**Topic: Healthy Sexuality/Growth and Development**

Dear School Administrator, please find below some basic messaging you are invited to use to promote the abovementioned topic among students, parents, and the general school community. Included are:

* Morning announcement scripts
* Newsletter inserts
* Social media messages

Please choose messaging as appropriate for your school community. You can find images and graphics to support this messaging at [hpePublicHealth.ca/newsletters-and-social-media.](https://hpepublichealth.ca/newsletters-and-social-media/)

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to your Healthy Schools contact at HPEPH.

-HPEPH Healthy Schools Team

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| Newsletter Inserts | Audience |
| Where is your child learning about sexual health? While many kids look to their friends for answers to questions they are embarrassed about, this can lead to wrong or confusing information. To help ensure your child gets sexual health information from a reliable source, do your best to be available to give them the facts. When parents, mentors and caregivers talk openly and honestly about sexuality, children and teenagers will have the comfort, knowledge and support they need to achieve healthy sexuality throughout their lives. Not sure where to start? To find age appropriate information, visit [teachingsexualhealth.ca](http://www.teachingsexualhealth.ca) | Elementary Students |
| “Can we talk?” Talking to your kids can help improve your relationship with one another. Having a good relationship with a trusted adult can helps kids make healthy choices. Not sure where to start? Here are some quick tips and ideas that can get the conversation started and help improve communication: * Ask questions to stay updated on what is happening in your child’s life. Every day conversations can tell you a lot about how your child is doing.
* Be a good listener. Look at your child when talking to them and ask open ended questions. Be relaxed, present and open with your child.
* Respect that there will be differences in opinions. Use this as a way to talk to your child about your values and beliefs while respecting that they may have a different opinion.
* Find comfortable places and times to talk with your child. This could include talking in the car or going on a walk with your child.
* Stay informed about what is happening in your child’s age group and talk about the information they are receiving from social media, friends or television.
* Remember, your child may not come to you with their questions, especially if they are embarrassed or scared. To keep the discussion going, you may need to go to them.
* It is normal not to know all the answers to your child’s questions or to be unsure how to respond. If you feel overwhelmed or uncertain about how to answer a question, let them know you are going to find out more. Follow up with them once you have the answers. Use correct language and words they can understand.

For more information, visit [teachingsexualhealth.ca](http://www.teachingsexualhealth.ca). | Elementary and Secondary Students |
| Healthy Relationships – It’s All About ConnectionYoung people are more likely to succeed when they have close connections with the important adults in their lives. Through these connections, young people discover who they are, what they are capable of and how to make a positive contribution in their community. Consider the following suggestions from your child to help keep your relationship strong: * Show me that I matter to you. Encourage my efforts and believe in me.
* Push me to keep getting better. Expect my best, while helping me learn from mistakes.
* Help me complete tasks and achieve goals. Stand up for me when I need it.
* Treat me with respect and give me a say (choices). Take me seriously and treat me fairly.
* Connect me with people and places that broaden my world. Inspire me about my future.
 | Elementary Students |
| 5 Tips for Talking About Sexual Health with Your Child Talking about sexual health topics like puberty, menstruation and relationships, might not be your favourite thing to do. But these important discussions will help your child to make healthy, informed decisions both now and later on in life. Here are some tips for starting or having conversations about sexual health: 1. Start young! Teach young children the correct terms for their body parts. Talk about puberty before they begin to experience it. The more you talk about it while they’re growing up, the easier it will be to discuss more difficult topics later.
2. Use teachable moments. These moments can happen when you least expect them. You may hear lyrics to a song, be watching TV together, or your child may tell you a story about someone at school. Ask your child’s opinion and use it as an opportunity to talk about sexual health and family values.
3. Answer their questions as best and as honestly as you can. Find out what they already know and keep your response simple and age-appropriate. If your child asks a question and you are unsure how to respond, simply let your child know that you will think about it and get back to them. Don’t put it off – they might think that it’s not okay to talk about it and will look for answers to their questions somewhere else.
4. Make it a regular topic. Think of sexual health education as an ongoing process. Shorter, frequent conversations are better than a big, one-off talks. Remember that healthy development, including sexual development, is a lifelong process.
5. Consider the conversation to be a friendly chat. Do your best to structure the talks as two-way discussions, not lectures. Ask what your child thinks and feels and be willing to listen. Aim to get a lively discussion going.

For more information and ideas, visit [teachingsexualhealth.ca](http://www.teachingsexualhealth.ca). | Elementary and Secondary Parents |
| Sexual Health During the Pandemic: The Importance of your Sexual Health is not in Lockdown. Did you know that sexual rights are an essential part of overall health and safety? And that stands for young people too. You deserve to have your sexual rights, concerns, and questions respected so that you can feel safe and understood. Even though life is different during the pandemic, confidential, respectful and youth-friendly supports and resources remain available to help you. Public Health Nurses:If you would like to have a confidential conversation with a Public Health Nurse call 613-966-5500 x 418 or 1-800-267-2803 x 418 (Monday to Friday, 8:30am – 4:30pm).Telephone/chat support:For answers to your sexual health questions, information and assistance, chat with a sexual health expert or to speak to a counsellor, visit sexualhealthontario.ca or Sexual Health Ontario at: 1-800-668-2437If you feel you are in a state of crisis, call the 24/7 Mental Health Helpline at 1-866-531-2600.Youth Friendly Care – it’s Your Right! For additional information, visit [hpePublicHealth.ca](file:///%5C%5CNEW-SALUS%5CSHRVOL%5CSHARE%5CEveryone%5CSchool%20Health%5CSchool%20Communications%20%26%20Materials%5CSchool%20Newsletters%5ChpePublicHealth.ca%5Cyouth-friendly-care).  | Secondary Students |

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| Social Media Messaging – Elementary | Audience |
| Teaching your child about healthy sexuality does not begin or end with ‘the talk’. Find teachable moments throughout their lives to address the topic of sexual health. These moments could be initiated by current or life events, how relationships are shown in TV or in the movies, internet safety, or even a friend or relative who is pregnant. To learn more visit [teachingsexualhealth.ca](http://www.teachingsexualhealth.ca) . | Elementary Parents |
| Is there a tween in your life? Personal hygiene becomes really important during and after puberty. To teach your child about healthy sexuality, talk together about their daily self care and have fun making a personal hygiene kit. For more info, visit [teachingsexualhealth.ca](http://www.teachingsexualhealth.ca). | Elementary Parents |
| You and your child may not always agree. But your child sees you as an important source of information and someone they can trust. You can be their primary source of information about health and sexuality, since you have a trusting relationship with each other. Be open to questions and make time to chat with your child. One way you can prepare yourself for talking to your child about sexual health is by reading about topics such as puberty, consent, and sexual and gender diversity. To learn more, visit [caringforkids.cps.ca](https://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/). | Elementary Parents |
| You are the most important teacher in your child’s life. Talking to your child about sexual health and sexuality is an important part of your role as a parent. Talking to your child about sexual health does not just mean talking about sex. Sexual health includes things like healthy relationships, sexual​ity, consent and personal hygiene. It’s never too early or too late to talk to your child about sexual health. Not sure where to start? Visit [caringforkids.cps.ca](https://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/). | Elementary Parents |

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| Social Media Messaging – Secondary | Audience |
| As a parent, you want your child to make decisions that are good for their health and wellbeing. An important step to help them do this is talking to them about sexual health. This doesn’t just mean talking about sex. Sexual health includes things like healthy relationships, sexual​ity, consent and personal hygiene. It’s never too early or too late to talk to your child about sexual health. Not sure where to start? Visit [teachingsexualhealth.ca/parents](https://teachingsexualhealth.ca/parents/) for more information. | Secondary Parents |
| Teaching your teen about healthy sexuality does not begin or end with ‘the talk’. Find teachable moments throughout their lives to address the topic of sexual health. These moments could be initiated by current or life events, how relationships are shown in TV or in the movies, internet safety, or even a friend or relative who is pregnant. To learn more visit [teachingsexualhealth.ca](http://www.teachingsexualhealth.ca)  | Secondary Parents |
| During your child’s teen years, they will probably look for answers to their questions about sexual health from their friends and the internet. But remember, they still care about what you say and do, even though at times it may not seem that way. Keeping open communication with your teen will let them know that they can come to you whenever they have questions. Talking about sexual health with your teen will help them make healthy, informed decisions now and later on in life. For more info - [teachingsexualhealth.ca/parents/](https://teachingsexualhealth.ca/parents/)  | Secondary Parents |
| Every young person should feel empowered, comfortable and supported when they visit a healthcare provider. This includes when you are looking for information or help related to birth control, STIs, or pregnancy. Youth-friendly care: it’s your right! To find out how you can access youth friendly care in your region, visit [hpePublicHealth.ca/youth-friendly-care](https://hpepublichealth.ca/youth-friendly-care/). | Secondary Students |
| Worried about STIs or pregnancy? Have other sexual health concerns? Don’t worry alone. Caring professionals are available to provide youth friendly care that recognizes your unique needs and concerns. For more information, visit [hpePublicHealth.ca/youth-friendly-care](https://hpepublichealth.ca/youth-friendly-care/).  | Secondary Students |
| Did you know that sexual rights are an essential part of overall health and safety? And that means for young people too. You deserve to have your sexual rights, concerns, and questions respected so you can feel safe and understood. For info about youth friendly sexual health supports visit [hpePublicHealth.ca/youth-friendly-care](https://hpepublichealth.ca/youth-friendly-care/). | Secondary Students |