



EAST NORTHPORT MIDDLE SCHOOL
1075 Fifth Avenue • East Northport, NY 11731
PHONE: (631) 262-6770 **FAX:** (631) 262-6773

Robert Banzer, *Superintendent of Schools*
Pasquale DeStefano, *Principal*
Angelo Cocchiola, *Assistant Principal*

August 2016

Dear Parents/Guardians,

There is probably no issue more sensitive to parents than the education provided to their children about human growth and development. In the Northport-East Northport School District, we have worked closely with our community to develop a curriculum that is open and honest, but also one that is sensitive to the ages of the children being educated. Nevertheless, we recognize that children mature at different rates, and we also recognize that some families may have religious and/ or philosophical concerns about this instruction. Therefore, we have a practice of permitting parents to have their children excused from HIV/AIDS portions of the health curriculum.

We are required by law to teach HIV and AIDS education. The exact content of the instruction is determined by a locally established committee of staff, parents, community members, and representative clergy. This committee met in the spring of 2005, and recommended some revisions to our curriculum, revisions that were approved by the Board of Education. An overview of the revised curriculum is presented below.

Under the law, parents may request that their children be excused only from that portion of the HIV/AIDS curriculum that deals with prevention methods. The law further requires that parents who have their children excused assure the school that they will present the information at home. In an effort to go “one step further”, our AIDS Advisory Council has decided that our parents should be given an opt-out curriculum so that this information can be taught at home. (Parents should be alerted to the fact that, in grades 6-12, if the opt-out is selected, it is still possible for the child to hear the word, “condom”, in other HIV/AIDS lessons, or in response to questions raised by other children.)

If you wish to have your child excused from some or all of the HIV/AIDS prevention lessons, please return the attached “Opt-Out” form by Friday, September 23, 2016. Your child’s health teacher will be notified and will excuse your child from class during those times that the instruction is being presented.

We believe that all of the topics, from smoking to drug/ alcohol abuse prevention to HIV/AIDS instruction, are delivered in a manner that is sensitive to the children, and we believe this information is very important for the children to have. Nevertheless, we also recognize that individual families, when it comes to information about HIV/AIDS, may not agree with this perspective. The intent of the “opt-out” procedures is to respect their point of view.

If you have any questions about this, please feel free to call my office at 262-6770.

Sincerely,

Pasquale DeStefano
Principal

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HIV/AIDS is a pandemic health problem that requires continued educational intervention providing accurate information encouraging healthy behaviors and decisions. The following curriculum concepts have been reviewed by the Advisory Council for AIDS Awareness and deemed age appropriate.

Grade

- K-2 When discussing communicable diseases HIV/AIDS will be identified as one of the many diseases that are communicable.
- Gr. 3 Students will understand that AIDS is a communicable disease which breaks down a person's disease fighting ability. Instruction will focus on allaying fears and discussing ways that one cannot catch the virus.
- Gr. 4 Students will recognize that AIDS is a communicable disease and may be spread from person to person via blood to blood contact, intravenous drug use and mother to baby. Additionally, students will recognize ways they can prevent the spread of infections, specific to the methods of transmission identified.
- Gr. 5 Students will demonstrate knowledge of how AIDS is and is not transmitted via intravenous drug use, mother to baby, blood to blood contact and sexual activity. Students will also be able to identify the difference between being HIV positive and having AIDS. Students will also understand the breakdown of the immune system specific to HIV/AIDS.
- Gr. 6 Students will recognize that AIDS is a communicable disease and should be aware of high risk activities that promote the transmission of HIV. Also, students will recognize and discuss the ways to eliminate or reduce the risk of acquiring HIV/AIDS via abstinence, and universal precautions. (There is no teacher demonstration of proper condom use in grade six.)
- Gr. 7 Students will be able to identify communicable diseases including HIV/AIDS as well as understand the terms "HIV", "AIDS", and "STD's". Students will have an understanding of transmission such as body fluids and high risk behaviors. A review of the decision-making process is done and methods of prevention are identified, including abstinence, safer sex through condoms, and elimination of risk behaviors. (There is no teacher demonstration of proper condom use in grade seven.)
- Gr. 8 Students will be able to understand the nature of sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS. Students will also discuss the sign and symptoms of HIV/AIDS, its impact on the immune system and risk behaviors. Prevention of HIV/AIDS will be discussed including abstinence and monogamous relationships. Various types of condoms will be compared regarding their effectiveness for HIV/AIDS prevention. A teacher demonstration of proper condom use will occur. Students will also be aware of the health care needs and civil rights of AIDS victims.

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- Gr. 9-10 Students will understand how STD's/AIDS are contracted, be able to discuss the decision-making process as applied to sexual behavior and the value of delaying sexual activity. Identifying methods of preventing STD's and HIV will be discussed including monogamy and abstinence.
- Gr. 11-12 Students will become aware of STD's including HIV/AIDS, as well as understanding the syndrome, the history, cause, incubation, transmission, risk behaviors, symptoms, diagnosis and treatment. Students will also be able to identify abstinence as a healthful lifestyle choice in eliminating the risk of HIV infection. Other methods of reducing the risk will be discussed, including monogamy and elimination of risk behaviors. Effective condom use will be discussed and the teacher will conduct a demonstration of condoms and their proper use.

“OPT-OUT” FORM MUST BE RETURNED BY SEPTEMBER 23, 2016

TO: Pasquale DeStefano, Principal
2016-2017 School Year
East Northport Middle School

I wish to exclude my son(s)/daughter(s) from AIDS prevention instruction. I understand that by excluding my son(s)/daughter(s) I have the responsibility of providing this instruction at home.

Student's name _____ Grade _____

Student's name _____ Grade _____

Student's name _____ Grade _____

Parent's name _____

Print

Signature of Parent

Date