

## **Sexual Health Education and Services Policy**

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Recognize that the health status of students is interrelated to academic achievement • Provide direction and promote consistency for staff who teach and/or support students in regards to their sexual health
- Ensure accountability and institutionalization of sexual health education and ongoing access to services consistent with best practice and state law

### **Sexual Health Curriculum**

BPS will deliver a sexual health curriculum that is planned, age-appropriate, developmentally appropriate, and part of a larger coordinated school health initiative as outlined in the Health and Wellness Policy. It will be inclusive of physical, mental, emotional and social dimensions of human sexuality. It will align with national and state sexuality education standards. It will be developed by educators and reviewed with teachers, students, school nurses, administrators, parents and community members through the Health and Wellness Advisory Committee. The curriculum will be medically-accurate, evidence-based or evidence-informed, and bias-free.

The Sexual Health Curriculum will be supported by appropriate professional development. The professional development will focus on providing the sexual health curriculum for elementary students, middle and high school students, and students with special needs.

### **Parent involvement and choice**

Parents may choose to opt out of any portion of the sexual health curriculum on a topical basis. The protocol for opting out will be available on the school website and the health curriculum information will be available for review. Parents who opt their students out of aspects of sexual health will need to provide sexual health education at home as the health curriculum is required by RIDE.

Additionally, efforts to involve parents in the sexual health curriculum will be supported by BPS. Some options include:

- assigning homework to students as part of their sexual health unit that encourages communication about sexual health topics. Research has shown that parent-child homework assignments connected to curricula can positively impact students' sexual behaviors.
- distributing resource materials to parents at the start of sexual health unit and sharing ideas about how to begin conversations with their children about sexuality.
- providing a parent-child communication program, either virtual or in person, to

complement the curriculum.

### **Providing guidance and support to older students**

School nurses, guidance counselors, mental health care providers, as well as educators and administrators, may all need to provide guidance and support to older students regarding their sexual health. This guidance will be provided based on state law as provided to the district by RIDOH.

### **References:**

Rhode Island's Confidentiality of Health Care Communications and Information Act (R.I. Gen. Laws § 5-37.3-12, § 5-37.3-12)

Mandatory Reporting RI Gen. Laws §§ 40-11-3; 40-11-6

Consent to testing and treatment — Reportable — Communicable diseases. [R.I. Gen. Laws § 23-8-1.1]

<http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/Statutes/TITLE23/23-8/23-8-1.1.HTM>

Consent to medical and surgical care [R.I. Gen. Laws § 23-8-1.1]

<http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/Statutes/TITLE23/23-8/23-8-1.1.HTM>

Informed consent for abortion: Minors — Parental consent — Judicial proceedings. [R.I. Gen. Laws § 23-4.7-6]

<http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/Statutes/TITLE23/23-4.7/23-4.7-6.HTM>

Title X: [https://opa.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/2020-07/title-x-statute-attachment-a\\_0.pdf](https://opa.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/2020-07/title-x-statute-attachment-a_0.pdf)

First Read **7/25/2023**

Amended 8.31.2023

### **PROTOCOL:**

The protocol for addressing the Sexual Health needs of older students will be created according to the guidelines provided by RIDOH that are based on RIGL and Title X as outlined in the references.

Protocol for Opting Out – to be developed