

August, 2009

Dear Parents:

As you are aware the Downingtown School District includes Health Education in grades six, seven and eight. Health education is conducted for one marking period during each year of middle school. Along with the many topics addressed, the curriculum content also includes: puberty, reproductive system, pregnancy and birth, sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS. An overview of each grade level's course content is included on the reverse side of this form for your reference.

The curricula accompanying these content areas are closely aligned with the National Health Education Standards and with the Pennsylvania Academic Standards for Health, Safety and Physical Education. Furthermore, the program also addresses guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control's Division of Adolescent Health. Supporting the Health Education program is "Totally Awesome Health" in sixth and seventh grades, a nationally recognized text for middle level health programs and "Health" by Holt, Rinehart & Winston for the eighth grade curriculum. The curriculum guides, the texts and other pertinent materials are available for your review in the main office at your child's school. Should you wish to see these, or the materials for any academic area, please contact your child's principal to do so.

An area of particular interest for parents is that of the human reproductive system and HIV/AIDS. The new, middle level information for these two areas will be taught primarily in the eighth grade. However, information discussed at previous grade levels will be mentioned in conjunction with other pertinent topics, such as drug and alcohol abuse. Furthermore, discussion of topics relating to human sexuality will, per Pennsylvania Department of Education guidelines, promote abstinence as the healthiest choice.

As is the case for any academic area which is in direct conflict with the family's religious beliefs and principles, parents may have their child opt out of direct instruction in a specific area such as HIV/AIDS (per state regulations) or human sexuality lessons. Should this be the case, *parents should notify the principal of their school in writing*, and an alternative unit of instruction will be provided for their child.

Again, you are invited to peruse all health education materials, and we look forward to working with you to help your child on the way to optimal health!

Sincerely,

Tom Mulvey
Principal