

Dear Parent or Guardian:

Your child's health is important to us. In New York City public schools, we provide health education classes that include age-appropriate lessons about family health, sexuality and HIV/AIDS, in addition to other important health topics. 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.

Statistics show that we have students who are having sex before the age of 13; students who have had multiple sexual partners; and students who are not protecting themselves against sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV/AIDS. We have an important role to play in educating our children about sex and the potential consequences of engaging in risky behavior. We must provide our students with medically accurate information and communication skills to help them make decisions that can keep them healthy and safe. To that end, the required one-semester, comprehensive health education course in both middle and high school must also include age-appropriate sexual health education, as well as the HIV/AIDS lessons that are required each year for students in K-12.

We understand that our students and their families have a range of beliefs, cultures and customs. As a parent/guardian, you have the right to keep your child out of some sexual health and HIV/AIDS lessons about birth control and methods of HIV/sexually transmitted infection prevention. However, you cannot remove your child from abstinence or other sexual health education lessons. If you have questions about which lessons you may opt your child out of, please check with your child's teacher, our parent coordinator, or me. You can also view the entire NYCDOE *HIV/AIDS Curriculum* online at <https://www.weteachnyc.org/resources/resource/hiv-aids-curriculum-2012-edition/>.

If you would like your child to be excused from birth control and HIV/STI prevention lessons, you must write a letter to me stating that:

- Your child should not be in the classroom during lessons about birth control and methods of HIV/STI prevention; and
- You will provide instruction on prevention to your child in your home.

As in all areas, parents and guardians are a child's first and most influential teachers. Parents, guardians and schools share a common goal: we want students of all ages to be healthy in all aspects of their lives. When it comes to talking with students about sex, our shared goal is to delay sexual activity in school-age youth. We encourage you to ask your child what he or she is learning in health education class and to make sure your child knows what you believe are the best ways to lead a healthy life. Conversations you have with your child about sexual health will place the information they are receiving in health class in the context of your family's values. Again, if you have any questions about health education or would like to review our school's health education curriculum, please contact your child's teacher or me.

Sincerely,

Principal