

## **Key messages re: health and physical education curriculum announcement**

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### ***Overall key messages:***

- Public Health supports and applauds the Ministry for the update to the curriculum
- Public Health was pleased to have a role in identifying key areas where the curriculum could enhance the knowledge and develop the skills of children and youth, whereby better preparing them for informed decision making
- Public Health will work with each of our school boards to support the implementation of this curriculum in a manner that is sensitive and respectful to their teachings and student populations

### ***Be prepared for questions relating to specific curriculum:***

- Children are being exposed to these issues at a young age through various mediums (TV, website, social media). As public health practitioners we have a responsibility to ensure kids are given the right tools at the right age in order to respect each other for their differences, build healthy relationships and be safe physically and emotionally.
- Research supports that the earlier children learn about sexual health, the less likely they are have risky sexual health behaviour and make healthy decisions

Messages to consider in your responses as adapted from the Ministry of Education's key message document:

- The foundation of the curriculum supports the understanding of and development of healthy relationships
- The curriculum reflects students in the classroom today, including students of all gender identities and sexual orientations
- Schools will implement the new curriculum in a manner by which students are valued and included, and the diversity of life experiences that students bring to the classroom.

***If asked about opinion and or religious ideology, refer to the appropriate board, but general statement is:***

- We respect the teachings of all our boards in Niagara and will work with them to operationalize in a manner that is respectful to their student populations

***If asked about statistics relating to sexual health:***

- Reinforce this curriculum supports healthy relationships and healthy decision making. It's not just about one issue like teen pregnancy, STIs, and so on. It's really about looking at health as holistic.

***If pushed, you can refer media to:***

- Health Story of Niagara that has some information relating to sexual health
- [www.niagararegion.ca/health](http://www.niagararegion.ca/health) search Health Story of Niagara