PHILOSOPHY AND GOALS | 1000

EQUITY AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION APPENDIX B – HUMAN DEVELOPMENT & SEXUAL HEALTH EXEMPTION GUIDELINES | 1020-B

1. Rationale & Legislative Context

Lakehead District School Board strives to provide learning environments that respect and uphold the human rights of all. The Board supports the Ontario Health and Physical Education curriculum, which promotes the healthy development and overall well-being of all students. However, The Board similarly recognizes that the curriculum does not replace the role of parents as the primary educators of their children with respect to learning about ethno-cultural, spiritual, and personal values, beliefs, and traditions.

This appendix document outlines the process for exemption from instruction 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*. This exemption, in line with Ontario *Policy/Program Memorandum 162* (PPM 162), only exempts students from the aforementioned expectations from Strand D. Students will still be expected to complete all other curriculum expectations in Health & Physical Education, as well as in any other subjects.

In alignment with the *LDSB Policy/Procedure 1020: Equity and Inclusive Education*, The Board recognizes the rights to safety and affirmation for all students, particularly those who have been marginalized based on their protected grounds under the *Ontario Human Rights Code*. 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* of Strand D are not included in the exemption procedure.

2. Exemption Guidelines

2.1 Context

2.1.1 Exemptions are limited to 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. Students will not be exempted from instruction related to any other expectations in this curriculum or related to expectations in other curriculum subjects

2.1.2 Exemptions will be granted only for instruction related to all the Human Development and Sexual Health expectations in a student's grade, and not for instruction related to selected expectations or groups of expectations (refer to *Appendix B1* in this document for a listing of expectations by Grade)

2.1.3 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 policy/procedure

2.1.4 There will be no academic penalty for an exemption

2.1.5 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' grade in health and physical education will be determined on the basis of the overall expectations in strand D of the curriculum, without consideration of the specific expectations under Human Development and Sexual Health

2.1.6 If a child is granted exemption, they will be given the option to either:

A. Stay in the classroom and complete work unrelated to Strand D – Human Development and Sexual Health;

B. Leave the classroom and complete work in an alternative, supervised setting (if and when possible); or

C. Be released into the care of their parent/guardian or approved designate.

2.2 Communication

2.2.1 Parents will be informed at least twenty school days before the start of the period of instruction related to the Human Development and Sexual Health expectations.

2.2.2 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 five days prior to the period of instruction (Please refer to *Appendix B2 – Exemption Request Form*)

2.2.3 Parents/Guardians must request exemptions for their child(ren) in writing through *Appendix B2 – Exemption Request Form*. Requests in alternative formats (emails, phone calls, oral notices) or incomplete exemption forms may be insufficient for the purposes of this procedural document.

2.2.4 Exemptions are only valid for a single academic year. If parents/guardians wish to continue exempting their child(ren) from Strand D – Human Development and Sexual Health expectations, they must complete a new request form each year.

2.2.4 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.

2.2.5 In the event that an exemption is not received by the deadline outlined in 2.2.2, the school principal or designate will determine if a request is accepted or rejected.

2.3 School Administrator Responsibilities

The Principal or designate will:

2.3.1 Work 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 accepting school;

2.3.2 Provide 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 (*Appendix B1)*, and the *Appendix B2 - Exemption Request Form*;

2.3.3 Determine activities during the exemption period which will be at the discretion of the principal in partnership with the teacher;

2.3.4 Ensure parent/guardian(s) receive an acknowledgement of receipt of their request for exemption (for example, using the format in *Appendix B3*);

2.3.5 Make 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 procedural guide;

2.3.6 Implement the parent request for student supervision at the school, when possible, based on student supervision demands in the school; and

2.3.7 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.

2.4 Teacher Responsibilities

The classroom teacher or designate will:

2.4.1 Use their professional judgement to select appropriate and effective teaching strategies to help students achieve the health and physical education curriculum expectations;

2.4.2 Engage in professional development and training opportunities to support effective delivery of the curriculum;

2.4.3 Notify parents at least twenty school days before the start of the period of instruction related to the Strand D - Human Development and Sexual Health expectations;

2.4.4 Inform parents as soon as possible when the period of instruction related to Strand D - Human Development and Sexual Health has been moved to another date due to an unforeseen event; and

2.4.5 Communicate with parents about what their children are learning and make supporting documents for the Human Development and Sexual Health expectations available to parents who request them.

Cross Reference	**Date Received**	**Legal Reference**
7020 Employment Equity 7030 Human Rights and Workplace Harassment 8070 Safe Schools – System Expectations 8071 Bullying Prevention and Intervention 1020-A Religious (Creed) Accommodation Guideline 1020-B Human Development & Sexual Health Exemption (1-8) Guideline 1020-C Equity Terms Glossary	April 4, 1995 **Date Revised** June 24, 2008 September 28, 2010 May 28, 2013 November 24, 2020 May 26, 2026	Ontario Ministry of Education Policy/Program Memorandum 119 Ontario Human Rights Code

PHILOSOPHY AND GOALS	1000
EQUITY AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION APPENDIX B – HUMAN DEVELOPMENT & SEXUAL HEALTH EXEMPTION GUIDELINES	1020-B

Appendix B1 - Curriculum Expectations for Human Development & Sexual Health, Grades 1-8

(From the Ontario Ministry of Education - https://www.ontario.ca/document/health-and-physical-education-grades-1-8/human-development-and-sexual-health-education-grade)

Grade 1

When children know how to care for and use the correct names of their body parts, they build understanding and respect for themselves and their bodies and can communicate clearly and ask for help in case of illness, injury, or abuse.

Students will learn:

- to identify body parts, including genitalia, by their proper names;
- to use positive language when describing their bodies;
- about their senses and how they function; and
- basic good hygiene habits (for example, washing your hands, using tissues).

Grade 2

Helping children to understand that their bodies will change (for example, losing baby teeth) can help them:

- prepare for and adjust to those changes;
- appreciate what their bodies are able to do and perceive them positively; and
- communicate about these changes with a trusted adult if they ever feel confused.

Students will learn:

- the basic stages of human development (infancy, childhood, adolescence) and related body changes;
- good hygiene habits for oral health (for example, brushing your teeth, flossing, visiting the dentist regularly); and
- to appreciate what their bodies can do.

Grade 3

To foster healthy relationships, students will learn what healthy relationships look like. Students also learn about what makes them unique and how to show respect for all.

Students will learn:

- about characteristics of healthy relationships and consent (for example, accepting differences, listening, stating, and respecting personal boundaries, being respectful, being honest, communicating openly);
- describe ways to respond to bullying and other challenges (for example, peer pressure, being left out);

- about factors and habits that can affect physical and emotional development (for example, safe environment, caring adults, feeling like you belong, appreciating what your body can do and building a healthy body image, sleep, food, physical activity);
- how visible differences (for example, skin, hair, and eye colour, clothing, physical ability) and invisible differences (for example, learning abilities, cultural values and beliefs, different types of families) make each person unique; and
- ways of showing respect for differences in others.

Grade 4

Today, children enter puberty earlier: on average, girls enter puberty between the ages of 8 and 13 and boys enter puberty between the ages of 9 and 14. Learning about puberty before students may fully experience it helps prepare young people for changes in their bodies, emotions, and social relationships.

Students will learn:

- the physical changes that happen during puberty, and the emotional and social impact these changes can have on a developing child; and
- how personal hygiene needs may change during puberty (for example, the increased importance of regular bathing).

Grade 5

By Grade 5, students have developed some self-awareness and coping skills, and have also learned critical thinking and reflective skills.

Puberty can be stressful and helping students to understand changes in their bodies can help them cope. Students will also continue to learn the importance of showing acceptance and respect for themselves and others, including those who may be entering puberty earlier or later than their peers.

Students will learn:

- about factors that may affect the development of a person's understanding of themselves and their personal identity, including their sexual orientation (for example, body image, self-acceptance);
- about the reproductive system, and how the body changes during puberty;
- about the process of menstruation and sperm production; and
- to describe emotional and interpersonal stresses related to puberty.

Grade 6

As children grow older and enter adolescence, understanding how they and their peers may be affected by the many changes they are experiencing helps them build a healthy sense of who they are.

By Grade 6, students have developed more self-awareness and coping skills, as well as critical thinking and reflective skills, to solve problems and examine issues. They will apply these skills to learning about stereotypes and assumptions.

By examining and challenging these stereotypes and assumptions, they continue to learn about respect for others, and build self-confidence to build a foundation for healthy relationships.

Students will learn:

- an understanding about the impacts of viewing sexually explicit media, including pornography;
- the physical, social, and emotional changes that may occur in adolescence (for example, body growth, skin changes, increasing influence of peers, increased intensity of feelings) and how students can build a healthy foundation for relationships;
- to make decisions in their personal relationships that show respect for themselves and others, recognizing the importance of consent and clear communication;
- how stereotypes — and assumptions about gender, race, sexual orientation, ethnicity, culture, and abilities — can affect how a person feels about themselves, their feelings of belonging and relationships with others; and
- appropriate ways to respond to and challenge assumptions, stereotypes, homophobia, and racism.

Grade 7

Students need information and skills to make sound decisions about their health and well-being before they face a situation where they may need that information.

Research has shown that teaching about sexual health and human development does **not** increase sexual behaviour and can actually prevent risky activity.

Students will learn:

- the importance of having a shared understanding with a partner about: reasons for delaying sexual activity until they are older, the concept of consent and how to communicate consent, and the need to clearly communicate and understand decisions about sexual activity in a healthy relationship;
- to identify common sexually transmitted and blood borne infections (STBBIs) and describe their symptoms;

- how to prevent STBBIs and avoid becoming a parent before they are ready, including delaying first intercourse and other sexual activities until they are older, and using condoms and other forms of protection consistently;
- about the physical, emotional, social, and psychological factors to consider when making sexual health decisions (for example, the risk of STBBIs or of becoming a parent before they are ready, emotional readiness, sexual orientation, moral and religious considerations, cultural teachings, and impact on other relationships); and
- how relationships with others and sexual health may be affected by physical and emotional changes in puberty and adolescence.

Grade 8

Students continue to build their understanding of factors that support positive, healthy choices, including building a deeper understanding and appreciation of themselves and their identity. Students are also exploring healthy ways to engage in evolving and new relationships.

Students will learn about:

- things that could affect someone's ability to make safe and healthy decisions about sexual activity;
- sources of support with respect to sexual health (for example, parents, health professionals, in-school resources, local community groups and religious, spiritual, and cultural leaders);
- gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation, and to identify factors that can help all young people to develop positive personal identities;
- abstinence, contraception, and consent in order to make safe and healthy decisions about sexual activity; and
- benefits, risks, and drawbacks associated with relationships involving different degrees of sexual intimacy.

PHILOSOPHY AND GOALS	1000
EQUITY AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION APPENDIX B – HUMAN DEVELOPMENT & SEXUAL HEALTH EXEMPTION GUIDELINES	1020-B

Appendix B2 – Exemption Request Form

Having reviewed the Human Development and Sexual Health expectations in the elementary Ontario Health and Physical Education curriculum for my child's grade, I would like my child to be exempted from instruction related to these expectations, without academic penalty.

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.
- Leave the classroom and remain in the school under staff supervision. I understand that my child's activities during the exemption period will be at the discretion of the teacher or principal. If supervision is unavailable, I understand that I will have to select another option for my child.
- Be released into my care or the care of my approved designate.

Note: If one of the three options above is not selected, the principal or the principal's designate will determine where in the school the child is to remain during the exemption period.
By exempting my child, I understand and agree to the following:

- I must submit a completed exemption form every school year, for each child, **at least five (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. **Forms must be complete, including a signature and date.**
- 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.

Parent/Guardian Name: Parent/Guardian Signature:

Child Name: Grade:

Date:

PHILOSOPHY AND GOALS | 1000

EQUITY AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION APPENDIX B – HUMAN DEVELOPMENT & SEXUAL HEALTH EXEMPTION GUIDELINES | 1020-B

Appendix B3 - Acknowledgement of Receipt

Name of Student: Grade:

Name of Parent:

Your request for exemption is:

❑ Accepted and approved.

❑ 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:

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: