September, 2011

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 an non-intrusive 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
drug-free, decision-making skills and strategies, basic first-aid procedures, the short and long-term benefits and risks associated with nutritional choices, the physical, social, and emotional benefits of regular physical activity.

Grade 6: Anatomical and physiological changes during puberty, how peer relationships change during adolescence, positive and negative stress/stress relief, strategies to deal with conflict, violence, harassment, and bullying, the ways that individuals, families, and communities cope with change, crisis, rejection, loss, and separation, laws related to the use of drugs and alcohol, effective decision-making in health and safety situations, behavior that may affect the safety of self or others, treatment procedures for common accidents, the relationship among the organizational components of the human body (cells, tissues, organs, and systems), food choices and healthy meal plans, the relationship between physical activity, healthy eating, and body composition.

Grade 7: Emotional health, decision-making skills in health and safety situations, consequences of the use and sale of illegal substances, reasons why people use alcohol and tobacco, how body systems are interdependent and interrelated, human growth from the time of conception until birth, the influences of hormones, heredity, nutrition, and the environment on the physical, social, and emotional changes during puberty, communicable, non-communicable, acute and chronic diseases, food groups and nutrients, making healthy food choices, the results of movement, fitness, and nutritional practices in a healthy lifestyle.

Grade 8: Depression, suicide, emotions and emotional responses, decision-making regarding social and sexual behaviors, eating disorders, influences on eating and dieting, healthy ways to lose, gain, or maintain weight, the importance of breast/testicular exam, the basic components of a healthy personality, how character development can be enhanced by individual, group, and team activities, changes in feelings and emotions that occur with sexual maturation, the signs of an unhealthy friendship/relationship and how to end it, internal and external pressures to become sexually active, hazardous situations in the environment, commonly used over-the-counter medicines.

Grade 9: First Aid, how to check a conscious and unconscious person for life-threatening and non-life-threatening conditions, CPR, Automated External Defibrillator (AED), the male and female reproductive systems, the consequences of teen sex and strategies to avoid it, abstinence and contraception, sexually transmitted diseases and the relationship between STDs, HIV/AIDS and the immune system, the positive lifetime health and social benefits gained from participating in physical activity.

Grade 10: Psychological and physiological factors that influence driving, the effects of drugs on driver performance, knowledge of driving laws, psychological principles & theories of personality development, the impact of physical development, social norms and expectations, self-esteem, and perceived vulnerability on adolescent social and emotional growth and behavior, psychoactive drugs and their effects on the body, the effects of alcohol on the individual, characteristics of functional and dysfunctional families, co-dependency and addictive behavior, personal values and interpersonal relationships, personal wellness diets.

Grade 11: Behaviors that optimize the functioning of body systems, essential nutrients for a well-balanced diet, the effects of sugar, fat, sodium, and additives on the body, the use of drugs, fitness products and fads to achieve fitness, ways to manage weight and body composition, drugs and their social, emotional, and financial implications for safety and well being, substance addiction and recovery. Personal strengths that lead to the achievement of goals and tasks, internal and external pressures to become sexually active and strategies to resist those pressures.

Grade 12: Principles of effective communication and psychological factors that influence interpersonal relationships, basic mental health needs and how they compare with personal psychological needs, the dangers of cocaine and alcohol use, contemporary issues in sexuality, the importance of breast/testicular exam, the dangers of STDs, HIV/AIDS, and ill-prepared pregnancy, the stages of labor and childbirth and childbirth options, factors necessary for healthy family development, the physical, economic, emotional, social, intellectual, and cultural demands of raising a child, effective parenting strategies and resources for help with parenting, personal and group goals, shared values, visions, and work plans, activities to benefit a health organization, cause, or issue, strategies that promote a healthy successful lifestyle upon graduation.
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

Department of Instruction
7/2009