

What you need to know

2019 elementary Health and Physical Education (HPE) curriculum

The Ministry of Education's revised Elementary Health and Physical Education (HPE) curriculum was introduced on Aug. 21, 2019. The Peel District School Board is implementing the curriculum in alignment with our [Equity and Inclusive Education Policy #54](#), the [Ministry of Education's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy](#), and our obligation to honour human rights that are protected under the [Ontario Human Rights Code](#).

The Peel board remains committed to ensuring all students feel safe and valued. Being caring, cooperative, honest, inclusive, respectful and responsible are all part of the board's core values that are encouraged in Peel classrooms daily. This includes students learning about creed, ethnic origin, race, different kinds of families, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation or any of the other human rights protected under the [Ontario Human Rights Code](#).

Visit <http://www.peelschools.org/HPE> to view the Ministry of Education's full curriculum documents and resources, and Peel board resources.

What will students learn about human development and sexual health?

Fears and concerns based on myths circulate in communities about what is and isn't taught. The best place to seek clarification and reassurance is from the school. To help families feel comfortable with what students will learn, we encourage parents/guardians to start with their child's teacher. Teachers can provide copies of the lesson plans developed by board Curriculum staff that outline how the curriculum will be taught. The Peel board has also produced an [HPE overview document that provides a breakdown of what students will learn in each grade](#) about human development and sexual health. Concerns about the curriculum itself can be shared directly with [the Ministry of Education](#).

Human Development and Sexual Health Education taught in the Spring

Peel staff will teach the [Human Development and Sexual Health Education](#) component of the HPE curriculum to elementary students in the Spring. By then, educators have developed strong relationships with students and have a clear understanding of their maturity levels. This helps ensure that we teach the curriculum in a developmentally and age-appropriate manner.

Notice of lessons and exemption requests for elementary school families

In accordance with [Ministry Policy/Program Memorandum No. 162](#), all Peel elementary schools will send letters to families of students in grades 1 to 8 at least 20 school days before human development and sexual health lessons take place. If schools need to move the date of a scheduled lesson due to unforeseen circumstances, families will be given notice of the changes as soon as reasonably possible.

While parents may choose to exempt their child from human development and sexual health lessons, the Peel board strongly hopes that they do not. We want all students to be part of discussions that build respect and understanding, and that help all students feel safe, valued and respected. These lessons, led

EXCERPT FROM THE
2019 CURRICULUM,
GRADES 1-8: HEALTH
AND PHYSICAL
EDUCATION, PAGE 75:

In an environment based on the principles of inclusive education, all students, parents, caregivers, and other members of the school community – regardless of ancestry, culture, ethnicity, sex, physical or intellectual ability, race, religion, creed, gender identity, gender expression, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, or other factors – are welcomed, included, treated fairly, and respected. Diversity is valued when all members of the school community feel safe, welcomed and accepted.

by qualified educators, in safe learning environments, continue to build the skills and understanding that our students need to engage with the diversity that exists in their schools and communities with comfort, confidence and competence.

Parents/guardians can choose to have their child exempted from these lessons on an annual basis by submitting a completed [exemption form](#) for each child no more than five schools days prior to scheduled lesson. A [copy of the form can be downloaded on the Peel board website](#) and will be included with the advanced notice letter from your child's school. This exemption must be requested by parents/guardians every school year.

It's important to note the advanced notice and exemption processes described above apply exclusively to the human development and sexual health lessons of the elementary HPE curriculum. Outside of these specific lessons, schools cannot and will not provide advanced notice for any references to or conversations about sexual health–related concepts that happen among teachers, school staff, or other students. Classroom discussions and school activities that build a climate of inclusion and safety, including discussions about different kinds of families or any of the other human rights protected under the [Ontario Human Rights Code](#), will continue to take place throughout the school year.

Notice of lessons and exemption requests for secondary school families

As there were no changes to the HPE curriculum for secondary students, Peel secondary schools will continue to provide notice to families of students in grades 9-12 two weeks prior to human development and sexual health lessons. As always, families can choose to keep their teen at home for parts of the curriculum, or can choose to request an exemption through the board's long-standing [Religious Accommodation operating procedure](#).

Again, the Peel board hopes all students will be part of discussions that build respect and understanding, that help all students feel safe, valued and respected. These lessons, led by qualified educators, in safe learning environments, continue to build the skills and understanding that our students need to engage with the diversity that exists in their schools and communities with comfort, confidence and competence.