

ELEMENTARY HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION EXEMPTION PROCEDURE

RATIONALE:

Program/Policy Memorandum 162, Exemption from Instruction related to the Human Development and Sexual Health Expectations in The Ontario Curriculum: Health and Physical Education, Grades 1–8, (2019), directs school boards to develop and implement a policy or procedure that allows for students to be exempted, at the request of their parents, from instruction related to the Human Development and Sexual Health expectations, found in strand D of *The Ontario Curriculum: Health and Physical Education, Grades 1–8, 2019*.

TERMINOLOGY:

Exemption: specific to this procedure, an exemption is the formal permission for students to forego the specific curriculum expectations related to Human Development and Sexual Health in Strand D Healthy Living of the Ontario Curriculum 1-8: Health and Physical Education.

Human Development and Sexual Health in Strand D Healthy Living: Human development and sexual health education is more than simply teaching young people about the anatomy and physiology of reproduction. Sexual health, understood in its broadest sense, can include a wide range of topics and concepts, from sexual development, reproductive health, choice and sexual readiness, consent, abstinence, and protection, to interpersonal relationships, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression, affection, love, pleasure, body image, and gender roles and expectations. Sexual development is one component of overall human development. Ontario Curriculum 1-8: Health and Physical Education, pages 43-44.

Parent(s): This includes parents, guardians and caregivers

PROCEDURES:

1.0 Expectations

1.1 Notification and Communication

1.1.1 Schools will provide the following to parents annually:

- A list of all Human Development and Sexual Health expectations by grade
- Information related to how to seek an exemption
- HWDSB's Exemption Form

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- 1.1.2 Schools will provide the following to parents at least 20 school days before the beginning of Human Development and Sexual Health Learning:
- The grade-specific HWDSB Health and Physical Education Human Development and Sexual Health Notification letter that contains:
 - The date(s) when instruction will occur
 - The current expectations to be covered
 - Notification that:
 - The exemption covers all Human Development and Sexual Health Learning
 - There is no academic penalty for exemption
 - The exemption does not include references to the Human Development and Sexual Health learning outside of the intentional teaching of the expectations
 - The timelines for the learning may change due to an unforeseen event and that parents will be informed if that is the case
 - A deadline for the exemption request not more than five (5) days before the start of learning
 - The exemption form

1.2 Exemption Process

- 1.2.1 Schools will exempt students from instruction related to Human Development and Sexual Health when a parent completes the HWDSB Health and Physical Education Exemption Form
- 1.2.2 Exemptions require the following:
- Completion of the HWDSB Health and Physical Education Exemption Form, in writing, by the deadline established by the school
 - Identification by parents of one of the three (3) exemption options
 - Their child remains in class during instruction, but completes learning unrelated to Human Development and Sexual Health; or
 - Their child leaves the classroom and is provided activities within the school under the supervision of an educator; or
 - Their child is released into the care of their parent or approved designate and excused from school.
- 1.2.3 The exemption does not result in an academic penalty.

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1.3 Supervision of Exempted Students

1.3.1 When students are exempted, schools will:

- Organize alternative learning which may include, but not be limited to, inquiry projects, continuation of other subject area learning, literacy activities, or numeracy activities.
- Ensure that exempted students are supervised through strategies that may include, but are not limited to, joining another class, congregating in the learning commons, and supporting the learning of a younger school mate.

2.0 Key Roles and Responsibilities

2.1 Principals will:

- Foster a healthy, safe, inclusive, and accepting school environment.
- Ensure that the communication practices outlined in 1.1 Notification and Communication occur.
- Support the successful implementation of the Health and Physical Education curriculum by emphasizing the importance of the curriculum within the framework of a healthy, safe, inclusive, and accepting school.
- Exempt students, at their parents' request, from instruction related to the Grade 1 to 8 Human Development and Sexual Health expectations in Strand D.
- Collect all exemption forms and maintain those forms, in hard copy, until the end of the following academic year.
- Ensure that a plan for supervision and alternative learning is in place for students exempted through this procedure in collaboration with teachers.

2.2 Teachers will:

- Use appropriate and effective teaching strategies to help students achieve the Health and Physical Education curriculum expectations.
- Contribute to a healthy, safe, inclusive, and accepting school environment.
- Distribute the Health and Physical Education Letter to parents, as per 1.1.2 above
- Participate in the exemption process.

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- Facilitate alternative learning activities and supervise exempted students in collaboration with the principal.
- Evaluate student learning based on the overall expectations of Strand D based on the student learning that occurred.
- Report and comment on learning in Strand D Healthy Living that did occur without reference to exempted learning.

2.3 Students will:

- Contribute to a healthy, safe, inclusive, and accepting school environment.
- Respect the decision of families to have their child(ren) participate or not participate in Human Development and Sexual Health learning.

2.4 Parents will:

- Be the primary educators of their children with respect to learning about values, appropriate behaviour, and ethnocultural, spiritual, and personal beliefs and traditions, and are their children's first role models.
- Contribute to a healthy, safe, inclusive, and accepting school environment.
- Decide whether their child will be exempted from instruction related to the Grade 1 to 8 Human Development and Sexual Health expectations in Strand D.
- Complete the exemption letter outlined in 1.2.2 above to request an exemption.

Revisions:

September 2025 – template migration