

Health Education Exemption

Dear Parent/Guardian:

We would like to inform you that your student will be enrolled in comprehensive Health Education as part of their Health and Wellness courses this year at Shawsheen. This program has been developed by our professional staff who are using the guidance of the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. The overall goal of the course is to continue efforts begun in earlier grades to promote the health and well-being of our students, and to help them make wise and informed decisions during their teen-age years and beyond.

Our health curriculum offers instruction on many critical components of your student's education with their well-being and safety as the over-arching goal. These topics include substance-use prevention, teen dating violence prevention and essential nutrition. In addition, age-appropriate comprehensive sex education is incorporated into the health education curriculum throughout each academic year, with the most in depth information being delivered during 10th grade. Our Health Educators provide lessons on topics such as setting boundaries and understanding consent; relationships and effective communication skills; teen pregnancy prevention; abstinence; birth control; abortion; LGBTQ issues; prevention of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases and infections. The instructional content we use for the courses offers the most up-to-date, medically accurate and age-appropriate information available.

During the course, students will be able to ask questions which will be answered factually and in an age-appropriate manner. Each student's privacy will be respected, and no one will be put on the spot to ask or answer questions or reveal personal information. Material will be presented in a balanced, factual way that makes clear that people may have strong religious and moral beliefs about issues such as birth control and abortion, and that these beliefs must be respected.

Under Massachusetts law, you may exempt your child from any portion of the curriculum that primarily involves human sexual education or human sexuality issues. *To receive an exemption, simply check the box stating, 'I do not consent to my child to participate in a curriculum that involves human sexual education or human sexuality issues and want them exempted from this portion of the health class'. No student who is exempted from this portion of the curriculum will be penalized. We will provide an alternative assignment to students who are exempted.*

We look forward to working with you to ensure that your child has a positive and educationally enriching experience this school year. If you have any questions about sex education or any other matter concerning your child's education, please contact me or your student's teacher of record.

Sincerely,

Danica Johnston
Director of Academic Programs