

Vermont Essential Content in Sex Education

Essential Topics:

- Abstinence & Sexual Decision-Making
- Barrier Methods
- Consent
- Contraception
- Healthy Relationships
- Puberty
- Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)

Required Topics:

Within Vermont's Comprehensive Health Education Law ([16 V.S.A § 131](#)), the following topics must be taught:

- (1) Body structure and function, including the physical, psychosocial and psychological basis of human development, sexuality, and reproduction.
- (4) Disease, such as HIV infection, other sexually transmitted diseases, as well as other communicable diseases, and the prevention of disease.
- (5) Family health and mental health, including instruction that promotes the development of responsible personal behavior involving decision making about sexual activity...
- (6) Personal health habits including dental health.
- (8) Human growth and development, including understanding the physical, emotional, and social elements of individual development and interpersonal relationships, including instruction in parenting methods and styles. This shall include information regarding the possible outcomes of premature sexual activity, contraceptives, adolescent pregnancy, childbirth, adoption, and abortion.
- (11) How to recognize and prevent sexual abuse and sexual violence, including developmentally appropriate instruction about promoting healthy and respectful relationships, developing and maintaining effective communication with trusted adults, recognizing sexually offending behaviors, and gaining awareness of available school and community resources.

Parent Opt Out

Sexually Transmitted Infections is the only sexual health education topic area where Vermont Law explicitly provides a parent opt-out. The Religious Exemption law (16 V.S.A. § 134) states that: Any student whose parent shall present to the school principal a signed statement that the teaching of disease, its symptoms, development, and treatment, conflicts with the parents' religious convictions

shall be exempt from such instruction, and no child so exempt shall be penalized by reason of that exemption.

Condom Availability

Secondary schools (16 V.S.A. § 132); provision of contraceptives In order to prevent or reduce unintended pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases, each school district shall make condoms available to all students in its secondary schools, free of charge. School district administrative teams, in consultation with school district nursing staff, shall determine the best manner in which to make condoms available to students. At a minimum, condoms shall be placed in locations that are safe and readily accessible to students, including the school nurse's office.

Source:

Essential Topics in Sexual Health Education: Created by the Vermont Sexual Health Education Stakeholders Group, August 2021,
https://www.healthvermont.gov/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/CYF_EssentialTopicsinSexualHealthEducation.pdf

Additional Resources:

- Vermont Agency of Education Sexual Health resource page:
<https://education.vermont.gov/student-support/healthy-and-safe-schools/sexual-health>
- Vermont Department of Health Adolescent Sexual Health page:
<https://www.healthvermont.gov/children-youth-families/adolescent-health/adolescent-sexual-health>
- Vermont Agency of Education Health Education resource page:
<https://education.vermont.gov/student-learning/content-areas/health-education>