Rockdale County Public Schools
RCPS

Shirley Chesser
Superintendent

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General Counsel

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School Year 2025-2026

Dear Parent of a Middle School Student:

As required by the Georgia Department of Education and the Georgia Mandate for Sexual Abuse and Assault Prevention Education, RCPS health teachers will instruct students in the areas of human growth and development, adolescent sex education, disease prevention, and sexual abuse, assault, and exploitation prevention. The above curriculum will be developmentally appropriate for each grade level. The program will assist students in coping with the social and peer pressures they face today. It will help students develop skills to say "no" to behaviors in which they do not wish to engage. If your student is receiving this instruction in a virtual environment, RCPS encourages parents/guardians to take appropriate steps to ensure that younger children in the home are sheltered from the lessons because of the sensitive nature of the topics being taught RCPS also encourages parents/guardians to talk with their students before each lesson in hopes of minimizing disruptions.

The growth and development of young people are important, and it is essential to give careful consideration in providing meaningful experiences for them. In our curriculum, all pertinent concepts are presented in a logical, sequential manner beginning in kindergarten. As of August 2018, the Georgia Mandate for Sexual Abuse and Assault Prevention Education requires students enrolled in grades K-9 to annually receive age-appropriate sexual abuse and assault awareness and prevention education. Kindergartners are taught that creatures of the same kind produce others of the same kind, middle school students are introduced to the correct anatomical terminology while identifying the physical and emotional differences between males and females, and high school students receive training that will prepare them for parenting.

What follows is a summary of the objectives to be addressed in the middle school growth and development unit of the Health Curriculum.

1. Through an introduction of correct terminology, students will be able to ask questions and discuss sex education accurately.
2. Through group activities, students will be able to identify the physical and emotional changes that occur during adolescence.
3. Through discussions and digital videos, students will identify differences between males and females.
4. Through discussions and digital videos, students will learn behaviors appropriate for interacting with persons of the opposite sex.
5. Students will understand some of the problems related to pre-marital sexual activity and how to effectively avoid them.
6. Students will explore how sex is used by the media to sell products.
7. Students will study the transmission of HIV, the effects of AIDS, and the causes/effects of STDs.
8. Students will learn the positive consequences of choosing abstinence.

You may review the materials used in the unit before your son or daughter receives instruction by contacting your child's teacher or counselor. Information is also available online at Parent Resources - Choosing the Best; sixth graders use *Choosing the Best Way* curriculum, seventh graders use *Choosing the Best Path* curriculum, eighth graders use *Choosing the Best Life,* and Carnegie students use *Choosing the Best Journey* curriculum. Additional information on sex education and instruction for AIDS prevention and exceptions for students can be found in Georgia Code 20-2-143. The above curricula are aligned with the Georgia Performance Standards, which can be viewed at GaDOE SuitCASE.

All staff members presenting the information have received proper training through Choosing the Best. Please be assured the information is presented in a prudent and tasteful fashion. Students will have the opportunity to complete a course evaluation on the unit and materials used. For details about our school system's sex education and AIDS prevention program, contact Heather Toliver in Curriculum and Instruction at 770.483.4713 x 10271.

I encourage your support in meeting the needs of all our students. For your own child, I ask that you provide your consent for his/her participation in the growth and development unit. Please indicate your preference for your child's participation in this class on the form below, sign the form, and return it to your child's teacher. If you choose not to consent to participation, please contact your child's teacher to develop an alternate plan of instruction that he/she can receive at school or home.

Thank you for your interest in your child's education and for supporting Rockdale County Public Schools.

Sincerely,

Shirley C Chesser

Shirley Chesser,
Superintendent

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PARENTAL AND STUDENT CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION

I understand my student will receive in-person and/or virtual instruction in the areas of human growth and development, **adolescent sex education, disease prevention, and sexual abuse, assault, and exploitation prevention. By signing below, I acknowledge these lectures will contain topics that are sensitive in nature, and I agree to release and waive any claims I** may have against the Rockdale County Board of Education, Rockdale County Public Schools, and its employees, agents, and representatives ("Releasees") related to the teaching of these materials. I further agree to indemnify, hold harmless, and reimburse the Releasees from and against any claim which I, any other parent or guardian, any sibling, the student, or **any other person, family, or corporation may have or claim to have, known or unknown, directly or indirectly, from any losses, damages, or injuries arising out of, during, or in connection with the student's participation in an in-person and/or virtual lesson.**

_____ I **do** give consent for my child to participate in the growth and development unit, including lessons from *Choosing the Best.*

_____ I **do not give** consent for my child to participate in the growth and development unit or *Choosing the Best.*

_____ _____
(Parent/Guardian Signature) (Date)

_____ _____
(Student Name) (Date)