September 2010

Dear Parents/Caregivers:

This letter is intended as a brief update on the teaching of Comprehensive Health and Physical Education, including Family Life, in the Montclair Schools. It touches on three topics:

- what is currently being taught in Comprehensive Health
- a student’s right to be excused from portions of the program
- revision of the Comprehensive Health and Physical Education curriculum

Current Curriculum

Attached you will find an overview of the instructional program in Comprehensive Health currently being provided in grades K-12.

At the elementary levels (K-5), the curriculum is addressed in two ways:

a. through special programs on topics such as chemical health and human development and,

b. through infusion into core subjects, such as science and social studies.

At the high and middle schools, the program is delivered primarily through Comprehensive Health and Family Life course work.

Curriculum outlines are available for review at the school’s main office.

Exclusion from Portions of the Family Life Program

Parents/caregivers who, for reasons of conscience or religious beliefs, object to any portion of the program may have their children excused from that portion of the program, upon receipt of written request to the principal.

State law and board policy allow for such exclusion without penalty to course credit or graduation. A student who is excused from a unit of the program will be provided other work or activity in as non-intrusive a manner as possible.

Curriculum Revision

The newly revised curriculum will be adopted by the Board of Education in the Fall. Our new curriculum has been aligned to the recently revised NJ Core Curriculum Content Standards.

Sincerely,

Dr. Lydia Furnari
Supervisor of Curriculum

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Montclair Public Schools

Current Comprehensive Health/Physical Education Curriculum Overview

All students will acquire knowledge and skills that will enable them to lead healthy, active lives; gain practical information necessary to prevent injury, disease, and substance abuse in the context of understanding personal growth and development.

Our present curriculum in Comprehensive Health Education was adopted by the Board of Education in June 2008. The curriculum is designed to educate and promote physical activity and health-related fitness as part of a regular healthy lifestyle. As a K-12 program, it strives to instill in the student the ability to exhibit responsible personal and social behavior, to manage stress, peer pressure, and competition, and to choose and value physical activities that promote personal health.

Parents/caregivers who, for reasons of conscience or religious belief, object to topics in the Human Growth & Development or Family Life/Interpersonal Relationships portions of the program may have their children excused from those portions by filing a written request with the principal. State law and board policy allow for such exclusion without penalty to course credit or graduation. A student who is excused from a unit of the program will be provided with other work/activities related to health in as non-intrusive a manner as possible. Topics covered are listed by grade below:

Kindergarten: Fundamental concepts related to personal safety, hygiene, parts of the body, why all living things need food, wise food choices, friendship, accepting unique and special qualities in others, awareness of personal and group space, appropriate play and touch at home and at school with peers and adults, acceptable and unacceptable uses for drugs.

Grade 1: Cooperation, sharing, how to express emotions appropriately, consequences of behaviors, knowledge of basic first aid procedures and safety at home and at school, the impact that germs have on overall health and wellness, acceptable and unacceptable uses for drugs, health professionals and their function, good and bad touch.

Grade 2: Cultural and media influences on health behavior, accepting and respecting others who are different, solving problems constructively, coping skills, care of body systems, food guide pyramid and food labels, the importance of participating in healthy activities versus watching television and playing video games, first aid responses for common injuries, the negative impact on health of tobacco and alcohol use, identification of legal and illegal drugs.

Grade 3: The structure and function of human body systems, factors that contribute to healthy development, food classification, preventable and non-preventable diseases and health conditions, the use of universal precaution when dealing with blood and unsafe substances, goal setting and effective problem solving, the difference between physical and sexual abuse, bullying and ways to avoid a bully, the relationship between personal habits and total well-being, the influence that peers or adults can have on your drug use, the physical, social, and emotional benefits of regular physical activity.

Grade 4: Goal setting, effective problem solving, the impact of health and nutrition choices and behaviors on wellness, the ability to choose foods wisely, factors that affect the digestive process (stress, esthetic conditions, timing of meals), distinguishing physical from sexual abuse, and conflict from violence, harassment, and bullying, and factors that contribute to each, qualified health personnel available for particular needs, the benefits of frequent physical activity, and factors such as heredity, training, and diet that influence fitness.

Grade 5: Common adolescent stressors, emotional changes that occur during adolescence, peer pressure, bullying, the purpose and process of trusting others, how personal assets (self-esteem, positive peer relationships) and protective factors (parental involvement) support healthy social and emotional development, how substance abuse affects the individual & family, and how drug use may result in health and safety problems, ways to support being
MONTCLAIR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Comprehensive Health Education Exclusion Form

The purpose of this form is to ensure compliance with health education requirements. These requirements indicate that procedures be established for any student whose parent or guardian presents to the school principal a signed statement that a part of the instruction in Human Growth & Development or Family Life/Interpersonal Relationships is in conflict with his/her conscience or sincerely held moral or religious beliefs. In such cases, the student will be excused from that portion of any course. State law and board policy allow for such exclusion without penalty to course credit or graduation. A student who is excused from a unit of the program will be provided with other work/activities related to health in as non-intrusive a manner as possible (NJSA 18A:35-365 et seq.)

Date of Request: ________________________

Student’s Name: ________________________ School: ________________ Grade: ______

I request that my child be excused from participating in the following portions (s) of the health education program because it is in conflict with my conscience or sincerely held moral or religious beliefs.

Topic (be as specific as possible):

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Objections (list all that apply):

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Return this form to your child’s principal and it will be forwarded to the appropriate teacher.

_________________________________________ Signature of Parent/Guardian
Montclair Public Schools
Montclair, New Jersey

Science “Opt Out” Form

The purpose of this form is to insure compliance with science “opt out” and not dissect, vivisect, incubate, capture or otherwise harm or destroy animals or any parts thereof as part of a course of instruction. The schools are required to provide an “alternative education” project to all students that opt out of these activities. (P.L. 2005, Chapter 266 (C. 18A:35-4.25 & C. 18A:35-4.25)

________________________
Date of Request

________________________
Student’s Name__________________________ Grade_____  

________________________
School

I request my child be excused from activities that involve animals. I understand that my child will be provided an alternative educational project.

Return this form to your child’s principal and it will be forwarded to the appropriate teacher.

________________________
Signature of Parent/Guardian

9/09
Department of Instruction