

Dear Parent/Caregiver,

This letter aims to provide you with an overview of the Human Development and Sexual Health curriculum that your child will be engaging with. This component is an integral part of the Healthy Living section outlined in the 2019 Ontario Curriculum for Health and Physical Education, specifically designed for Grades 1 to 8.

Our commitment is to ensure that every student sees themselves and their families reflected in Ontario's curriculum, receiving the necessary information to protect their health and well-being. We want all students to feel respected and safe in our classrooms.

The lessons on Human Development and Sexual Health are thoughtfully made to align with your child's age and developmental stage. These lessons offer the knowledge, motivation and skills to empower students to take responsibility for their own health. Additionally, the curriculum fosters an inclusive school culture, encouraging students to make informed choices for their well-being.

We encourage you to engage in conversations with your child about healthy living and the topics covered in these lessons. It's important to note that schools are obligated to inform caregivers when these topics will be addressed. This allows caregivers the option to exempt their child from this learning if they deem it as needed.

Your child's class will be delving into this information on or about \_\_\_\_\_, end on \_\_\_\_\_ for the \_\_\_\_\_ school year.

**The Ministry of Education's Expectations for Human Development and Sexual Health**

Children in Grade 8 will learn to:

- identify and explain factors that can affect an individual's decisions about sexual activity (e.g., previous thinking about reasons to wait, including making a choice to delay sexual activity and establishing personal limits; perceived personal readiness; peer pressure; desire; curiosity; self-concept; awareness and acceptance of gender identity and sexual orientation; physical or cognitive disabilities and possible associated assumptions; legal concerns such as the legal age of consent; awareness of the risk of sexually transmitted and blood-borne infections [STBBIs]; concerns about the risk of becoming a parent; use of alcohol or drugs; personal or family values; religious beliefs; cultural teachings; access to information; media messages), and identify sources of support regarding sexual health (e.g., a health professional [doctor, nurse, public

health practitioner], a teacher, a guidance counsellor, a religious leader, a parent or other trusted adult, a reputable website)

- demonstrate an understanding of gender identity (e.g., male, female, Two-Spirit, transgender), gender expression, and sexual orientation (e.g., heterosexual, gay, lesbian, bisexual, pansexual, asexual), and identify factors that can help individuals of all identities and orientations develop a positive self-concept
- demonstrate an understanding of abstinence, contraception and the use of effective and suitable protection to prevent pregnancy and STBBIs, and the concept of consent, as well as the skills (e.g., self-awareness, communication, assertiveness, and refusal skills) they need to apply in order to make safe and healthy decisions about sexual activity (e.g., delaying first intercourse; establishing, discussing, and respecting boundaries; showing respect; opting to seek additional information and support; having safer sex)
- analyse the attractions and benefits associated with being in a healthy relationship (e.g., support, understanding, camaraderie, pleasure), as well as the benefits, risks, and drawbacks, for themselves and others, of relationships involving different degrees of sexual intimacy (e.g., hurt when relationships end or trust is broken; in more sexually intimate relationships, risk of STBBIs and related risk to future fertility, becoming a parent before you are ready, sexual harassment and exploitation; potential for dating violence)

The Ministry of Education provides additional information about Human Development and Sexual Health on their website at <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/elementary/health.html>.

Thank you for your partnership in fostering a healthy and supportive learning environment for your child. The next page will guide you with frequently asked questions about this curriculum.

Sincerely,  
SHORE CENTRE Education Team & [Your school name]

## The Benefits of Human Development and Sexual Health curriculum

- ✓ **Holistic Development:** This curriculum actively contributes to healthy human development, steering children towards making safer and healthier choices throughout their lifecourse.
- ✓ **Inclusive Community:** Students actively participate in creating an inclusive community within their school and the broader KW community.
- ✓ **Open Dialogue:** The curriculum fosters an environment where students feel comfortable asking any questions they may have, promoting open and shame-free discussions.
- ✓ **Misinformation Prevention:** By taking this class, students learn to identify the misinformation that may arise from inaccurate sources, ensuring they can learn about accurate and reliable information.
- ✓ **Informed Decision-Making:** Students acquire the knowledge and skills needed to make fully informed and educated choices, empowering them to live healthier lives.
- ✓ **Cultural and Global Understanding:** The curriculum provides insight into the diversity that exists not only in Canada but also around the world.
- ✓ **Combat Stereotypes and Discrimination:** Actively promoting understanding, the curriculum serves as a powerful tool in combating harmful stereotypes and discrimination.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. Why must my children take the Ontario Health and Physical Education courses on human development and sexual health?

- The inclusion of the Health and Physical Education courses on human development and sexual health is an integral part of the 2019 [Ontario Curriculum for Health and Physical Education for Grades 1 to 8](#). Here is why:
- **Self-Understanding and Healthy Choices:** It's crucial for children to learn about themselves, including their bodies, relationships, and how to interact with the world. This curriculum supports healthy human development, enabling children to make safer and healthier choices throughout their lifecourse.
- **Inclusive Community:** By participating in these courses, students become part of an inclusive community within their school and the broader KW community.

### 2. Is the content age appropriate?

- Yes. The curriculum is designed with age-appropriate content for each grade, researched and reviewed to be scientifically effective in promoting physical and mental wellness, healthy relationships, and equity for diverse students. This course is approved by the Ministry of Education and the Government of Ontario.

### 3. What are the benefits of my children taking this class?

- **Professional Guidance:** Students receive information from trusted professionals.
- **Safe and Open Environment:** A shame-free environment encourages students to ask questions, preventing misinformation from inaccurate sources.
- **Informed Decision-Making:** Education equips students to make fully informed and educated choices for healthier lives.
- **Promoting Diversity and Combating Stereotypes:** Understanding diversity fosters empathy, combats harmful stereotypes, and discrimination.

### 4. What language will be used in the class?

- All language used is **anatomical/medical, scientific, age-appropriate, and accurate.**
- Foul language is strictly avoided.
- Inclusive language is always prioritized, respecting individuals of all backgrounds and identities.

### 5. How will gender be discussed?

- Gender is presented as constructed and expressed in various ways by individuals of all gender identities.
- The explanation encompasses perspectives beneficial for all people, including cisgender, trans, non-binary, etc.
- Learning about gender **does not alter** one's identity, but **fosters comfort and empathy for people of all genders.**

### 6. What can I do, if I want to exempt my children from this class?

#### How can I discuss human development at home with my children?

We understand that discussing certain topics in our upcoming class may raise concerns or preferences for some families. If you wish to exempt your child from this class, please Follow the following steps:

- **Submit the Exemption Form:** Please sign and submit the Exemption Form attached to this letter at least 5 days before the lessons begin and bring it back to school if you want to exempt your child.

- **Familiarize Yourself with the Curriculum:** Take the time to review the curriculum for your child's grade level so that you are well-informed. Feel free to contact us with any questions or concerns you may have.
- **Open and Honest Conversations with Your Child(ren):** Be prepared to engage in open and honest discussions with your child(ren). It's important to create an environment where they feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and asking questions.
- **Use Anatomical and Scientific Terms:** During discussions, we encourage the use of anatomical and scientific names for body parts, such as "penis," "vulva," and "period." This approach helps foster an understanding of these topics in a respectful and educational manner.
- **Neutral and Accurate Language:** When addressing sensitive subjects like sexual assault and consent, please use proper, neutral, and accurate terms.
  - There is **no need to sugarcoat** these important conversations; the goal is to provide comprehensive and factual information.
  - Understanding and using accurate terminology is a helpful tool to protect children, as it equips them with the language necessary to disclose experiences and advocate for their boundaries.
  - The aim is to nurture skills that promote healthy relationships in the future.
  - We are committed to empowering students with the tools and knowledge they need to navigate these conversations confidently and responsibly.

**If you have any additional questions please email  
[education@shorecentre.ca](mailto:education@shorecentre.ca)**