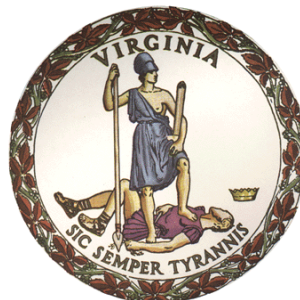


# **Health Education Standards of Learning**

**for  
Virginia Public  
Schools**



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**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.

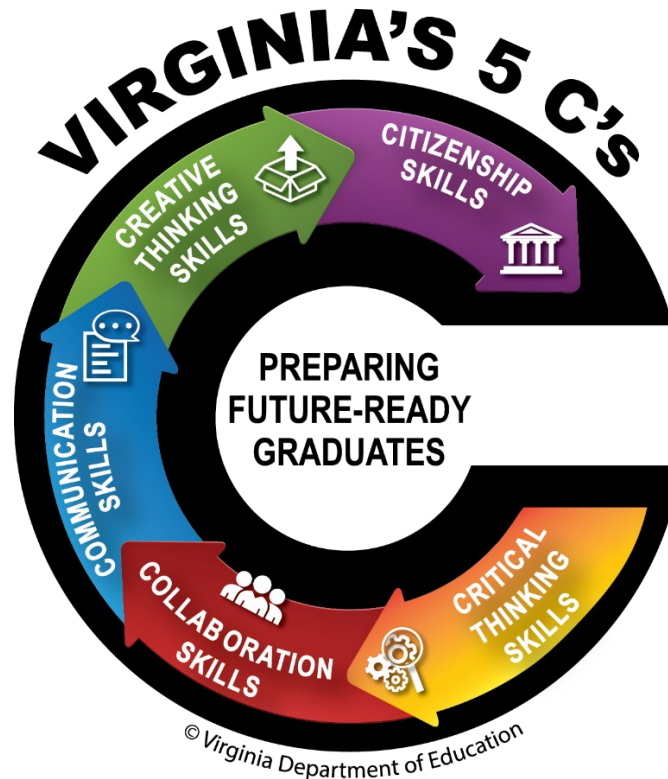
The 2020 Standards of Learning reflect age-appropriate knowledge and abilities, increasing in depth and complexity as students mature. The standards are designed to provide a core body of knowledge (i.e., Body Systems, Nutrition, Physical Health, Disease Prevention/Health Promotion, Substance Abuse Prevention, 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.

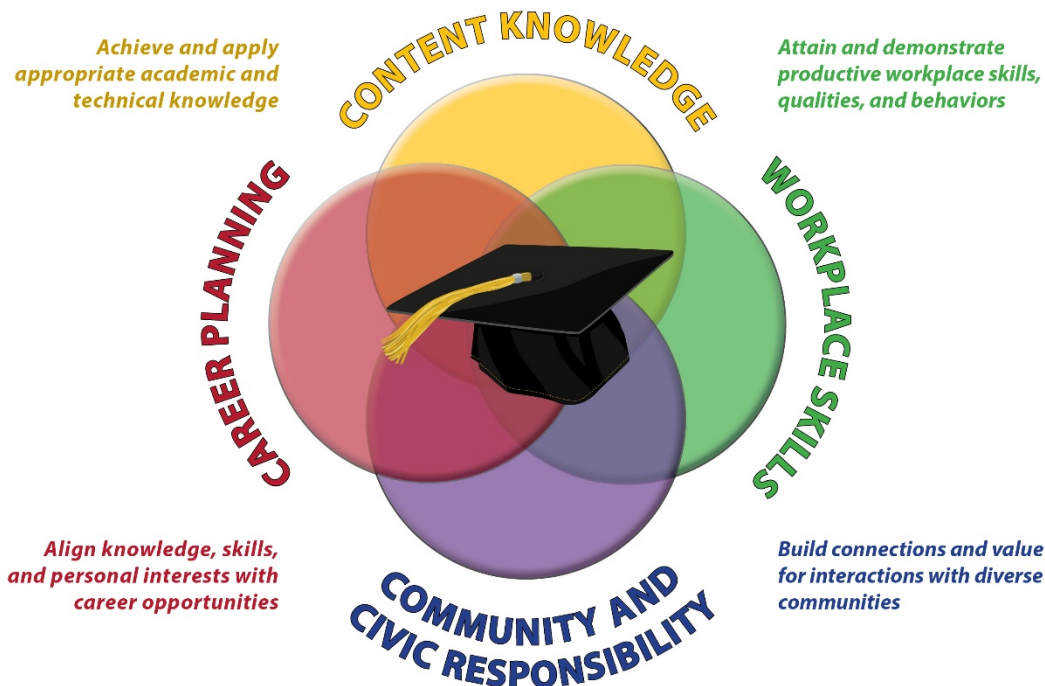


Through Health Education, students will

- ✓ *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 Three

Students in grade three learn how health habits impact growth and development. They learn to compare and contrast healthy and unhealthy practices. Skill building continues as students learn to apply the knowledge of health-risk reduction to the promotion of health. Students access valid information and begin to understand the relationship between personal decisions (responsible decision making) and the impact of personal decisions on oneself and others (self-awareness and social awareness).

### Essential Health Concepts

3.1 The student will explain that health habits and practices impact personal growth and development.

#### Body Systems

a) Identify the major structures and functions of the digestive system.

#### Nutrition

b) Explain the importance of water and healthy food choices for digestion and body function.

c) Identify whole grain and refined grain food items.

d) Identify foods that most often cause a food allergy.

#### Physical Health

e) Describe the benefits of getting enough sleep and the consequences of the use of electronic devices (i.e., screen time) on sleep.

#### Disease Prevention/Health Promotion

f) Identify the steps for goal setting to adopt positive health practices.

g) Define noncommunicable and describe the difference between communicable and noncommunicable diseases.

#### Substance Abuse Prevention

h) Describe proper and improper use of prescription (e.g., taking medication prescribed for someone else) and nonprescription medications.

i) Identify body systems affected by the use of alcohol, tobacco, nicotine products (e.g., electronic smoking devices), inhalants, and other drugs.

#### Safety/Injury Prevention

j) Explain safety rules at home and when riding in a motor vehicle.

k) Explain the need for personal safety strategies when interacting with others online.

l) Identify different safety drills that are important for home and school.

#### Mental Wellness/Social and Emotional Skills

m) Describe feelings/emotions that result from experiencing change, such as the arrival of a new family member, making new friends, going to a new school, being accepted by peers, and losing a loved one.

n) Describe the benefits of friendship and list the qualities of a good friend.

o) Define conflict and identify possible situations where conflict can occur with family and friends.

#### Violence Prevention

p) Describe what bullying is and how to identify it.

q) Explain the benefits of positive communication on relationships with family and friends.

#### Community/Environmental Health

- r) Explain what happens with waste and recycled materials.

## **Healthy Decisions**

- 3.2 The student will demonstrate the ability to use essential health concepts to improve personal health.

### Body Systems

- a) Describe how the body uses digested food molecules.

### Nutrition

- b) Describe why digestion is important for body function.
- c) Explain the difference between a whole grain and a refined grain and the nutritional benefits of eating whole grains.
- d) Explain your school's food policy as it relates to food allergens (e.g., peanut-free classrooms, cafeteria options for children with food allergies).

### Physical Health

- e) Evaluate how sleep, physical activity, screen time, and healthy food and beverage choices affect one's personal health.

### Disease Prevention/Health Promotion

- f) List the benefits of goal setting for personal health.
- g) Analyze the importance of prevention and early detection of communicable and noncommunicable diseases.

### Substance Abuse Prevention

- h) Explain the consequences of disregarding medical recommendations for prescription and nonprescription medications.
- i) Analyze the harmful short- and long-term effects of alcohol, tobacco, nicotine products, common household inhalants, and other drugs on body systems.

### Safety/Injury Prevention

- j) Explain the importance of following safety rules at home and when riding in a motor vehicle.
- k) Identify situations when adult assistance may be needed with online interactions.
- l) Demonstrate proper behavior during safety drills at school.

### Mental Wellness/Social and Emotional Skills

- m) Explain how to identify, express, and respond to emotions in a healthy way.
- n) Describe how to make and keep a friend and behaviors that may cause the friendship to end (e.g., being unaware of the attitudes and feelings of others, using inappropriate language and behavior, excluding a friend from activities, breaking promises).
- o) Describe how to make healthy decisions when dealing with conflict, including when help from an adult is needed.

### Violence Prevention

- p) Identify ways to safely stand up to bullying and how to get help.
- q) Describe how to communicate directly, respectfully, and assertively with family and friends.

### Community/Environmental Health

- r) Analyze how reducing, reusing, and recycling products promotes a healthier environment.

## **Advocacy and Health Promotion**

3.3 The student will promote health and safety at school and at home.

Body Systems

- a) Evaluate the role of the digestive system in providing energy for the body.

Nutrition

- b) Identify healthy food and beverage choices to support digestion and body function.
- c) Explore how grains are grown and the careers related to it (e.g., agriculture, farming, food science, environmental science).
- d) List alternatives (e.g., stickers, pencils, games) for school celebrations that are safe for someone with a food allergy.

Physical Health

- e) Set a goal for a positive health practice and monitor progress.

Disease Prevention/Health Promotion

- f) Identify areas for improving personal health.
- g) Identify healthcare professionals who can help prevent and detect health concerns.

Substance Abuse Prevention

- h) Create a health message about the proper use of prescription and nonprescription medications.
- i) Encourage others to use refusal skills to avoid alcohol, tobacco, nicotine products, inhalants, other drugs, and unknown substances.

Safety/Injury Prevention

- j) Discuss and develop a family safety plan to prevent injuries at home and when riding in a motor vehicle.
- k) Create strategies for personal safety when online.
- l) Practice disaster-preparedness procedures at home and at school.

Mental Wellness/Social and Emotional Skills

- m) Design and demonstrate effective strategies for expressing and managing emotions, which may include physical activity, talking about feelings, reading, or creative expressions such as writing, art, music, and dance.
- n) Demonstrate behaviors to make and keep friends (e.g., effective communication skills; awareness of the attitudes, feelings, and opinions of others; appropriate language and behavior; sharing; reciprocal helping behavior).
- o) Demonstrate healthy ways to resolve conflict, including determining when adult help is needed.

Violence Prevention

- p) Describe how to report bullying and how to advocate for oneself and for others who are bullied.
- q) Demonstrate positive ways to communicate with family and friends.

Community/Environmental Health

- r) Demonstrate ways to reduce, reuse, and recycle at home, at school, and in the community.