The Healthy Living units address the expectations of the Healthy Living strand and Living Skills.

The focus of learning in the Healthy Living strand is not merely on health knowledge, but rather on higher-level thinking connected to the application of skills for healthy living. The content emphasises why students are learning about healthy living and what they need to know to make informed decisions about their health. Students are also encouraged to make connections beyond themselves to understand how their health is connected to that of others and how it is affected by factors in the world around them.

(Adapted from "The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1–8: Health and Physical Education," by Ontario Ministry of Education, 2015 [revised], p. 34. Copyright 2015 by Queen’s Printer for Ontario.)

The Healthy Living Overall Expectations delineate the three aspects in the curriculum:

- C1. demonstrate an understanding of factors that contribute to healthy development. (Understanding Health Concepts)
- C2. demonstrate the ability to apply health knowledge and living skills to make reasoned decisions and take appropriate actions relating to their personal health and well-being. (Making Healthy Choices)
- C3. demonstrate the ability to make connections that relate to health and well-being — how their choices and behaviours affect both themselves and others, and how factors in the world around them affect their own and others’ health and well-being. (Making Connections for Healthy Living).

The health curriculum addresses four topics (Healthy Eating, Personal Safety and Injury Prevention, Substance Use Addictions and Related Behaviours, and Human Development and Sexual Health) connected directly to the focus of the learning in the three Overall Expectations of the Healthy Living Strand. The three Overall Expectations, including an integration of the Living Skills, make up the three health units within each grade of the Ophea Curriculum Resources, 2015.

Each student is unique in a number of ways. Ontario is a multicultural and multireligious province. Consequently, students bring to the classroom a diversity of cultural, religious, and family traditions and values related to: healthy eating, personal safety, substance use, and sexuality, gender, and human development. Students also differ considerably in their knowledge and comfort with puberty and sexuality issues. Teachers need to recognize and respect all of these differences. An understanding of students’ strengths and needs, as well as of their backgrounds, life experiences, and possible emotional vulnerabilities, can help teachers plan effective instruction and assessment. Teachers continually build their awareness of students’ learning strengths and needs by observing and assessing the students’ readiness to learn, their interests, and their learning styles and preferences. As teachers develop and deepen their understanding of individual students, they can respond more effectively to the students’ needs by differentiating instructional approaches, by adjusting the method or pace of instruction, using different types of resources, allowing a wider choice of topics, and even adjusting the learning environment, if appropriate, to suit the way their students learn and how they are best able to demonstrate their learning.

Parents/guardians play the most significant role in the formation of their children’s values and behaviours and it is important to work together with parents/guardians and keep them informed. Communication with parents/guardians about all student learning — not just sexual health education — is beneficial for students. Use a letter developed by your school or school board to communicate with parents/guardians about the specific topics and approaches that will be used in the health unit, distributing it prior to the beginning of instruction.
Healthy Eating
Learning in this content area is intended to help students develop the knowledge and skills required to make healthy eating choices. The major topics include Canada’s Food Guide, nutrition, food choices, factors influencing eating habits, skills for healthy eating, food trends, oral and dental health, food systems, and connections between eating choices, chronic disease prevention, and the health of the environment. The objective in the unit addressing Healthy Eating is to encourage students to develop a sense of personal responsibility for taking care of themselves and making healthy food decisions. Health Eating also provides a point of contact with the home and with healthy school policies relating to food.


Healthy Eating Teaching Considerations
• Making the connection between what we eat and how it may affect current and future wellness is one of the most important changes to the teaching about healthy eating. The idea that a student can affect their own wellness, along with that of their family, is crucial. The Ontario Curriculum, Health and Physical Education, Grades 1–8, 2015 (revised), and Eating Well with Canada’s Food Guide were created after consultation with many different Canadian health promotion organizations, to ensure that key nutritional messages are delivered within the context of a healthy school and curriculum.
• Healthy eating is something that can be reinforced every day during the school year, and the teacher is a key role model in delivery of this message. The learning is most effective when the healthy eating messages being addressed in class are being reinforced by what the rest of the school is doing to promote healthy eating. See information on the Ministry of Education’s School Food and Beverage Policy: http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/healthyschools/policy.html
• Students in Grades 1–3 can begin to form an understanding of the relationship between healthy eating and health. Children at these ages start to understand that healthy eating can help them be healthy now and stay healthy in the future. Making healthier food choices is a way of showing respect for themselves (in both their bodies and their minds). In class, they have an opportunity to share their ideas with people whose eating habits may be different but are equally valuable.
• All children are unique, lead different lives, and have different energy needs. Children need a varying amount of food depending on their biological sex, their body size, how physically active they are, and how fast they are growing. Although children’s energy needs tend to increase through puberty, this increase is not steady. Children grow according to their own growth patterns. As a general rule, if children eat according to their appetites and hunger cues, and choose foods from the four food groups, over time they will get the nourishment they need.
• Teachers must be sensitive to individual students who may have a direct connection to a family member living with a chronic disease. Teachers must also consider individuals’ different body sizes and shapes. When teaching healthy eating, teachers should also take into account students’ personal interests and personal circumstances. Students bring their learning home to their families, and they have variable amounts of control over the food they eat at home and the food they bring to school. Teachers need to consider these realities and be aware of issues such as poverty, food allergies and sensitivities, disordered eating, and social and cultural practices in order to ensure that the learning is presented with sensitivity. Using a flexible and balanced approach and avoiding rigidity regarding food rules and guidelines can reduce potential triggers to body image and eating concerns.
(Adapted from "The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1–8: Health and Physical Education," by Ontario Ministry of Education, 2015 [revised], p. 37. Copyright 2015 by Queen’s Printer for Ontario.)
• Before discussing the food practices of various groups of people, try to gain an understanding of their value systems. Food habits are greatly influenced by a group’s values, and the perception of healthy food differs from one cultural group to another. On occasion, because of family, culture, or religion, some children may not eat foods from all four food groups but can still meet their nutritional needs. It is important that teachers do not make students feel that one value system and food practice is superior to another.
• When there is discussion around cultural foods:
  • do not assume that students from a particular group have or have not adopted the food and dietary practices of the
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- general Canadian population. Invite students to share their family’s food practices and eating patterns.
  - ask questions with an open mind — don’t be judgmental. Instead, validate: sharing food experiences can help establish trust and knowledge among classmates.
- The school community can help children to learn about the differences in peoples’ eating habits, likes and dislikes, and cultures. Students learn that people from other parts of the world can choose different nutritious foods (e.g., bread, rice, tortillas, or roti all belong to the Grain Products category). Families might be interested in sharing ethnic food and recipes. Discussion in the classroom about different foods or eating habits can enable each child to feel individually involved by including foods that relate to their own eating habits. Overall, learning in this way helps to support all people in developing and keeping healthy eating patterns.

Personal Safety and Injury Prevention

Learning in this content area is intended to reduce children’s injuries and to equip them to recognize, assess, and control potentially dangerous situations. The expectations address the knowledge and skills necessary to reduce safety risks at home, at school, and in the community. Having the ability to reduce risk is essential to one’s physical safety and mental and emotional well-being. In these units on personal safety, students resolve issues on topics such as bullying, peer assault, child abuse, harassment, and violence in relationships. Injury prevention topics focus on areas such as road safety (pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicle), sun protection, Internet safety, home and fire safety, and first aid.

(Adapted from “The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1–8: Health and Physical Education,” by Ontario Ministry of Education, 2015 [revised], p. 37. Copyright 2015 by Queen’s Printer for Ontario.)

Personal Safety and Injury Prevention Teaching Considerations

- Safety messages need to be reinforced and practised at home and out in the community; therefore, it is important to work with parents/guardians and keep them informed in ongoing throughout the year. Encourage parents/guardians to discuss “what if” situations with their children, helping them think through their choices, talking about possible solutions, and practicing these solutions.
- School board and school policies provide many guidelines for ensuring the safety of staff and students (e.g., Ministry Safe Schools, Ontario Physical Education Safety Guidelines). Staff, students, and parents/guardians need to know these guidelines.
- Many national and local events in the community reinforce and enrich the messages children receive at school. Cross reference the following list with the community events in your area:
  - March: Poison Prevention Week and Farm Safety Week
  - May: National Road Safety Week and Bike Week
  - June: National Water Safety Week
  - October: Fire Prevention Week, Injury Prevention Week, and Provincial Seat Belt Campaign
  - November: Drug Awareness Week
  - December: National Safe Driving Week
- Many programs and supports are available to schools to assist in teaching safety messages (e.g., local fire departments, Riskwatch, and local public health units).
- Bullying may be a disciplinary issue for both teachers and administrators. However, new legislation added to Ontario’s Safe School Act, Bill 212, now recognizes bullying and cyberbullying as offences for which a student can be suspended or expelled from school. Bill 212 further extends the right to discipline students for actions that take place off school property and for activities not associated with the school if the actions affect the school climate. The Keeping Our Kids Safe at School Act, effective February 1, 2010, requires all school staff to report incidents of bullying in the school that can lead to suspension or expulsion. This includes cyberbullying. This legislation further requires all school staff working directly with students to respond to incidents that negatively affect the school climate.
- It is important that schools define clearly for students what bullying is, why people bully, strategies to prevent bullying, and the actions that take place as a result of bullying. Staff may have specific training needs that need to be addressed before a policy on bullying can be implemented. For example, staff may need training in behaviour management skills, counselling skills, and assertiveness techniques. The school staff, together with parents/guardians, must set firm limits and agree on non-hostile,
non-physical sanctions for violations of rules. In addition, the school policy must promote co-operation in a school environment, characterized by warmth, positive interest, and adult involvement.

• Teachers should have a clearly stated code of conduct for their classes (e.g., everybody gets a chance to speak, listen, take turns, no name calling, no fighting, everyone is special). The students should be involved in the development of this code in order to give them a sense of ownership.

• Encourage students to recognize that when they see an emergency or someone who needs help, their own safety is most important. They should not try to help someone if it means putting themselves at risk (e.g., going into traffic, onto train tracks, near electrical wires). Remind them explicitly that the safest thing to do is to seek help from a trusted adult or call 911 for emergency help.

• Concussion policy is critical to ensuring a safe environment for physical education, interschool athletics, and intramural activities. As outlined in Policy/Program Memorandum No. 158 (PPM 158), School Board Policies on Concussion, the Ministry of Education considers the concussion protocol outlined in the Ontario Physical Educational Safety Guidelines, available at http://safety.ophea.net, to be the minimum standard. The PPM provides direction to and outlines expectations for school boards to develop and maintain a policy on implementation of concussion awareness, prevention, identification, and management in publicly funded schools in Ontario. More information can be found at: http://health.gov.on.ca/en/public/programs/concussions/resources.aspx

Substance Use, Addictions, and Related Behaviours
Education is critical in the prevention of substance abuse. Parents/guardians and teachers have important roles to play in the education of students about substance use, misuse, and abuse. The learning expectations related to substance use and abuse focus on an understanding of the effects of drugs — prescription drugs, non-prescription drugs, illicit drugs, tobacco, and alcohol — and the consequences of their use.

These units also address addictions and related behaviours that can lead to addictions (e.g., excessive screen time, self-harm, and online gambling). The relationship between substance use and abuse and mental health disorders (e.g., anxiety, depression, and eating disorders) is discussed, and information on support systems for healthy, substance-free alternatives is provided.

(Adapted from “The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1–8: Health and Physical Education,” by Ontario Ministry of Education, 2015 [revised], p. 38. Copyright 2015 by Queen’s Printer for Ontario.)

Substance Use, Addictions, and Related Behaviour Teaching Considerations

• It is important to be aware of not only students’ own experiences and decisions regarding substance use, but also the potential influences of those around them (including friends, siblings, parents/guardians, and the broader community). When talking about substance use, misuse, and abuse it is important that students have a clear understanding of what is meant by “substances”. The word “substances” is more commonly known to children and youth as “drugs”. Children or youth may use many different types of substances. Caffeinated energy drinks, cannabis, alcohol, tobacco, over-the-counter drugs, and prescription medications are some examples.


• The personal connections that children and youth have to different substances can profoundly affect their beliefs and values. Stereotypes and beliefs may also affect students in many different ways, ranging from those whose faith does not allow the use of certain substances to those for whom drug use is an established element in their lives. These assumptions and beliefs can affect the perceptions of risk that children and youth may have about certain substances and on their decisions to use specific substances. For instance, many children and youth often do not think of alcohol as a drug, given its legal status in our society. In fact, it is the most common substance used by youth, and when they drink in hazardous ways they may underestimate the dangers of doing so. Teachers can support students by providing factual information on the specific risks associated with different types of substance use and how to reduce the harms associated with those risks. (Teachers may wish to read the overview by Parent Actions on Drugs that provides adults with information on various types of substances and the risks associated with the use of each substance.


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- Many variables are involved for anyone making the decision to use or not use a substance. The Just Say No approach to substance-use education is an abstinence-based approach that instructs children and youth to abstain from substance use, but the approach may not resonate with some people. Research suggests that the Just Say No approach is too simplistic and not helpful for youth or others who might be trying to decide whether substance use is a problem for them. The Just Say No approach may fail to acknowledge the developmental reality that children and youth sometimes make decisions based on emotions and impulses. Instead, best practices in substance-use education suggest that teachers can affect students’ views, attitudes, and ultimate decisions by providing ongoing opportunities for discussion and learning informed by the best available evidence about substance use, misuse, and abuse. Moreover, it is important to begin these conversations early so that children and youth have an opportunity to prepare and practise how they might make personal choices around substance use.

- Many First Nations and the Métis societies use tobacco in small amounts in ceremonies connected to cleansing and communicating with the spirit world. In these cultures, tobacco in its original form has a spiritual purpose, as one of the four sacred medicines (natural tobacco, cedar, sage, and sweetgrass).

- As of 2009, any person (driver or passenger) in a motor vehicle who is smoking while anyone under the age of 16 is present is subject to a fine of up to $250. The law applies to both moving and stationary vehicles, regardless of whether any window, sunroof, rooftop, door, or other feature of the vehicle is open.

Human Development and Sexual Health

Human development and sexual health education is more than simply teaching children and youth about the anatomy and physiology of reproduction. Sexual health, understood in its broadest sense, can include a wide range of topics and concepts, from sexual development, reproductive health, choice, sexual readiness, consent, abstinence, and protection, to interpersonal relationships, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression, affection and pleasure, body image, and gender roles and expectations. Sexual development is one component of overall human development, and learning about healthy human development begins at an early age. It is important for learning to be appropriate to students’ age and stage of development.
  (Adapted from “The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1–8: Health and Physical Education,” by Ontario Ministry of Education, 2015 [revised], p. 38. Copyright by Queen’s Printer for Ontario.)

The lessons within these units are based on the curriculum expectations, teacher prompts, and student responses of the Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1–8: Health and Physical Education curriculum, 2015 (revised). These lesson plans have been developed in collaboration with community health partners and elementary school teachers and are aligned with the content of the Ontario Curriculum in order to ensure they are developmentally appropriate. Students should have the knowledge and skills needed to make sound decisions about matters affecting their health and well-being before they experience real-life situations in which decisions must be made.

Human Development and Sexual Health Teaching Considerations

- Teachers must strive to create an inclusive and respectful learning environment. It is important that teachers examine and address their own biases. To increase their comfort level and their skill in teaching health education, teachers should reflect on their own attitudes, biases, and values with respect to the topics they are teaching within this part of the curriculum and seek out current resources, mentors, and professional development and training opportunities as necessary.
- Teachers are encouraged to move away from language that might gender people and instead use gender-neutral language to address the anatomy specifically (e.g., the penis and testicle will grow larger rather than a boy’s penis and testicles will grow larger,) or using inclusive language such as “bodies with” or “persons with” (e.g., people with ovaries can get pregnant, people with testicles make sperm). Using language that is inclusive of diverse bodies and genders allows you to include those who are transgender or intersex and anyone whose bodies don’t have parts often associated with their gender. Throughout the resources the language “people with vaginas” is used (along with “people with penises”) in order to provide inclusive, gender-neutral instruction. The language “people with vulvas” may also be used in place of “people with vaginas”. For additional information on gender-neutral language review: “Inclusive Sex Ed Language Checklist” http://jacketjacques.ca/SITE_sexted-add/Adapting-Sex-Ed-Language%20-Guelph-Checklist.pdf
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- In an environment based on the principles of inclusive education, all students, parents, guardians, caregivers, and other members of the school community — regardless of ancestry, culture, ethnicity, sex, physical or intellectual ability, race, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, or other factors — are welcomed, included, treated fairly, and respected. In such an environment, diversity is valued and all members of the school community feel safe, comfortable, and accepted. Every student is supported and inspired to succeed in a culture of high expectations for learning. In an inclusive education system, all students see themselves reflected in the curriculum, their physical surroundings, and the broader environment, so they can feel engaged in and empowered by their learning experiences.

- It is essential that learning activities and materials used to support the curriculum reflect the diversity of Ontario. This means acknowledging diverse families and family structures, diverse genders and gender identities, diverse sexual orientations, and different types of relationships and relationship structures. In addition, teachers should differentiate instruction and assessment strategies to take into account the background and experiences as well as the interests, aptitudes, and learning needs of all students.

- Teaching about human development and sexual health needs to be approached with sensitivity because of the diverse values, attitudes, and beliefs and experiences that exist in relation to gender roles and gender identity and expression, relationships and dating, pregnancy options, affection, and pleasure. Students build their values, perceptions and understandings about these topics through a lot of mixed messages coming from their peers, siblings, parents/guardians, the media, and other adults, including teachers. It is important to think about how your perceptions may affect how you discuss these important issues. It is also important to give students an opportunity to explore all sides of an issue in order to promote understanding. Facts should be presented objectively, and students should be given a range of information to enable them to make informed decisions based on their personal values.

- It is important to set ground rules so that discussion takes place in a setting that is accepting, inclusive, and respectful of all. Consider having students work in small groups to create a list of ground rules for creating a safe and inclusive classroom. Groups write their rules on chart paper and share their responses with the class. Common group rules can be recorded on separate chart paper and left on display for reference throughout the unit. Ground rules might include, but are not limited to: respect what others say — no put downs; understand others’ feelings; be respectful of differences; it’s okay to pass; agree to disagree; use correct names of body parts and terminology; discuss puberty and sexual health topics responsibly outside the classroom; don’t ask personal questions of others; and if referring to another person, use “Someone I know...” rather than the person’s name.

- When teaching Human Development and Sexual Health, consider conducting classes with all genders of students together whenever possible. Teaching puberty in an all-gender environment allows students to:
  - learn to talk comfortably and respectfully with each other
  - create a safer environment for transgender students
  - understand that they need to learn about others
  - understand that many changes are the same for everyone
  - learn that they are more alike than different.

(Mental Health)

Mental health concepts in the Ontario Health and Physical Education Curriculum, 2015, are included within all content areas of the Healthy Living strand. In fact, students today have opportunities to learn about mental health across the full curriculum, in this and other disciplines. The focus of mental health in Health and Physical Education is on promoting and maintaining mental health, building an understanding of mental illness, and reducing stigma and stereotypes.

Mental Health Teaching Considerations

- Mental health is a fundamental dimension of overall health and an essential resource for living that influences how students feel, perceive, think, communicate, and understand the world.

(Mental Health)

- Children and youths’ understanding of positive influences on mental health (e.g., life, love, school, friendships, family) involves the development of their understanding of mental health indicators and behaviours (e.g., depression, anxiety, substance use, low self-esteem). Without good mental health, children and youth may be unable to fulfill their full potential or play an active
part in everyday life. Discussions and activities relating to mental health can address many areas, from enhancing our emotional well-being to treating and preventing severe mental illness and preventing suicide.


- Teaching about mental health and mental illness needs to be approached with sensitivity because of the wide range of experiences, information (or misinformation), and understandings of what mental health and mental illness are. Children and youth (and adults) receive this information from those around them, including their peers, siblings, parents/guardians, the media, and other adults such as teachers, coaches, and religious leaders. So it is important to think about how your own perceptions of mental health and mental illness might affect how you discuss this important issue. Oftentimes, the perceptions that students have regarding mental health and mental illness are interconnected with their own personal experiences. For example, some students may have a friend or family member who has experienced, or currently experiences, mental illness. Some of your students might themselves have personally experienced poor mental health or mental illness.

- Stigmas, which are negative attitudes (prejudice) and negative behaviours (discrimination), also affect the way children, youth, and adults discuss mental health and mental illness, and how they treat people experiencing mental illness. Cultural background can also affect how children and youth talk (or don’t talk) about these issues.

Connect[ED] — Grade Four

A full unit on Internet safety that addresses the Healthy Living learning expectations for grade 4 has been included in these resources. It is designed to help students examine and develop their own online practices and behaviours, such as netiquette, security, personal privacy, and relationships (e.g., recognizing and managing cyberbullying) in the same way they would in real-life situations, including online. Connect[ED] engages students in learning in a fun and interactive way to help them both understand and internalize the messages pertaining to safe and healthy use of the Internet. It also helps teachers and parents/guardians overcome challenges of keeping up with technological developments by providing them with the tools they need to comfortably and effectively protect children and youth during daily online activities. Connect[ED] is a web-based resource (also available as a DVD) that includes the following materials:

- A 20–30 minute video “episode”, for each of grades 4, 5, and 6, that combines animation with exciting and informative live action
- Teacher lesson plans that directly link to the curriculum
- Take-home lessons for students to complete with their parent/guardian
- A teacher resource section
- A parent/guardian resource section
- Additional online supports to help enhance student learning and support both teachers and parents/guardians

Connect[ED] — Grade Four Teaching Considerations

- Send the "Sample Letter to Parent(s)/Guardian(s)” (Teacher Resource 1) home with students before starting the lessons.
- Become familiar with the grade-appropriate video episodes and accompanying lessons before introducing them to students.
- Become familiar with Bill 212 and the Keeping Our Kids Safe at School Act.
- Ensure you have all of the necessary equipment on hand. Connect[ED] can be used directly from the Internet or from the Connect[ED] DVD. Notes:
- If using the Internet, you’ll need a computer, LCD projector, and Internet connection to access http://www.reallifeonline.ca, or students can access the website from individual laptops/PCs.
- If using the DVD, you’ll need a TV and DVD player or a computer with an LCD projector.
- Choose the appropriate option for playing the video and conducting the lessons.
- Prior to beginning this unit, review “Before You Get Started”, pp. 12–14, on the website http://www.reallifeonline.ca or in the hardcopy. Everything necessary to deliver these lessons including training supports is provided in the resources.

Connect[ED] was made possible by funding provided by the Ontario Ministry of Education. Grade 5 and 6 Connect[ED] units are available for download through http://www.reallifeonline.ca.
Program Planning Considerations

Assessment
• Writable assessment tools are provided throughout the unit. Based on students’ needs and interests, as well as connections to the curriculum, teachers are encouraged to modify the tool as appropriate and use tools that best fit their instructional needs.
• One Anecdotal Recording Chart is provided for use throughout each unit. When creating anecdotal notes, consider recording notes for 6–8 students per class. Ensure that students are aware of the success criteria and that the students observed vary from class to class, to ensure you eventually observe and provide direct feedback to all students.
• The culminating task includes a Rubric for assessment of learning (summative assessment). Teachers should use their professional judgement and knowledge of their comprehensive yearly plan to determine which overall expectations will be assessed throughout which unit.

Supportive and Sensitive Approaches to Teaching
When approaching topics that require additional sensitivity, teachers can use these general guidelines as a starting point to create a safe, equitable learning environment:
• Begin with the curriculum expectations and focus on the key learnings of the overall expectations.
• Ensure that children and youth know that school Code of Conduct guidelines and Ontario Human Rights policies are in place to govern how everyone should act and behave toward others in schools and in public spaces.
• Ensure that group discussions respect, protect, and promote the sharing of individual views (i.e., diverse views are expected and encouraged).
• Think carefully about sharing personal information or views. Teachers’ opinions carry great weight with students.
• Use interactive discussion while providing opportunities for students to pass or simply listen if that is safer for them, rather than direct instruction or lecture-style approaches.
• Remind students that exploring these topics should lead to the development and growth of their understanding (i.e., understanding their own thoughts and values as well as those of others).
• Reinforce that classrooms are not platforms for any one individual (student or teacher) to dominate with one perspective.
• Discuss what constitutes confidential information and what does not.
• Provide students with resources and follow-up materials where appropriate.

Religious Accommodations
For board-specific guidelines on religious accommodations, and steps to take if these are being considered, teachers should consult their own specific school board policies.

Being Prepared
For teachers, learning as much as they can about the topics they will be teaching and about different support services and resources for students can help to prepare them for responding to students’ questions and meeting their needs. A number of supports are available in schools and communities to provide additional information and support for both students and teachers, such as:
• Guidance counsellors
• School social workers
• Public health staff
• Religious leaders, school chaplains, spiritual leaders
• Elders
• Child and youth workers
• Educational assistants
• Child psychologists
• Child welfare practitioners
• Settlement workers
• Community health centre workers
• LGBTQ youth workers
• Culturally reflective services to meet the needs of diverse groups in the community
Additional support for teachers is also available from school colleagues, board staff, provincial and national organizations, and accurate and reliable websites.

What Is My Bias?
When addressing topics that can be challenging to teach, all students need to feel supported in a stable, non-judgmental learning environment in which they are free to learn about and explore their own personal beliefs and the personal and social views of others.

It is important for teachers to be aware of and plan how to manage conflicting views in the course of classroom discussions, to ensure all students have the opportunity to experience an inclusive environment in which their thoughts and values are respected regardless of ancestry, culture, ethnicity, body size, biological sex, physical or intellectual ability, race, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, or other similar factors.

With personal reflection, teachers are better able to be aware of personal bias and respectful about how they articulate their own perspectives and respond to the perspectives of others.

Teachers can also model appropriate behaviour for students to follow, providing students the opportunity to respectfully participate in discussion that promotes the development and growth of students’ understanding.

To examine their personal beliefs and identify potential bias that they may have about their students, teachers can ask themselves some or all of the following reflective and guiding questions:
• What personal biases shape my emotional reaction to the content of this particular topic?
• What experiences have shaped my perspectives?
• What assumptions do I make about learning and teaching about this topic?
• What, if any, of these assumptions come from my own biases?
• What steps will I take to support my students so that my personal biases and beliefs do not interfere with my ability to respond professionally to a question a student poses?
• How will I ensure the content of the curriculum is professionally and fully addressed if the topic challenges my personal beliefs?
• How do I select resources with an awareness of the bias and perspective?
• What assumptions might I be making around how my students will react or engage with this topic?

Question Box Guidelines
A question box is a great tool that allows students to maintain anonymity when exploring topics that might be challenging to discuss or personal in nature, and allows teacher time to prepare answers for students’ questions.

Materials and Preparation
• Obtain an empty box (e.g., tissue box, shoe box).
• To ensure confidentiality, create a small slot in the box so students cannot reach in and remove questions.

Guidelines for Use
• Explain how to use the question box.
• Distribute blank pieces of paper for questions/comments that students submit at the end of the lesson. (All students hand in their piece of paper at the end of the lesson to ensure anonymity — students may submit a blank paper if they do not have a question.)
• Read all questions beforehand to determine which questions you will answer. Screen questions to determine whether students are at risk, and refer concerns to the principal.
• Attempt to organize questions in a logical sequence according to topic.
• Make an effort to answer all questions.

Student Rules for Use of the Question Box
• All questions are valid and welcome. However, you will have to make the final decision as to the appropriateness of each
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question for class discussion. Clarify that no question is a “bad” question, but if you feel that some questions may not be of interest to all students or that you are not prepared to lead a class discussion around that issue, you may not answer all questions. If necessary, have students see you at the end of class to answer a question privately.

• Refer students to parents/guardians or clergy for discussion of moral/religious questions.

• When writing the questions, students should use correct terminology. If they do not know the proper word, have them use the term with which they are familiar.

Equity and Inclusive Education in Health and Physical Education

Anti-discrimination education encourages children to think critically and empathetically about themselves and others in the world around them. This promotes fairness, sensitivity, and responsible citizenship. Learning activities and materials used in H&PE should reflect the diversity of Ontario’s multicultural society and create awareness of the diversity of cultures and ethnicities in the global community. Teachers may also need to adapt instruction and assessment strategies to accommodate children’s unique cultural experiences. Celebrating diversity through H&PE can include attention to individuals’ sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, and ethnicity. In Ontario, emphasis should be placed on learning about First Nation, Métis, and Inuit cultural beliefs and practices.

Disclosure of Abuse

Teachers are encouraged to review appropriate procedures to be followed by staff regarding the disclosure of abuse. This includes a review of any existing district school board child abuse policies and procedures. The following suggestions are offered for the initial response to any disclosure:

• If a student discloses personal information of this nature during a lesson, acknowledge the disclosure, let the student know that you will talk to him or her about it after class, and then continue with the lesson.

• As soon as possible after the lesson, meet with the student.

• Find a quiet and private location to talk to the student.

• Let the student know that the information will be shared with other adults in order to get help. Avoid giving “unconditional” confidentiality.

• Avoid minimizing, giving “advice” about, or judging the student’s concerns.

• Reassure the student that sharing the information is a good thing.

• Let the student know that you will offer support.

• Provide information about the steps you will be taking.

• If the student asks a question you cannot answer, acknowledge this and reassure the student that you will assist in finding the answer.

• Follow your school’s procedures for reporting the disclosure.

Duty to Report Child Abuse

If a school staff member has reasonable grounds to suspect that a child or youth under the age of 16 has suffered abuse or neglect, has been sexually abused or sexually exploited by a person having charge of him or her, or is at risk of any of these, the details must be reported directly (not through another party such as the principal) to the local child protection agency (Children’s Aid Society). (Adapted from “Policy/Program Memorandum 145: Progressive Discipline and Promoting Positive Student Behaviour,” by Ontario Ministry of Education, 2009. Copyright 2009 by Queen’s Printer for Ontario. Available at www.edu.gov.on.ca/extra/eng/ppm/145.html)

All school staff members must be aware of the requirements to report a child in need of protection under Ontario’s Child and Family Services Act and outlined in the Ontario Ministry of Education’s Policy/Program Memorandum No. 9: Reporting of Children in Need of Protection. Refer to: www.edu.gov.on.ca/extra/eng/ppm/9.html

Consequences of Failure to Report

Subsection 72(4) of Ontario’s Child and Family Services Act makes it an offence for persons performing professional or official duties with respect to children to fail to report a child who, they suspect, is or may be in need of protection. Clause 72(5)(b) expressly identifies teachers and school principals as such persons. If a teacher or principal obtains information, in the course of performing
their professional or official duties, that leads them to suspect that a child is or may be in need of protection, they must report this suspicion. If such a professional or official does not report the suspicion, they are liable, upon conviction for the offence, to a fine of up to $1000.


Protection for Persons Making Reports
The duty of a professional or official to make a report overrides the provisions of any other provincial statute – that is, those provisions that would otherwise prohibit the professional or official from disclosing confidential or privileged information. In other words, a teacher or school principal must report that they suspect that a child is or may be in need of protection even if they believe that the information to be used to support the report is supposed to be confidential or privileged.

Subsection 72(7) provides that no action for making a report shall be instituted against a person who acts in accordance with the duty to report in section 72, unless the person acts maliciously or without reasonable grounds for the suspicion.


Additional Resources

Ministry of Education supports for Human Development and Sexual Health
As part of their support strategy for the Health and Physical Education curriculum, 2015, the Ministry of Education has created a variety of support tools available for teachers, parents-guardians, and community members. A Parent's Guide to the Revised Health and Physical Education Curriculum, grade-by-grade overviews, and Quick Fact Sheets are available to support the instruction of human development and sexual health. These resources are available in many languages and can be accessed for free at http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/elementary/health.html. Print copies are also available from Service Ontario at http://www.publications.serviceontario.ca/pubont/servlet/ecom/MainServlet?selectedLocale=en.

Supports for Students Regarding Human Development and Sexual Health
The following resources may help students who are experiencing stress related to human development and sexual health:

- Kidshealth.org: http://Kidshealth.org
- LGBT Youth Line. Phone: 1-800-268-9688 Text: 647-694-4275 TTY: 416-962-0777 Email: askus@youthline.ca Online chat and resources: http://www.youthline.ca
- Teen Health Source. Text: 647-933-5399 Phone: 416-961-3200 Email: teenhealthsource@ppt.on.ca Online chat and resources: http://teenhealthsource.com

Resources for Digital Citizenship and Cyberbullying Information
Many resources are available for teachers to help further their own knowledge of Internet safety and to assist them in broadening the learning of children and youth:

- Get Cyber Safe: http://www.getcybersafe.gc.ca
  Get Cyber Safe is a national public awareness campaign created to educate Canadians about Internet security and the simple steps they can take to protect themselves online. The campaign's goal is to bring together all levels of government, the public and private sectors, and the international community to help Canadians be safer online.
- Media Smarts: http://www.mediasmarts.ca
  MediaSmarts is a Canadian non-profit charitable organization promoting digital and media literacy. Their vision is that children and youth have the critical thinking skills to engage with media as active and informed digital citizens.

HIV/AIDS Online School Support Kit (http://hae.ophea.net)
The Ontario Curriculum includes learning expectations that prepare children and youth for a world in which HIV and AIDS continue to be a reality. The HIV and AIDS Online School Support Kit supports teachers and school administrators in the development of lessons and instructional strategies that help students fulfill the expectations related to age-appropriate HIV education in
Introduction to Healthy Living

the Ontario curriculum. The HIV and AIDS Online School Support Kit brings together evidence-based information, best practice strategies, and a myriad of existing free HIV-related resources and tools to help schools deliver age-appropriate HIV education and create supportive environments for students who are living with, affected by, and vulnerable to HIV and AIDS.

Sabrina’s Law — Ministry of Education’s Online Training for Anaphylaxis
Ontario Ministry of Education — Online Anaphylaxis Training Prevention First, http://www.eworkshop.on.ca/edu/anaphylaxis/sc00.cfm?L=1, is a website developed to assist school boards, principals, teachers, staff, and others who play an important role in helping to create safer environments for pupils with life-threatening allergies. The site contains vital information on how to develop strategies for reducing the risk of anaphylaxis and how to respond in the event of an emergency, in compliance with Sabrina’s Law. For more information see the Ministry of Education’s website: http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/healthyschools/anaphylaxis.html

Ministry of Education’s School Food and Beverage Policy
The School Food and Beverage Policy (Policy/Program Memorandum No. 150) required that all food and beverages offered for sale in Ontario’s publicly funded elementary and secondary schools for school purposes had to comply with the requirements set out in the policy, including the nutrition standards, by September 1, 2011. The nutrition standards apply to all food and beverages sold in all venues (e.g., cafeterias, vending machines, tuck shops/canteens), through all programs (e.g., catered lunch programs), and at all events (e.g., bake sales, sports events). For more information, visit the Ministry of Education’s website: http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/healthyschools/policy.html

Safe Schools Strategy: The Keeping Our Kids Safe at School Act (Bill 212)
For as long as public educational institutions have existed, bullying has been a disciplinary issue for both teachers and administrators. However, new legislation, added to Ontario’s Safe School Act, Bill 212, now recognizes bullying as offences for which a student can be suspended or expelled from school. The Keeping Our Kids Safe at School Act, effective February 1, 2010, requires all school staff to report incidents of bullying that happen in the school that can lead to suspension or expulsion. The Bill further extends the right for administrators to discipline students for actions that take place off school property and during activities not associated with the school but which affect school climate. This legislation further requires all school staff working directly with students to respond to incidents that negatively affect the school climate. See: http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/safeschools/reportingResponding.html and http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/safeschools/act.html

Safe Schools Registry
A registry of resources for safe and inclusive schools has been established on the Ministry of Education’s website, to provide one-stop access to a wide range of products and resources that can be used to prevent and address bullying, gender-based violence, homophobia, and sexual harassment as well as to target systemic barriers and all forms of discrimination named as prohibited grounds under the Ontario Human Rights Code. The registry is continually updated and can be found at: http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/safeschools/bullyprevention.html

Additional Sexual Health Supports
The following are a collection of websites that might support teachers in deepening their content knowledge related to Human Development and Sexual Health. Ophea does not endorse or support the following resources:
• Caring for Kids — information for parents/guardians from Canada’s paediatricians: http://www.caringforkids.cps.ca
• CATIE (information about HIV and hepatitis C): http://www.catie.ca/en/home
• Institute for Catholic Education: http://iceont.ca
• Planned Parenthood: http://www.ppt.on.ca
• Sexualityandu: http://www.sexualityandu.ca
• The Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario: http://acbo.on.ca