

NOTE: Footnotes are for reference only. They should be eliminated from an individual board's policy.

COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH EDUCATION PROGRAM

Policy Code: **3540**

The board is committed to a sound, comprehensive health education program that provides students with accurate information and encourages them to be responsible for their own health and behavior. The board recognizes the primary role of parents in providing for the health and well-being of their children and seeks to involve parents as provided in this policy.¹ The comprehensive health education program provided by the school system will meet the requirements of the Basic Education Program (BEP), G.S. 115C-81(e1), and aligned state-adopted standards. The board may, in its discretion, expand on the subject areas to be included in the program and on the instructional objectives to be met.

A. COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH EDUCATION PROGRAM

A comprehensive health education program must be taught to students from kindergarten through ninth grade. As required by law, the health education program must include age-appropriate instruction on bicycle safety, nutrition, dental health, environmental health, family living, consumer health, disease control, growth and development, first aid and emergency care, mental and emotional health, drug and alcohol abuse prevention, prevention of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), including HIV/AIDS and other communicable diseases, and reproductive health and safety education.

As required by law and beginning in seventh grade, reproductive health and safety education will include age-appropriate instruction on sexual abstinence until marriage, STDs, the human reproductive system, preventable risks for preterm birth in subsequent pregnancies, effective contraceptive methods for preventing pregnancy, awareness of sexual assault and sexual abuse, and sex trafficking prevention and awareness.²

B. PARENTAL OPPORTUNITIES TO REVIEW MATERIALS AND WITHHOLD CONSENT FOR STUDENT PARTICIPATION

Each year before students participate in reproductive health and safety education or in other separate instruction on the prevention of STDs, including HIV/AIDS, or the avoidance of out-of-wedlock pregnancy, the principal or designee shall notify parents of the opportunity to review the materials and objectives that will be used in instruction.³ A

¹ This paragraph should reflect the local board's philosophy. These statements may be modified or replaced.

² The board may expand upon the subject areas and objectives provided in G.S. 115C-81(e1)(4) and (4a) and *The Healthful Living Standard Course of Study*.

³ An opportunity for parents to review materials prior to student participation in these three subject areas is required by G.S. 115C-81(e1)(7). Another provision, G.S. 115C-81(e1)(5), requires the board to make available for review by parents all State-developed or approved objectives for instruction and textbooks, or other materials that pertain to or are intended to impart information or promote discussion or understanding in regard to these subject areas. These materials must remain available for review at least 60 days before use. *The Healthful Living Standard Course of Study* should be included in materials made available for review.

copy of all objectives and materials will be available for review in the media center of each school where these subjects will be taught.⁴

The principal or designee shall also notify parents of the right to withhold or withdraw consent for their child's participation in all reproductive health and safety education instruction or in specific topics such as STDs, the effectiveness and safety of contraceptive methods, awareness of sexual assault and sexual abuse, and sex trafficking prevention and awareness. Parents may also withhold consent to student participation in other separate instruction on the prevention of STDs, including HIV/AIDS, or the avoidance of out-of-wedlock pregnancy.⁵ Any parent wishing to withhold consent must do so in writing to the principal.

C. STANDARDS FOR INSTRUCTION

For reproductive health and safety education, teachers shall follow the instructional objectives and only use the age-appropriate materials that have been made available to parents for review in accordance with this policy. Information conveyed during instruction will be objective and based upon scientific research that is peer reviewed and accepted by professionals and credentialed experts in the field of sexual health education or other field authorized by law.⁶

A determination of what is an appropriate education for a student with disabilities must be made in accordance with the student's individualized education plan, following all procedures as provided in the North Carolina *Policies Governing Services for Children with Disabilities*.⁷

Legal References: G.S. 115C art. 9; 115C-36, -81(e1); State Board of Education Policies GCS-D-000, GCS-F-007; *Policies Governing Services for Children with Disabilities*, available at <http://ec.ncpublicschools.gov/policies/nc-policies-governing-services-for-children-with-disabilities>

Cross References:

Issued:

⁴ The process for review provided in this policy may be modified or replaced.

⁵ Alternatively, the board may adopt a policy that requires parental consent before a student may participate in instruction. G.S. 115C-81(e1)(4a) states, "Each local board shall adopt a policy and provide a mechanism to allow a parent or guardian to withdraw his or her child from instruction required under this subdivision." G.S. 115C-81(e1)(7) requires board policy to provide parents and legal guardians the opportunity to consent or withhold consent for the student to participate in reproductive health and safety education.

⁶ Law enforcement and criminal justice agencies and nongovernmental organizations with expertise in sex trafficking prevention and awareness may also provide materials and information. Beginning with the 2016-17 school year, the authorized fields of expertise also include behavioral counseling, medicine, human anatomy, biology, ethics, or health education.

⁷ Different materials may be used if necessary to meet the objectives of an IEP. Parents of students with disabilities may review materials and withhold or withdraw consent in accordance with this policy.

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