



WESTWOOD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Honoring Tradition, Inspiring Excellence, Shaping the Future

Caitlin Ahern
Assistant Superintendent of Schools

781-326-7500 x.1348
cahern@westwood.k12.ma.us

Dear Parents and Guardians,

In accordance with MGL Chapter 71, Section 32A, school districts in the Commonwealth must adopt a policy that notifies parents of the maintenance or implementation of a curriculum “which primarily involves human sexual education or human sexuality” and also gives parents the opportunity to exempt their children from the curriculum without penalty. The specific WPS policy developed in response to the state law is policy IHAMA-R: Parental Notification Relative to Sex Education. I am writing to notify you of the classes and curriculum we offer in Westwood Public Schools that substantially involve human sexual education or human sexuality.

While the Westwood Public Schools does not currently have a dedicated sexual education course or curriculum, the following courses and programs include units or lessons that meet the criteria of “primarily” involving human sexuality or sex education:

Elementary

Grade 3 - Body Safety Theater Program (*a partnership program with Westwood Youth and Family Services designed to help students establish safe boundaries*)
Grade 5 - “Our Changing Bodies” (Puberty) Program

Middle School

[Grade 6 Health](#) - “Changes that Occur During Puberty” Unit

High School

[Grade 9 Biology](#) - “Human Reproduction and Development” Unit

[Anatomy & Physiology](#) - “Reproductive Systems” Unit

[Wellness I](#) - “Reproductive Education” Unit

[Wellness II](#) - “Healthy Relationships” and “Sexuality” Units

If you have questions or concerns related to any of the information linked above, or are considering opting your child out of the lesson(s), we encourage you to reach out to the curriculum leaders listed below for more information about how these topics are addressed in the classroom.

Ariana Tornatore

Director of Wellness

Health and Wellness Units/Lessons

atornatore@westwood.k12.ma.us

(781) 326-7500 x. 3244

Andrew Miller

WHS Science Dept. Head

Science Units/Lessons

anmiller@westwood.k12.ma.us

(781) 326-7500 x. 3218

More information about the Body Safety Theater program, including another opportunity for parents to opt out, is sent home prior to the program.

It is important to acknowledge that there are other instances when the topic of human sexuality can come up despite not being the focus of our curriculum. For example:

Our elementary teachers read books that acknowledge different types of family structures with the goal of honoring the diversity among their current students' families, promoting kindness and preventing bias-based bullying.

Middle school students may examine and discuss Massachusetts and supreme court cases related to same sex marriage, abortion or transgender rights as part of their 8th grade civics course.

High school students might read books, poems or plays assigned in their English classes in which characters are sexually active (e.g., *1984*, *The Great Gatsby*), or there are instances of sexual violence (e.g., *To Kill a Mockingbird*).

The Westwood Public Schools does not consider these lessons or units to be substantially or primarily focused on human sexuality or human sexual education, and in our view, lessons and units like these are not the intended province of MGL chapter 71, section 32A.

Our educators are highly skilled and very thoughtful when it comes to considering students' development progress. When questions or ideas related to human sexuality come up in classes where these topics are not the intended learning focus, we trust our staff to respond in a way that is supportive, kind and factual.

If you wish to exempt your child from participating in the classes or programs that substantially involve human sexuality or sexual education, please complete the attached form indicating the specific unit, lesson or program that you would like to exempt your child from, and return it to your child(ren)'s school principal. Exempted students will be provided with a supervised space in order to complete alternate assignments on different topics.

If we do not receive a form from you, we will assume that you do not wish to opt your child out of whichever programs or units listed above your child is scheduled for this school year. Exemption requests must be made on an annual basis.

Sincerely,



Caitlin Ahern
Assistant Superintendent



WESTWOOD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Honoring Tradition, Inspiring Excellence, Shaping the Future

MGL 71, 32A Exemption Form

Child's First and Last Name: _____

School: _____ Grade: _____

In accordance with MGL 71, 32A I wish to exempt my child named above from participating in the following programs or curriculum this school year:

Please list specific unit/lesson/program(s): _____

I understand that my child will be given an alternate assignment on a different topic and will not be penalized in any way for not participating in the programs/curriculum units listed above.

Parent/Caregiver Signature: _____

Parent/Caregiver Name (print): _____

Date: _____