

Human Development and Sexual Health Exemption, Grades 1-8 Administrative Procedure

Status:	Active
Effective:	December 2019
Revision Date:	March 2025
Review Date:	March 2029
Responsibility:	Superintendent of Education, School Operations and School Programs

Definitions:

School Board(s) and Board(s): refers to district school boards and school authorities.

Parent(s): refers to parent(s) and guardian(s).

Period of Instruction: refers to the period of time, including the beginning and end dates, during which instruction in Human Development and Sexual Health during health and physical education classes is delivered. This period could extend over several days or weeks, depending on individual schools' calendars and teachers' lesson plans.

Unforeseen Event: refers to an event that impairs a school's ability to administer the "period of instruction".

Intended Purpose:

The Halton District School Board recognizes that the Health and Physical Education curriculum promotes the healthy development and overall well-being of all students. The Board recognizes that the curriculum does not replace the role of parents as the primary educators of their children with respect to learning about values, appropriate behaviour, and ethno-cultural, spiritual, and personal beliefs and traditions.

The purpose of this procedure is to outline the process for exemption from instruction and school activities related to the Human Development and Sexual Health expectations found in Strand D-Healthy Living of *The Ontario Curriculum: Health and Physical Education, Grades 1-8, 2019* in accordance with the requirements set out in Policy/Program Memorandum PPM 162. Students will not be exempted from instruction related to other expectations in the Grade 1-8 Health and Physical Education curriculum or related to expectations in other curriculum subjects. In alignment with the HDSB Equity and Inclusive Education Policy, references to human development and sexual health made by teachers, board staff, or students outside the intentional teaching of content related to the Human Development and Sexual Health expectations are not included in the exemption procedure.

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Notice and Communications

- Parents/Guardians can request that their child(ren) be exempted from instruction related to the Human Development and Sexual Health expectations by completing and returning an exemption form for each child a minimum of 5 days prior to the period of instruction. Parents are informed at least 20 school days before the start of the period of instruction related to the Human Development and Sexual Health expectations;
- Exemptions are limited to instruction related to all the Human Development and Sexual Health expectations found in Strand D - Healthy Living of *The Ontario Curriculum: Health and Physical Education, Grades 1-8, 2019*, and not for instruction related to selected expectations or groups of expectations. Appendix A provides a list of the Human Development and Sexual Health expectations by grade;
- Students will not be exempted from instruction related to any other expectations in this curriculum or related to expectations in other curriculum subjects;
- In the case of an unforeseen event, the school has the authority to move the period of instruction to a later date in the school year and will give notice to parents as soon as reasonably possible;
- References to human development and sexual health made by teachers, Board staff, or students outside the intentional teaching of content related to the Human Development and Sexual Health expectations are not included in the exemption procedure. This exemption does not apply to school activities, presentations by external speakers, or other educational experiences related to the content in Strand D for educational purposes;
- Assessment for students will be based on expectations covered, excluding the expectations approved for exemption;
- There will be no assessment, evaluation, or reporting of exempted students' achievement of Human Development and Sexual Health expectations in their particular grade. Exempted students' reported achievement in health and physical education will be determined on the basis of the overall expectations in the Healthy Living strand of the curriculum including, Healthy Eating, Personal Safety and Injury Prevention, Substance Use, Addiction and Related Behaviours, and Mental Health Literacy.

Process For Exemption Requests-Roles and Responsibilities

School Administration:

- Works in partnership with teachers and parents to provide support for 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

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accepting school;

- Provides parents/guardians with access to information regarding the Healthy Living strand which includes a list of all Human Development and Sexual Health expectations by grade, and the Exemption Request Form;
- Determines activities during the exemption period which will be at the discretion of the principal in partnership with the teacher;
- Ensures parent(s)/guardian(s) receive an acknowledgement of receipt of their request for exemption;
- Makes the final decision about whether to accept or reject a request for an exemption that does not fall within the parameters set out in this Administrative Procedure; and,
- Implements the parent request for student supervision at the school, when possible, based on student supervision demands in the school. If the supervision option selected by the parent/guardian is not possible because of the supervision demands at the school, the school administration will notify the parents/guardians and request that another option is selected.

Teachers:

- Use appropriate and effective teaching strategies to help students achieve the health and physical education curriculum expectations;
- Engage in professional development and training opportunities to support effective delivery of the curriculum;
- Notify parents/guardians at least 20 school days before the start of the period of instruction related to the Human Development and Sexual Health expectations using the HDSB standard letter;
- Inform parents/guardians as soon as possible when the period of instruction related to Human Development and Sexual Health has been moved to another date due to an unforeseen event; and,
- Communicate with parents/guardians about what their children are learning, and make supporting documents for the Human Development and Sexual Health expectations available to parents/guardians who request them.

Parents/Guardians:

- Become familiar with the Health and Physical Education curriculum to gain understanding of what is being taught in each grade and what their child/children is/are expected to learn throughout the school year;
- Discuss their child/children's learning with them, communicate with their child/children's teachers for all matters relating to Healthy Living;

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- Provide a written request for a child to be exempted from instruction related to the Human Development and Sexual Health expectations at least 5 school days before the start of the period of instruction. An exemption request made verbally, by telephone or email and an application not bearing the parent(s)/guardian(s) signature will not be accepted; and,
- Make an annual application if they wish to exempt their child/children from the expectations related to Human Development and Sexual Health in Strand D of *The Ontario Curriculum: Health and Physical Education, Grades 1-8, 2019*, by completing the form (Appendix B) and sending it to the school no later than 5 days before the beginning of the period of instruction.

Supervision of Exempted Students

- Student Safety and well-being are primary considerations when creating supervision plans;
- Parents/Guardians should indicate a preferred choice for student supervision on the Request For Exemption Form. (Appendix B);
- School Administration will endeavour to honour the preferred choice for supervision requested by parents/guardians;
- School Administration will examine the student supervision needs at the school and the availability of supervising staff prior to responding to parents/guardians requests when the preferred choice is for students to leave the classroom and remain in the school under staff supervision; and,
- If the parents/guardians preferred choice for supervision is not possible because of the supervision demands at the school, the school administration will request that the parent/guardian select another option for supervision.

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APPENDIX A

Healthy Living Learning Summary Key Topic: Human Development and Sexual Health

Grade	D1. Understanding Healthy Concepts	D2. Making Healthy Choices	D3. Making Connections for Healthy Living
1	D1.3 Body parts D1.4 Senses and functions	D2.5 Hygienic procedures	
2	D1.4 Stages of development D1.5 Body appreciation	D2.4 Oral Health	
3	D1.4 Healthy relationships, bullying, consent D1.5 Physical and social emotional development		D1.3 Visible, invisible differences, respect
4	D1.5 Puberty - changes; emotional, social impact	D2.4 Puberty - personal hygiene and care	
5	D1.3 Reproductive system D1.4 Menstruation, spermatogenesis	D2.4 Self-concept, sexual orientation D2.5 Emotional, interpersonal stresses - puberty	
6	D1.3 Sexually explicit media	D2.5 Understanding of puberty changes, healthy relationships D2.6 Decision making, consent	D3.3 Stereotypes and assumptions - impacts and strategies for responding

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7	D1.3 Delaying sexual activity D1.4 Sexually transmitted and blood-borne infections (STBBIs) D1.5 STBBIs and pregnancy prevention	D2.4 Sexual health and decision making	D3.3 Relationship changes at puberty
8	D1.4 Decisions about sexual activity; supports D1.5 Gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, self-concept	D2.3 Decision making considerations and skills	D3.3 Relationships and intimacy

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APPENDIX B

Request Form for Exemption from Instruction in Human Development and Sexual Health Strand D: Healthy Living

Having reviewed the Administrative Procedure and the summary (Appendix A) of the Human Development and Sexual Health expectations in the elementary *Ontario Health and Physical Education curriculum, Grades 1-8, 2019* for my child's grade, I would like

(student's first and last name)

(grade)

to be exempted from instruction related to these expectations, without academic penalty.

I understand and agree with the following statements:

- The Human Development and Sexual Health expectations in Strand D of the Health and Physical Education Curriculum are different in every grade. Therefore, I must submit a completed exemption form every school year, for each child, at least 5 days prior to the period of instruction, in order for my child to be exempted from the instruction related to Human Development and Sexual Health expectations in that school year.
- References to or conversations about sexual health-related concepts among teachers, school staff, or other students outside formal instruction in Human Development and Sexual Health are not subject to this exemption.
- My child will continue to receive instruction related to all other elementary health and physical education curriculum expectations.
- In the event of an unforeseen event, the period of instruction for Human Development and Sexual Health may be changed to a later date in the school year and notice will be given to parents as soon as reasonably possible.
- My child's activities unrelated to Human Development and Sexual Health during the exemption period will be at the discretion of the teacher or principal.

During the exemption period, I would like my child to **[select one only]**:

- ☐ Remain in the classroom without taking part in instructional activities related to Human Development and Sexual Health. I understand that my child's activities unrelated to Human Development and Sexual Health during the exemption period will be at the discretion of the teacher.
- ☐ Be released into my care or the care of my approved designate.
- ☐ Leave the classroom and remain in the school under staff supervision, where this is deemed possible based on student supervision demands in the school. I understand that my child's activities during the exemption period will be at the discretion of the teacher or principal. The principal will indicate in the response to the exemption request if supervision outside of the classroom is not possible and I will need to choose one of the other options.

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Parent/Guardian Name _____

Signature

Date

**Please return the exemption form signed at least 5 days prior to the period of instruction.*

Acknowledgement of Receipt

Name of Student: Grade:
Name of Parent/Guardian:
Your request for exemption is: <input type="checkbox"/> Accepted and approved. <input type="checkbox"/> Accepted and approved; however , your selected supervision option is not possible because of the supervision demands at the school. Please select an alternate option on the form below and return to school. Details:
Principal Signature: Date:

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Alternate Supervision Option (select one)

Student Name: _____ Grade _____

- ☐ Remain in the classroom without taking part in instructional activities related to Human Development and Sexual Health. I understand that my child's activities unrelated to Human Development and Sexual Health during the exemption period will be at the discretion of the teacher.
- ☐ Be released into my care or the care of my approved designate. I understand I will have to pick up my child/children at the beginning of the class and return them to school for the beginning of their next class.

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

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Cross-Reference:

Legislation

Ministry Policy & Program Memoranda

Policy/Program Memorandum 162 - Education in Ontario: policy and program direction

Board Policies, Procedures & Protocols

HDSB Equity and Inclusive Education Policy

Revision History

- March 2025
 - **Comprehensive:** Updates include: that exemptions do not apply to school wide activities, presentations, or external speaker events; provide guidance on notice, communication, and supervision of exempted students; and reinforce timelines for parent/guardian notification and exemption requests.