

Dear Parent or Guardian:

HIV/AIDS is one of the most serious health problems Americans have ever faced. Advances in medicine have made tremendous strides in keeping people infected with HIV healthy for many years. Still, it has no cure, and education is the only way we can help our students protect themselves from becoming infected. Mayor de Blasio's \$24 million investment in the new Health Ed Works initiative strengthens DOE's commitment to student health by increasing support for health education in all our schools.

The New York State Education Department and the New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) require that HIV/AIDS education be provided for all students in kindergarten through grade 12, as part of comprehensive health education. The *HIV/AIDS Curriculum* that NYCDOE developed for NYC students is age and developmentally appropriate. For example, in kindergarten, students learn how people get sick and how to get better. In 7<sup>th</sup> grade, children learn how HIV affects the immune system, the risks of alcohol and drug use, and the importance of communicating with parents/guardians or caregivers. High school lessons teach students to avoid behaviors that put them at risk for HIV, sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and unintended pregnancy.

As a parent or legal guardian, you have the right to excuse your child from certain HIV/AIDS lessons that teach about methods of HIV/sexually transmitted infection prevention. These "opt out" prevention lessons are identified in the *HIV/AIDS Curriculum*, which is online at <https://www.weteachnyc.org/resources/resource/hivaids-curriculum-2012-edition/>

If you would like your child to be excused, you must write a letter to me stating that:

- Your child should not be in the classroom during the "opt out" prevention lessons; and
- You will teach your child about prevention at home.

Encourage your child to speak with you about HIV/AIDS. Doing so can help you reinforce your child's awareness of how HIV is transmitted, and present opportunities for you and your child to discuss how abstaining from sexual intercourse is the most important and effective way for children to protect their health and their future.

We welcome your involvement on our School Wellness Council or to coordinate PTA presentations about HIV/AIDS. Speak to your child's teacher, parent coordinator, or me about how you can support the lessons. If you have any questions regarding this program, please call me at \_\_\_\_\_.

Sincerely,

Principal