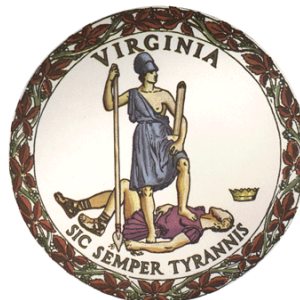


# **Health Education Standards of Learning**

**for**

## **Virginia Public Schools**



# **Health Education Standards of Learning for Virginia Public Schools**

**Adopted January 2020 by the  
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## **Preface**

The 2020 Health Education Standards of Learning for Virginia Public Schools utilize the best practices from the 2015 Standards of Learning and elevate them to meet the health challenges facing today’s youth. Students will learn essential health concepts, develop understanding of health information, and actively advocate for their own health, as well as the health of their peers, families, and communities.

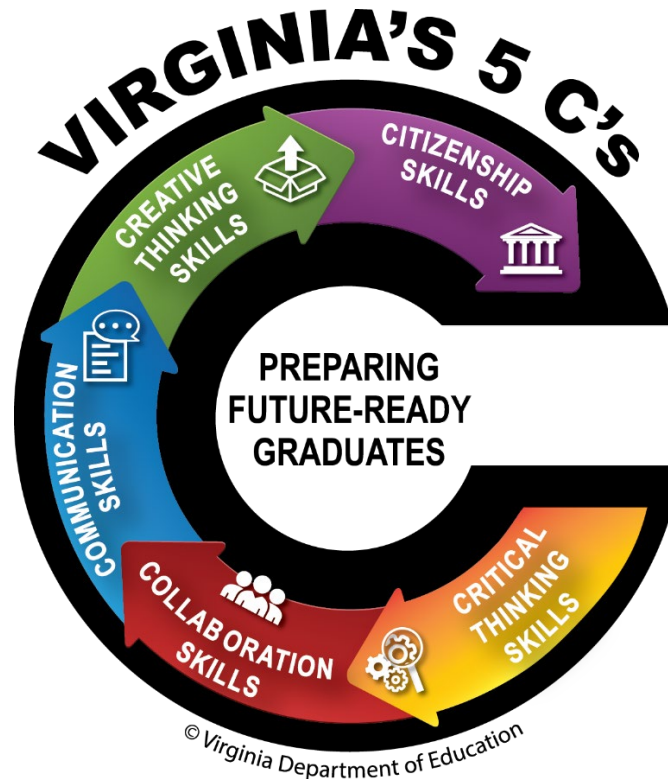
The 2020 Standards of Learning reflect age-appropriate knowledge and abilities, increasing in depth and complexity as students mature. The standards are designed to provide a core body of knowledge (i.e., Body Systems, Nutrition, Physical Health, Disease Prevention/Health Promotion, Substance Abuse Prevention, Safety/Injury Prevention, Mental Wellness/Social and Emotional Competence, Violence Prevention, Community/Environmental Health), while also allowing flexibility for students to develop personal values and beliefs and shared positive group norms and for individual school communities to address local health issues and emerging health concerns.

The standards follow the research-based recommendations of mental, social, emotional and behavioral health, substance abuse prevention, nutrition, and public health subject matter experts and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for health education curricula by teaching functional health information; shaping personal values and beliefs that support healthy behaviors; shaping group norms that value a healthy lifestyle; and developing the essential health skills necessary to adopt, practice, and maintain health-enhancing behaviors. The standards are also designed to support the social and emotional development of students (<https://casel.org/core-competencies/>), enhancing students’ capacity to integrate skills, attitudes, and behaviors to deal effectively and ethically with daily tasks and challenges, understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.

The standards articulate learning goals in the terms of what students should know, understand, and do. Standard 1, Essential Health Concepts, provides foundational health knowledge—what students should know. Standard 2, Healthy Decisions, broadens student understanding of health content at the same time it develops skills to allow students to transfer information in a variety of contexts to make healthy and safe life choices—what students should understand. Standard 3, Advocacy and Health Promotion, provides relevance for student learning and opportunities for students to demonstrate or design realistic outcomes for application of health information—what students should be able to do to advocate for their health and the health of others. The standards enable students to immerse themselves in a health topic from content to understanding to application and advocacy. As a result, Virginia students will be better prepared to make healthy decisions for themselves and influence others to do the same.

### Profile of a Virginia Graduate

The 2020 Health Standards of Learning support the Profile of a Virginia Graduate through the development and use of communication, collaboration, creativity, critical thinking and civic responsibility skills necessary to adopt and maintain health-enhancing behaviors, manage feelings, build healthy relationships, successfully navigate social environments, make safe life choices and advocate for personal health and the health of others.

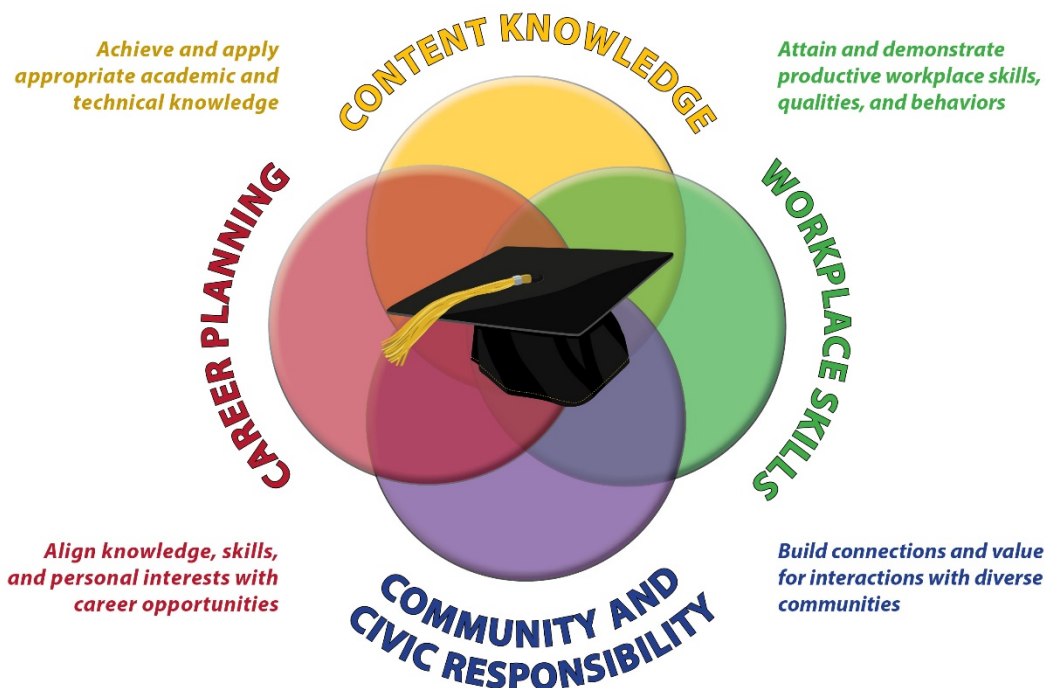


Through Health Education, students will

- ✓ *Acquire, interpret, and understand health concepts; and develop and apply a range of health skills needed to make appropriate health decisions (Content Knowledge)*
- ✓ *Acquire and practice effective communication, relationship-, cooperation-, self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, responsible decision-making, and stress-management skills (Workplace Skills)*
- ✓ *Engage in home, school, and community projects to enhance physical, mental, social, emotional, and environmental health (Community Engagement and Civic Responsibility)*
- ✓ *Explore a variety of health-related career opportunities in health promotion, disease, injury, and substance abuse prevention, mental health, nutrition, and community health (Career Exploration)*

## Profile of a Virginia Graduate

In Virginia, the Life Ready Individual Will  
During His or Her K-12 Experience:



### INTRODUCTION

Health education increases health literacy, helps students understand how to achieve and maintain a healthy lifestyle, and fosters the motivation, skills, and self-efficacy necessary to make informed and healthy choices, avoid high-risk behaviors, and build healthy families, relationships, schools, and communities. The *Health Education Standards of Learning for Virginia Public Schools* identify the concepts, processes, and academic, social and emotional skills for a continuum of learning experiences for students from kindergarten to grade ten. The standards provide school divisions and teachers with a guide for creating aligned curricula and structured learning experiences in health education that will provide students with the necessary knowledge, processes, and skills to make healthy choices (goal-setting and planning skills, communication and assertive skills, responsible decision making), prevent chronic disease, and avoid health-risk behaviors identified by the national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (e.g., tobacco use, dietary patterns that contribute to disease, sedentary lifestyle, alcohol and other drug use, behaviors that result in intentional and unintentional injuries).

The standards for each grade level are grouped into three content strands—Essential Health Concepts, Healthy Decisions, and Advocacy and Health Promotion—that align with the overarching learning goals of the *Health Education Standards of Learning*. The content strands identify a core set of concepts and skills that facilitate the formation and promotion of healthy behaviors and practices. Indicators that align with the three content strands and address four dimensions of health (i.e., physical, emotional, social, environmental), as well as health careers,

are embedded at each grade level. These indicators identify the minimum standards for a sequential course of study within a comprehensive health education program. The indicators are sequenced to progress in complexity from grade level to grade level across several topic areas (i.e., Body Systems, Nutrition, Physical Health, Disease Prevention/Health Promotion, Substance Abuse Prevention, Safety/Injury Prevention, Mental Wellness/Social and Emotional Skills, Violence Prevention, Community/Environmental Health).

### **Goals and Strands**

The purpose of health education is to develop health-literate students—students who acquire an understanding of health concepts and the skills needed to make healthy decisions to improve, sustain, and promote personal, family, and community health. These skills align with core competencies (i.e., self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship building, responsible decision making) identified in the CASEL framework for social and emotional learning (<https://casel.org/core-competencies/>). As a result of health education instruction, students will be able to:

- Access, evaluate, and synthesize information to protect, enhance, and advocate for their own and others' health, well-being, and safety across their lifespan;
- Critically analyze health information from a variety of sources (e.g., credible scientific and institutional sources, health brochures, media messages, websites) to make appropriate health decisions and access services needed to prevent or treat illness; and
- Develop and use personal, behavioral, social, and cognitive skills and strategies to promote a sense of personal identity and well-being and to build and manage respectful relationships.

The content for the Standards of Learning for health education is organized around the following three essential strands:

1. Demonstrate the knowledge and skills to make healthy decisions that reduce health risks and enhance the health of oneself and others. **(Essential Health Concepts)**

*The intent of this goal is for students to become health-literate, self-directed learners who recognize the relationship between personal behavior and personal health and can skillfully apply health-promotion and disease-prevention strategies as a foundation for leading healthy and productive lives. This includes the development of the capacity to acquire, interpret, and understand health concepts and the development and application of a range of health skills. Instruction will focus on the topics of hygiene, communicable and noncommunicable disease prevention, dental health, nutrition, sleep, mental wellness and social and emotional skills, drug use, physical activity, body systems, safety, intentional and unintentional injury and violence prevention, Internet safety, gangs, bullying, and preventive health care. As a result, students will have a comprehensive understanding of essential health concepts related to health promotion and risk/disease prevention, self-awareness and social awareness, and an enhanced ability to engage in lifelong health behaviors.*

2. Demonstrate the ability to access, evaluate, and use health information, products, and services that influence health and wellness in a positive manner. **(Healthy Decisions)**

*The intent of this goal is for students to demonstrate the ability to identify valid and accurate health information, products, and services. This ability is critical for the prevention, early detection, and treatment of most health problems. Valid health information raises awareness of the long-term consequences of unhealthy decisions and enables students to make decisions that support lifelong health. Students will experience many opportunities across their school years to use information-analysis and responsible decision-making skills as they compare, contrast, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate materials, products, and services related to a variety of health issues. As they become informed consumers, students will become aware of and able to analyze the influence of culture, media, technology, and other factors on health. Upon the completion of the health education program, students will be able to make constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on ethical standards, safety concerns, and social norms, and accept responsibility for personal health practices and engage in healthy decision making.*

3. Demonstrate the use of appropriate health practices and behaviors to promote a safe and healthy community when alone, with family, at school, and in other group settings. **(Advocacy and Health Promotion)**

*The intent of this goal is for students to become responsible, health-literate citizens who demonstrate an understanding of how to create and maintain an environment that serves to protect and promote the health and wellness of individuals, families, and communities. Students will develop awareness of social and media influences that affect their decision making and develop skills to effectively navigate and resist negative influences while building positive, healthy rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups. Students will develop healthy habits for managing emotions including stress, anger, and impulse control, and learn how to effectively advocate for themselves and their communities, which also supports equity. Specifically, upon completing their health education program, students will demonstrate a variety of healthy practices and behaviors and advocate for ways in which peers, families, and community groups can work together to promote safe and healthy communities.*



## Grade One

Students in grade one learn about personal safety and their body's major organs. They begin to understand how behaviors can impact health and wellness now and in the future. Students begin to relate choices with consequences, which relates to responsible decision making and supports social and emotional development. They begin to examine the influence of social media (increasing self-awareness as well as social awareness) on health decisions (responsible decision making) and to identify ways to access reliable information. They exhibit respect for self, others, and the environment, which supports social and emotional development specifically in terms of self-awareness and social awareness.

### Essential Health Concepts

- 1.1 The student will identify the basic components and functions of human body systems and the importance of safe practices, positive interpersonal relationships, and environmental health.

#### Body Systems

- a) Identify major body organs (e.g., heart, brain, lungs, stomach) and location of the organs.

#### Nutrition

- b) Identify why it is important to consume a variety of foods and beverages from the five MyPlate food groups (i.e., fruits, vegetables, grains, protein, dairy).  
c) Explain what physical reactions may occur if someone is having an allergic reaction.

#### Physical Health

- d) Recognize that physical activity is a form of healthy entertainment.  
e) Identify behaviors that promote health and wellness, including personal hygiene, sleep, physical activity, and healthy food choices.

#### Disease Prevention/Health Promotion

- f) Identify adults who keep children healthy (e.g., parents/guardians, teachers, school counselors, nurses, dentists, doctors).

#### Substance Abuse Prevention

- g) Identify that medicines can be both helpful and harmful.

#### Safety/Injury Prevention

- h) Identify safety rules and guidelines for bus and automobile safety, pedestrian safety, playground safety, fire safety, water safety, Internet safety, and safety when biking and using other recreational equipment.  
i) Compare and contrast personal safety behaviors at home, at school, and in the community.  
j) Describe sun safety practices.

#### Mental Wellness/Social and Emotional Skills

- k) Identify comfortable and uncomfortable feelings and when one might experience these feelings.  
l) Describe positive characteristics that are unique to each individual.  
m) Identify effective listening skills.  
n) Identify cooperative and responsible behaviors, such as respect for others, adherence to school rules, acceptance of responsibility, and respect for the property of others.

#### Violence Prevention

- o) Describe feelings that may result from hearing kind and unkind words and when experiencing problems (e.g., someone not sharing).  
p) Describe personal space and boundaries for oneself and others.

Community/Environmental Health

- q) Identify items and materials that can be reduced, recycled, repurposed, or reused.

**Healthy Decisions**

- 1.2 The student will explain that good health is related to healthy decisions.

Body Systems

- a) Describe the importance of having a healthy heart, brain, and lungs.

Nutrition

- b) Identify "sometimes foods" (e.g., candy, cookies, chips, ice cream, soda) and recognize that not all food products advertised or sold are healthy.
- c) Explain how allergens remain on surfaces and why it is important to clean surfaces and hands before and after eating.

Physical Health

- d) Identify ways to increase physical activity.

Disease Prevention/Health Promotion

- e) Determine how sleep habits affect mood and academic performance.
- f) Explain the need for regular health checkups and screenings (e.g., medical, dental).

Substance Abuse Prevention

- g) Explain the harmful effects of misusing medicines and drugs.

Safety/Injury Prevention

- h) Explain why it is important to follow safety rules and guidelines for personal safety.
- i) Describe how to report a dangerous situation.
- j) Identify the importance of sun safety.

Mental Wellness/Social and Emotional Skills

- k) Identify appropriate ways a person may express feelings (e.g., happy, unhappy, mad) and trusted adults to share feelings with at school and at home.
- l) Explain the importance of showing kindness, consideration, and concern for others.
- m) Explain how listening is important for effective communication.
- n) Identify strategies for respecting others' personal space, boundaries, and belongings.

Violence Prevention

- o) Explain the importance of responsible behaviors when interacting with others.
- p) Explain how to listen and use words to respond to and solve problems.

Community/Environmental Health

- q) Explain why it is important to dispose of trash properly, recycle materials, conserve water, and prevent water pollution.

**Advocacy and Health Promotion**

- 1.3 The student will identify specific rules and practices to promote personal safety and socially responsible behaviors.

Body Systems

- a) Share ways to maintain a healthy heart, brain, and lungs for lifelong health.

Nutrition

- b) Explain that all foods can fit into a healthful diet through balance, variety, and moderation.
- c) Describe how one can get help from an adult if a classmate is having an allergic reaction.

Physical Health

d) Encourage classmates to be physically active inside and outside of school.

Disease Prevention/Health Promotion

e) Promote behaviors that impact health and wellness.

f) Describe how one selected health professional/adult helps keep children healthy.

Substance Abuse Prevention

g) Create safety rules for medications in the home.

Safety/Injury Prevention

h) Promote positive behaviors for personal safety, including bus and automobile safety, pedestrian safety, playground safety, fire safety, water safety, Internet safety, and safety when biking and using other recreational equipment.

i) Practice fire safety and emergency/disaster procedures.

j) Describe the proper way to apply sunscreen.

Mental Wellness/Social and Emotional Skills

k) Demonstrate ways to express feelings appropriately.

l) Demonstrate cooperation with friends and classmates.

m) Demonstrate effective listening skills.

n) Apply strategies for establishing and respecting others' personal space, boundaries, and belongings.

Violence Prevention

o) Demonstrate responsible behaviors when interacting with others.

p) Demonstrate best ways to solve social problems.

Community/Environmental Health

q) Create strategies to keep the environment healthy, including proper disposal of trash, recycling or reusing, and water conservation.