

## **SEX EDUCATION**

The St. Mary Parish School Board is committed to protecting the health of all of its students by providing comprehensive, medically accurate, and evidence-informed sexual health education.

In order to better educate and meet the growing awareness of today's youth, the School Board shall have the discretion, if so desired, of conducting classes in subject matter designated as sex education. Instruction in this area shall be age and developmentally appropriate such that it is designed to teach concepts, information, and skills suitable to a particular age, grade, and developmental level, based on the cognitive, emotional, social, and behavioral capacity of most students at that age, grade, and level. Said subject matter may be integrated into an existing course of study in grades three through twelve. When offered, such instruction shall be offered to non-graded special education students at age appropriate levels. Whenever instruction in sex education is offered by a school, such instruction shall be available also to any student in such school regardless of the student's grade level who is pregnant or who is a mother or father.

No religious beliefs, values, customs, practices in human sexuality nor the subjective moral and ethical judgment of any person shall be included in the study of sex education. Students shall not be tested, quizzed, or surveyed about their personal or family beliefs or practices in sex, morality, or religion.

All instructional materials used during the course of study of sex education shall be submitted to and approved by the Mary Parish School Board and by a parental review committee, whose membership shall be determined by the School Board. The major emphasis of any sex education instruction offered in this parish shall be to encourage sexual abstinence between unmarried persons and any instruction shall:

1. Emphasize abstinence from sexual activity outside of marriage as the expected standard for all school children.
2. Emphasize that abstinence from sexual activity is a way to avoid unwanted pregnancy, sexually transmitted disease, including acquired immune deficiency syndrome and other associated health problems.
3. Emphasize that each student has the power to control personal behavior and to encourage students to base action on reasoning, self-esteem and respect of others.

Any child may be excused from receiving instruction in sex education at the option and discretion of his/her parent or guardian.

INSTRUCTION OR DISCUSSION ON SEXUAL ORIENTATION, GENDER IDENTITY

No teacher, school employee, or other presenter at a school shall engage in the following discussions with students in grades kindergarten through twelve:

1. Covering the topics of sexual orientation or gender identity in any classroom discussion or instruction in a manner that deviates from state content standards or curricula developed or approved by the School Board.
2. Covering the topics of sexual orientation or gender identity during any extracurricular academic, athletic, or social activity under the jurisdiction of the school or School Board.
3. Discussing his/her own sexual orientation or gender identity.

Nothing in this policy shall be construed to mean a student may not seek out guidance from a teacher or licensed mental health professional outside classroom hours with prior parental consent.

New policy: December 12, 2024

Ref: La. Rev. Stat. Ann §§17:281, 17:412; Board minutes, 12-12-24.