learning at school and share your values and beliefs with them. Here are some things you can do at home to help your child understand the concepts being taught:

- Ask your child what they are learning in health class
- Encourage your child to practise what they are learning at school
- Recommend books for your child to read or provide them with books and ask them questions about what they are reading
- Join your child when they are watching television or movies and ask them what they think about the characters, gender roles, relationships etc. that they see
- Be aware of, and know how to use, the social media your child uses
- Talk to them about what they are posting on social media and the implications

Book recommendations:

- The Teenage Body Book, Kathy McKoy and Charles Wibbelsman
- Cycle Savvy: The Smart Teens Guide to the mysteries of her Body, Toni Weschler

Book recommendations for parents:

- Beyond the Big Talk: A Parent's Guide to Raising Sexually Healthy Teens – From Middle School to high School and Beyond, Debra W. Haffner
- What Every 21st-Century Parent Needs to Know: Facing today's challenges with wisdom and heart, Debra W. Haffner

Website Recommendation:

- sexandu.ca – a trusted resources for sexual and reproductive health for youth, parents and educators created by the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada.

As always, I encourage you to get in touch with me if you have any questions or concerns. The full Health and Physical Education curriculum can be found on the WRDSB website.

Thank you,