PROCEDURE PR.695.CUR

TITLE: Exemption from Instruction related to Human Development and Sexual Health Education - Grades 1 to 8

Date issued: 30 November 2019
Last revised: 30 November 2019
Authorization: Senior Staff: 30 November 2019

1.0 OBJECTIVE

To establish a procedure for parents/guardians to request an exemption for their child(ren) from instruction related to the Human Development and Sexual Health expectations found in Strand D of The Ontario Curriculum: Health and Physical Education, Grades 1-8, 2019.

2.0 DEFINITIONS

In this procedure,

2.1 Board refers to the Board of Trustees.

2.2 District means the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board.

2.3 Human Development and Sexual Health expectations refers to those expectations found in Strand D of The Ontario Curriculum: Health and Physical Education, Grades 1-8, 2019 as specified in Appendix C Healthy Living Learning Summary: Key Topics.

2.4 Period of Instruction refers to the period, including the beginning and end dates, during which instruction in Human Development and Sexual Health during health and physical education classes is delivered.

2.5 Unforeseen event refers to an event that impairs a school’s ability to administer the period of instruction.

3.0 RESPONSIBILITY

3.1 School principals, or designates, will:

a) ensure the timely communication with parents/guardians around the expectations of and the chance to request exemption from the Grade 1 to 8 Human Development and Sexual Health expectations in strand D;

b) provide a timely process for accepting and making a determination regarding the submitted exemptions;
c) acknowledge the receipt of exemption forms or written requests from parents; and

d) determine what activities exempted students would undertake, should their parents/guardians choose to keep them at school.

3.2 Teachers will:
   a) allow for students to be exempted, at their parents’ request, from instruction related to the Grade 1 to 8 Human Development and Sexual Health expectations in strand D; and

   b) provide alternate activities for exempted children whose parents/guardians choose to keep them at school.

3.3 Parents/Guardians, should they choose to exempt their child(ren) from Human Development and Sexual Health expectations, will:
   a) submit a completed and signed exemption form or a written request within the timelines set by school; and

   b) submit a new completed and signed exemption form every school year, for each child.

4.0 PROCEDURE

Notice and Communications

4.1 The District has a responsibility to teach the Human Development and Sexual Health Curriculum, and to ensure that parents are notified prior to the instructional period and have the opportunity to remove their child from instruction.

4.2 At least twenty school days before the start of the period of instruction, parents/guardians will be notified of the planned instruction and provided with the Human Development and Sexual Health expectations.

4.3 Schools will use Appendix A to inform parents/guardians of the instruction and the process to exempt their children from instruction related to the Human Development and Sexual Health expectations.

4.4 At least five days prior to the start of the instruction, parents/guardians must complete and return Appendix B identifying one of the following options for their child:
   a) To remain in the classroom during the exemption period without taking part in instruction in Human Development and Sexual Health, and to be assigned work or activities by the teacher that are unrelated to Human Development and Sexual Health;

   b) To leave the classroom for the duration of the instruction and remain in the school under supervision as determined by the principal or principal’s designate. The student’s activities during the exemption period will be at the discretion of the teacher or principal; or
c) To be released into the care of the parent/guardian or the parent’s approved designate.

4.5 Schools may also accept written requests from parents for an exemption other than those made using the standard form.

4.6 Schools will acknowledge the receipt of exemption forms or written requests from parents/guardians.

4.7 To facilitate the notice process to all parents, the District encourages the teaching of the Human Development and Sexual Health expectations in May each year. A memorandum will be provided to schools confirming the period for instruction and the date of notice to the parent community and the process for managing exemptions. Schools will be required to post the specific dates and timetables for instruction on the school website.

4.8 Notwithstanding the preferred practice of instruction of this unit in May, teachers may exercise their professional judgement in determining the timing of instruction. Where the teacher elects to deliver at a time other than the centrally administered time, the teacher is responsible for full compliance with the administration of the notice and exemption requirements as established in this procedure.

4.9 In case of an unforeseen event, schools may move the period of instruction to a later date in the school year and will give notice of the change to parents/guardians as soon as reasonably possible.

4.10 As per Policy/Program Memorandum No. 162, exemptions are limited to instruction related to Human Development and Sexual Health expectations found in strand D of The Ontario Curriculum: Health and Physical Education, Grades 1-8, 2019. Students will not be exempted from instruction related to any other expectations in this curriculum or related expectations in other curriculum subjects.

4.11 References to human development and sexual health made by teachers, Board staff, or students outside the intentional teaching of content related to the Human Development and Sexual Health expectations are not included in such exemption.

Process
4.12 Schools will make the final decision about whether to accept or reject a request for an exemption that does not fall within the parameters set out in this procedure (e.g. if the exemption form is returned to the school during the scheduled period of instruction rather than by the school’s official submission date).

4.13 Exemptions will be granted only for instruction related to all of the Human Development and Sexual Health expectations in a student’s grade, and not for instruction related to selected expectations or groups of expectations.
4.14 There will be no academic penalty for exempted students when a request for an exemption has been made from a parent/guardian in writing in accordance with this procedure.

4.15 There will be no assessment, evaluation, or reporting of exempted students’ achievement of Human Development and Sexual Health expectations in their particular grade.

4.16 Exempted students’ grade in health and physical education will be determined on the basis of the overall expectations in strand D of the curriculum, without consideration of the specific expectations under Human Development and Sexual Health.

4.17 Schools must ensure appropriate supervision strategies are in place based on the parental exemption requests received.

4.18 Every teacher will have a list of students who are exempted from Strand D and that list shall identify whether the student is to:
   a) remain in the classroom, but not participate;
   b) leave the classroom; or
   c) be released to the care of the parent/guardian.

5.0 APPENDICES
(Please right-click on the links below to open appendices in new webpages)

Appendix A: Notice of Period of Instruction and Exemption Form
Appendix B: OCDSB 968 Exemption Form
Appendix C: Healthy Living Learning Summary: Key Topics from The Ontario Curriculum: Health and Physical Education, Grades 1-8, 2019.

6.0 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

Ministry of Education Policy/Program Memorandum No. 162
OCDSB Policy P.031.CUR Learning Resources
OCDSB Policy P.083.CUR Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting of Student Achievement
OCDSB Procedure PR.520.CUR Learning Resources
OCDSB Procedure PR.584.CUR Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting of Student Achievement
Appendix B: Exemption from Instruction in Human Development and Sexual Health Form

Having reviewed the Human Development and Sexual Health expectations in the elementary Ontario Health and Physical Education curriculum for my child’s grade, I would like my child to be exempted from instruction related to these expectations, without academic penalty.

During the exemption period, I would like my child to [select one only]:

- remain in the classroom without taking part in instructional activities related to Human Development and Sexual Health. I understand that my child’s activities unrelated to Human Development and Sexual Health during the exemption period will be at the discretion of the teacher.
- leave the classroom and remain in the school under staff supervision. I understand that my child’s activities during the exemption period will be at the discretion of the teacher or principal.
- be released into my care or the care of my approved designate.

NOTE: If one of the three options above is not selected, the principal or the principal’s designate will determine where in the school the child is to remain during the exemption period.

I understand and agree with the following statements:

- The Human Development and Sexual Health expectations in strand D of the health and physical education curriculum are different in every grade, so I must submit a completed exemption form every school year, for each child, in order for the child to be exempted from instruction related to Human Development and Sexual Health expectations in that school year.

- References to or conversations about sexual health–related concepts among teachers, school staff, or other students outside formal instruction in Human Development and Sexual Health are not subject to this exemption.

- My child will continue to receive instruction related to all other elementary health and physical education curriculum expectations.

Child’s Last Name, Child’s First Name
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Parent’s Name (print) and Signature
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Grade, Class
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Date
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