

# Middle School

The *Health Framework for California Public Schools* recognizes the differences between health education for elementary school students and for middle school students:

Students in grades six through nine are becoming more independent of their parents and increasingly more subject to peer approval than are younger children. They are concerned, at times preoccupied, with changes in their bodies and they often begin to focus on themselves and to be critical of themselves and others. Able to understand that certain behaviors have undesirable consequences, they may have difficulty in accepting that such consequences could happen to them. An awareness of immediate consequences (for example, bad breath as a result of smoking) rather than long-term consequences is more likely to motivate students. The curriculum for this grade span focuses in part on the personal health habits appropriate to the changing needs of adolescents. But students should also continue to explore and practice the skills necessary for developing lifelong positive health habits. Although prevention remains the mainstay of the curriculum at this level, additional elements are the early identification of health problems and appropriate intervention. Student should always be encouraged to discuss personal and health problems with their parents or guardians. Information about local resources for health-related support and assistance should also be provided as part of the curriculum. (Page 92)

A health education program for students in grades six through nine involves students, school staff, families, and the community. These groups work together to promote good health, to prevent health problems when possible, and to address them in a systematic way when they do occur. All students are engaged in activities that foster the development of each individual's optimal physical, mental, and emotional well-being, leading to healthy choices and lifelong good health. The health education standards address the four unifying ideas for health literacy found in the *Health Framework for California Public Schools*:

- Acceptance of personal responsibility for lifelong health;
- Respect for and promotion of the health of others;
- An understanding of the process of growth and development, and
- Informed use of health-related information, products, and services.

Curriculum is structured to incorporate these unifying ideas and is implemented through a meaningful, student-centered approach, providing opportunities for participation, recognition, and successful achievement.

## Acceptance of Personal Responsibility for Lifelong Health

### Standard 1

**The student understands and demonstrates ways in which his or her health and well-being can be enhanced and maintained.**

Students in middle school who meet this standard will be able to:

- Analyze the immediate and long-term effects of personal health habits on body systems.
- Explore the wide variety of healthful food choices available in all cultures.
- Analyze the ways in which physical activity contributes to their physical, mental, emotional, and social health.
- Set personal goals for developing and maintaining a healthy lifestyle.
- Explain emotional development during adolescence.

The following tasks and assignments might be used to determine whether the student is meeting the standard:

- Students will select and use a health appraisal survey to interview an adult, analyzing his or her responses for potential risk behaviors or health issues.
- Students will research a variety of cultures and design a multicultural Food Guide Pyramid.
- Students will develop and implement a personal fitness plan for one year.

**Standard 2      The student understands and demonstrates behaviors that prevent disease and speed recovery from illness.**

Students in middle school who meet this standard will be able to:

- Describe current major chronic and communicable diseases prevalent at different stages of life.
- Explore how good health behaviors, such as aerobic exercise and proper nutrition, influence disease.
- Understand the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), including HIV.
- Participate in regular health screenings, including scoliosis, vision, and hearing.

The following tasks and assignments might be used to determine whether the student is meeting the standard:

- Students will identify situations or behaviors that may lead to STDs and HIV.
- Students will brainstorm and chart facts and myths of HIV transmission.
- Students will describe behaviors that affect risk of chronic disease, including heart disease, cancer, and osteoporosis.
- Students will research historically important infectious diseases and discuss how prevention and treatment would occur today.

**Standard 3      The student will understand and demonstrate knowledge of behaviors that reduce the risk of becoming involved in potentially dangerous situations and know how to react to situations in ways that help to protect his or her health.**

Students in middle school who meet this standard will be able to:

- Recognize the role that drugs and alcohol play in contributing to high-risk situations.
- Analyze emergencies and respond appropriately.
- Analyze appropriate strategies to avoid, resolve, and cope with conflicts.
- Identify behaviors that decrease the risk of becoming involved in potentially dangerous situations.
- Explain the need for using protective equipment in sports and physical activity or practicing behaviors that protect the body.

- Demonstrate proficiency in basic first aid, abdominal thrust maneuver, and cardiopulmonary resuscitation.
- Recognize and avoid situations that can increase risk of abuse.

The following tasks and assignments might be used to determine whether the student is meeting the standard:

- Students will role-play aggressive, passive, and assertive responses to situations.
- Students will select examples from media (television and print) of appropriate and inappropriate responses to potentially dangerous situations.
- Students will role-play conflict situations to demonstrate resisting negative peer pressure and using conflict resolution skills.
- Students will create a “flowchart” of possible reactions to scenarios demonstrating degrees of risk.
- Students will create a plan to escape dangerous situations, and identify safe havens and safe persons.

## Respect for and Promotion of the Health of Others

### Standard 4

**The student will understand and demonstrate how to play a positive, active role in promoting the health of his or her family.**

Students in middle school who meet this standard will be able to:

- Understand the changing roles of family responsibilities.
- Recognize the skills needed for good communication between adolescents and parents.
- Understand his or her role in supporting positive health practices of younger family members.
- Identify effective strategies to cope with change in the family.
- Understand the responsibilities of parenting, including legal, financial, social, and moral.
- Identify the difficulties and challenges of being a teenage parent.
- Recognize the diversity of family structures.

The following tasks and assignments might be used to determine whether the student is meeting the standard:

- Students will create hypothetical family (group activity) situations with rules and a budget (income and expenses).

- Students will participate in presentations by teen parents by asking questions and writing a reflection paper.
- Students will record and analyze time spent with younger children as a positive role model or in a caretaking role.
- Students will role-play a scenario in which conflicts between parent/caregiver and adolescents are depicted, including resolution strategies.

#### Standard 5

**The student will understand and demonstrate how to promote positive health practices within the school and community, including how to cultivate positive relationships with peers.**

Students in middle school who meet this standard will be able to:

- Interact effectively with people, including both males and females and members of different ethnic and cultural groups.
- Recognize his or her role in promoting positive health behaviors among peers.
- Know appropriate ways to make new friends.
- Know how to help friends recognize when they should seek help from a trusted adult.
- Understand and follow school rules related to health.
- Join in community efforts to address local health and environmental issues.
- Identify agencies that provide protection against fraudulent health products, services, and misinformation.
- Understand how HIV can spread throughout a community.

The following tasks and assignments might be used to determine whether the student is meeting the standard:

- Students will work in groups to design their ideal school, including activity areas and environment.
- Students will investigate and report on how clubs, sports, and organizations in their school and community provide opportunities to meet people and make new friends.
- Students will commit to a volunteer or service learning project in the school community and report on the experience to the class.
- Students will identify the elements of an ideal friendship.
- Students will role-play strategies to convince friends in high-risk situations to seek adult help.
- After participating in a mock HIV transmission activity, students will describe how quickly and extensively HIV can spread.

## An Understanding of the Process of Growth and Development

### Key Education Code Sections Regarding Health Education Instruction

The *Education Code* sections described briefly below highlight parent notification requirements associated with the teaching of sexuality, growth and development, and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). The full text of all except Section 60614 can be found in the *Health Framework for California Public Schools* (1994).

- §51201.5     *Requires* that students in grades seven through twelve receive HIV/AIDS prevention education (once in junior high or middle school and once in high school), including current information and recommendations. (See *Education Code* sections 51240, 51550, 51553, and 51820 for parent notification requirements.)
- §51240     *Ensures* the right of parents and guardians to exclude their children from health, family life, and sex education because of religious beliefs.
- §51262     *Encourages* instruction about the effects of using anabolic steroids (including reproductive consequences) in grades seven through twelve.
- §51550     *Requires* that:
- Parents must be notified in writing (some districts may choose to expand the notification requirement to require positive permission) of any class in which human reproduction or family life is described.
  - Instructional materials must be available for inspection.
  - Parents and guardians must be given the opportunity to exclude their child from this education.
- §51553     *Establishes* criteria for the course content of sex education to include:
- Abstinence as the only 100 percent protection against STDs, such as human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), and unintended pregnancy
  - Failure rates of condoms and other methods of contraception
  - Emotional consequences of unintended pregnancies and adolescent sexual activity
- Instructional materials and information must be age appropriate.
- §51820     *Requires* a 15-day parent notification period prior to the beginning of venereal disease instruction. This code section also requires availability of instructional materials for review and ensures the right of parents and guardians to exclude their child from such instruction.

- §60614 *Establishes that no test given as part of the statewide pupil assessment program will contain any questions or items that solicit or invite disclosure of a pupil's, or his or her parents' or guardians', personal beliefs or practices in sex, family life, morality, or religion nor will it contain any questions designed to evaluate personal behavioral characteristics.*
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**Standard 6****The student will understand the variety of physical, mental, emotional, and social changes that occur throughout life.**

Students in middle school who meet this standard will be able to:

- Identify the changes associated with puberty.
- Understand the function of the male and female reproductive systems.
- Understand and describe how choices made during pregnancy directly affect the health of the mother and the fetus.
- Identify strategies for coping with physical changes and emotional changes, including isolation and depression.

The following tasks and assignments might be used to determine whether the student is meeting the standard:

- Students will draw a pictorial time line or select pictures from magazines that depict normal physical changes during growth and development.
- Students will draw a traditional time line with significant “rites of passage” and projected changes in their lives.
- Students will create a chart to compare changes in males and females that occur during puberty.
- Students will research and write about the importance of appropriate (amount and pattern) weight gain during pregnancy.

**Standard 7****The student will understand individual differences in growth and development.**

Students in middle school who meet this standard will be able to:

- Understand that each individual changes at his or her own pace.
- Understand the harmful effects of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs, including performance-altering substances, on the body.
- Identify consequences of not having a realistic body image, such as dieting and eating disorders.

The following tasks and assignments might be used to determine whether the student is meeting the standard:

- Students will collect images of “ideal” bodies from the media and will compare those images with class observations of what reality is.
- After hearing speakers on eating disorders and the negative consequences of inappropriate dieting and eating disorders, students will write reflective comments and discuss the topic.
- Students will develop and conduct interviews with teens and adults to elicit strategies for coping with physical, mental, emotional, and social changes.
- Students will attend a presentation (or be shown video clips) about individuals negatively affected by steroid use and create posters depicting the hazards of steroid use.

## Standard 8

**The student will understand his or her developing sexuality, the benefits of abstinence from sexual activity, and how to be respectful of the sexuality of others.**

*Although this standard is targeted for grades six through twelve, individual districts may choose to implement this standard earlier in accord with community needs and values.*

Students in middle school who meet this standard will be able to:

- Understand personal responsibility and the consequences of sexual activity.
- Identify appropriate ways to show affection.
- Recognize that abstinence from sexual activity is the healthiest choice for young people.
- Recognize situations that place them at risk of participating in sexual activity.
- Identify methods of contraception.
- Understand how to be respectful of the sexuality of others, including the personal and social characteristics of sexual harassment.

The following tasks and assignments might be used to determine whether the student is meeting the standard:

- Students will demonstrate responsibility and caretaking by participating in a flour sack activity or an egg baby activity.
- Students will participate in a presentation by teen parents and analyze what they have heard.



- Students will role-play simulations to demonstrate responses to and skills to avoid negative social influences and peer pressure situations to become sexually active.
- Students will develop a risk continuum from low to high risk to recognize potential risk situations dealing with sexuality.
- Students will identify and evaluate potential situations involving sexual harassment, recognizing the potentially diverse interpretations of actions.

## **Informed Use of Health-Related Information, Products, and Services**

**Standard 9      The student will know how to identify products, services, and information that may be helpful or harmful to his or her health.**

Students in middle school who meet this standard will be able to:

- Identify a variety of consumer influences and analyze how those influences affect decisions.
- Identify reliable sources of nutrition information.
- Identify a variety of low-cost foods that provide nutritionally adequate diets.
- Explore a variety of health-related careers.
- Identify health services in the community that seek to prevent and treat disease.
- Distinguish health concerns that they can manage from those that require professional care.

The following tasks and assignments might be used to determine whether the student is meeting the standard:

- Using computerized nutrient analysis program and actual grocery store prices, student groups will identify the lowest cost one-day menu with the greatest nutritional benefit.
- Students will find and compare two or more advertisements for the same health-related product, select one, and defend their decisions verbally or by cartoon depiction.
- Students will develop a list of consumer “bill of rights,” investigate (through the Internet) consumer advocate groups, and compare the class-generated list with existing lists.