

HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM: HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND SEXUAL HEALTH SUMMARY GRADES 7 AND 8

Overview of Grades 7 and 8

Students in the intermediate grades may still be going through a growth spurt. For females the growth spurt tends to occur between the ages of 9 and 13 years, and for males, between 11 and 15 years.

The human development and sexual health expectations recognize that students at this age are developing their sense of personal identity, which includes their sexual identity. Students may already be involved in or contemplating sexual activity or dealing with relationship issues that affect their self-concept and sense of well-being. Consequently, there is an emphasis on developing the skills needed for maintaining healthy relationships and acquiring the knowledge and skills needed to make informed decisions about their sexual health. Key topics include delaying sexual activity, preventing pregnancy and disease, understanding how gender identity and sexual orientation affect overall identity and self-concept, and making decisions about sexual health and intimacy.

GRADE 7 (ages 11 and 12)

- Students will learn the importance of having a shared understanding with a partner about delaying sexual activity until an older age, the reasons for not engaging in sexual activity, the concept of consent, how consent is communicated and clear communication about making decisions about sexual activity within the relationship
- Students will learn to identify common sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and describe their symptoms
- Students will learn ways of preventing STIs and unintended pregnancy
- Students will learn physical, emotional, social and psychological factors that need to be considered when making decisions about sexual health
- Students will learn the benefits and dangers, for themselves and others, that are associated with the use of computers and technology (*e.g. increased access to information, improved communication, misuse of private information, identity theft*) and identify protective responses

- Students will learn to assess the impact of different types of bullying or harassment, including sexting, on themselves and others, and identify ways of preventing or resolving such incidents

GRADE 8 (ages 12 and 13)

- 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-spirit, 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