



Dear Parent/caregiver

The New Jersey Student Learning Standards - Comprehensive Health and Physical Education were revised in 2020 to address the need for students to gain knowledge and skills in caring for themselves, interact effectively with others, and analyze the impact of choices and consequences. These revised standards will be implemented in the 2022-2023 school year. We value the importance of partnering with families as we educate students in the knowledge and skills they need in order to lead a healthy, active life.

The eighth grade Family Life and Relationships health unit is comprised of these indicators:

2.1.8.SSH.1: Differentiate between gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation.

2.1.8.SSH.2: Develop a plan for the school to promote dignity and respect for people of all genders, gender identities, gender expression and sexual orientations in the school community.

2.1.8.SSH.3: Demonstrate communication skills that will support healthy relationships

2.1.8.SSH.4: Compare and contrast the characteristics of healthy and unhealthy relationships.

2.1.8.SSH.5: Analyze the similarities and differences between friendships, romantic relationships and sexual relationships.

2.1.8.SSH.6: Examine how culture influences the way families cope with traumatic situations, crisis, and change.

2.1.8.SSH.7: Identify factors that are important in deciding whether and when to engage in sexual behaviors.

2.1.8.SSH.8: Identify factors that can affect the ability to give or perceive consent to sexual activity (e.g., body image, self-esteem, alcohol, other substances).

2.1.8.SSH.9: Define vaginal, oral, and anal sex.

2.1.8.SSH.10: Identify short and long-term contraception and safer sex methods that are effective and describe how to access and use them (e.g., abstinence, condom).

2.1.8.SSH.11: Develop a plan to eliminate or reduce risk of unintended pregnancy and STIs (including HIV).

2.1.8.EH.1: Compare and contrast stress management strategies that are used to address various types of stress-induced situations (e.g., academics, family, personal relationships, finances, celebrations, violence).

2.1.8.EH.2: Analyze how personal attributes, resiliency, and protective factors support mental and emotional health.

2.1.8.CHSS.1: Identify professionals at school and in the community available to assist with health conditions and emergencies, sexual health services, life skills training and describe how they can be accessed (e.g., suicide prevention, CPR/AED, breast self-examination, traumatic stress).

2.1.8.CHSS.2: Describe the state and federal laws related to age of consent, minors' ability to consent to health care, confidentiality in a healthcare setting, child pornography, sexting, safe haven and sex trafficking.

2.1.8.CHSS.3: Identify the state and federal laws related to minors' access to sexual healthcare services, including pregnancy and STIs/HIV prevention, testing, care, and treatment.

2.1.8.CHSS.4: Identify community resources and/or other sources of support, such as trusted adults, including family members, caregivers, and school staff, that students can go to if they are or someone they know is being sexually harassed, abused, assaulted, exploited, or trafficked.

2.1.8.CHSS.5: Identify medically accurate sources of information about STIs, including HIV, such as local STIs /HIV prevention, steps to obtain PrEP and PEP, testing, and treatment resources.

2.1.8.CHSS.6: Develop an advocacy plan regarding a health issue and share this information in an appropriate setting.

2.1.8.CHSS.7: Collaborate with other students to develop a strategy to address health issues related to climate change.

2.1.8.CHSS.8: Analyze difficult situations that might lead to feelings of sadness, anxiety and depression and identify individuals, agencies or places in the community where assistance may be available.

Indicators that are in boldface type are new or expanded from the 2014 standards, and learning activities have been created to integrate this content. For example, indicator **2.1.8.SSH.1** has expanded from **discuss** in the 2014 standards to **differentiate** in the 2020 standards. Also, indicator **2.1.8.SSH.9** expanded from **relate certain behaviors to placing one at greater risk for HIV/AIDS, STIs and unintended pregnancy** to **define vaginal, oral, and anal sex**. As such, the definitions for vaginal, oral, and anal sex are presented in the context of how STIs are transmitted.

Although we strongly encourage families to have their student(s) participate in these essential health topics, we want to acknowledge that Parents/caregivers do have the option of excluding their child from any portion of sexuality/family life education instruction if it is in conflict with their conscience, morally, or religiously held beliefs. (*Please see the appropriate NJ Statute below)

If this is the case, please email your student's principal and the health education teacher that is listed on their schedule in Genesis. Please include the students, name, grade level and school to notify which topic(s) you are opting your student(s) out of. Students who are excused will be assigned to a separate learning area for the duration of those identified lessons.

Section: 18A:35-4.7: Parent's statement of conflict with conscience: Any child whose parent or guardian presents to the school principal a signed statement that any part of the instructions in health, family life education or sex education is in conflict with his conscience, or sincerely held moral or religious beliefs shall be excused from that portion of the course where such instruction is being given and no penalties as to credit or graduation shall result therefrom.

Sincerely,