

Province Launches New Health and Physical Education Curriculum

There has been a lot of speculation and media coverage about the new Health and Physical Education curriculum for Ontario students in grades 1-12. The Minister of Education has just released the new curriculum documents which will come into effect for September 2015. Over the next six months, our staff will be busy reviewing the curriculum and participating in training and workshops that will help our teachers develop age appropriate lesson plans for instruction.

The revised curriculum promotes the healthy development – physical, social, emotional and cognitive – of all students. The curriculum continues to address issues of general health and physical literacy. It also contains new material related to important issues such as healthy relationships, consent, mental health, online safety and the risks of sexting – and is more inclusive of Ontario’s diverse population.

Curriculum documents are developed by subject area and are regularly updated to ensure the content is current, relevant and age appropriate. Curriculum documents include mandatory learning expectations indicating what students should know and be able to do at the end of the grade or course in a specific subject. Curriculum documents are also designed with the understanding that students within a grade may be at different stages in their learning and include optional examples, prompts and student questions to assist with the development of teaching strategies. The optional examples help to prepare teachers for the questions or issues that might arise in student discussions on a topic.

Health and physical education are important aspects of student well-being. This is an area where schools and parents play critical and complementary roles in supporting student learning, including learning about human development and sexual health. As a parent, I understand the sensitivity and concern around these issues. I also believe that parents and educators share a common goal – we want to provide our children with a strong sense of self and a strong sense of belonging. It is important that all students see themselves reflected in the learning at school – students need to respect diversity, understand how to develop healthy relationships, respect personal boundaries, understand the boundaries of consent and the importance of managing personal information.

At the OCDSB, we are reviewing the new curriculum content to better understand how parents and educators can work together in this area. The Ministry has provided some excellent resources to help us get started. I encourage you to take a few moments to read some of the following documents which were posted on the Ministry’s website

Additional Resources

- [Updated curriculum documents](#)
- [A Parent Guide to the Revised Health and Physical Education Curriculum, Grades 1-12](#)
- [A Parent Guide: Learn More About Human Development and Sexual Health in the Health and Physical Education Curriculum, Grades 1-6](#)
- [A Parent Guide: Learn More About Human Development and Sexual Health in the Health and Physical Education Curriculum, Grades 7-12](#)
- [Quick Facts for Parents: Online Safety, Including Risk of Sexting](#)

- [Quick Facts for Parents: Healthy Relationships and Consent](#)
- [Public Health Agency of Canada's Canadian Guidelines for Sexual Health Education](#)
- [Achieving Excellence: Ontario's Renewed Vision for Education in Ontario](#)

As with any subject area, there may be times when your child talks about his/her learning in the classroom. If you have questions that emerge about these learning activities, do not hesitate to contact your child's teacher and/or the school principal. We understand that good communication between school and home reinforces a positive learning environment for children.

Jennifer