

## Puberty Talk Frequently Asked Questions

**Why is MVWSD providing Human Growth and Development Instruction?** In order to comply with the California Healthy Youth Act passed in January 2016, as well as the California state health and wellness standards, MVWSD is providing instruction through Health Connected. Visit the following website for more information on the California Healthy Youth Act <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/he/se/>

**Has MVWSD adopted Health Connected Puberty Talk curriculum?** No. MVWSD is continuing to use the program this year and will continue until the release of new materials available for review and adoption. At that time the District will convene a committee to review newly published materials that meet the Health standards. The instruction is delivered to students by Health Connected educators. After the program, feedback will be gathered and next steps will be determined.

**What is unique about this program?** The developers are knowledgeable experts who also teach our students. Their vast experience in working with many students shows in the warmth and sensitivity with which they have approached our fifth-graders. Additionally, Puberty Talk is a local program that is consistent with recent changes in law.

**Is Puberty Talk very different from materials used prior to 2016?** The content is the same that was covered in previous classes with two exceptions. There is a minimal section on HIV as well as information to support providers if questions about gender identity come up. The addition of these sections is consistent with new state law and best practices for health and wellness. We are using health professionals who are experienced in answering these kinds of questions from kids.

**Do other school districts use Health Connected's "Puberty Talk"?** Yes, many other local districts use it.

**Does Health Connected directly align to the California Health and Wellness standards for fifth grade and the California Healthy Youth Act adopted in January 2016?** Yes. Each lesson is directly connected to a fifth-grade standard both California and national, and is aligned to the new California Healthy Youth Act. Visit the following website <https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/documents/healthstandmar08.pdf>. for more information on California Health Content Standards (Grade 5 - pages 23-27)

**What does the Health Connected curriculum cover?** Puberty Talk is a curriculum designed for fifth- and sixth-graders that covers subjects ranging from anatomy and body changes to menstruation and conception. This curriculum lays a foundation for comprehensive sexuality education in middle school.

Health Connected worked with local school districts to provide sexual health courses for eighth graders for 15 years prior to developing Puberty Talk in 2011. The Puberty Talk 5th/6th grade curriculum was developed in response to teachers, administrators and parents expressing the need to provide sexual health information prior to eighth grade.

**Lessons include:**

Session 1 - Explore and communicate personal feelings and values about puberty

Session 2 - Learning about physical and emotional changes

Personal hygiene Terminology and function of sexual and reproductive body parts

Session 3 - Reproduction - menstruation, ovulation, and conception. Seeking help from parents or other trusted adult for issues that occur during puberty Being comfortable and respectful of body changes Dealing with pressure to become sexually active

Session 4 - Seeking help from trusted adults Scenarios about healthy and unhealthy relationships

Session 5 - HIV/AIDS How the virus is/is not transmitted Post-test and evaluation

**Why is Puberty Talks taught in mixed gender groups?** California Education Code (51933) requires that school-based sexual health education programs be accessible to students of all orientations and gender identities. Providing the course in a mixed- gender environment helps students of all gender identities feel included in the experience.

It is recommended that Puberty Talk be taught in mixed gender groups in order to provide opportunities to practice effective, respectful communication about bodies and health among different genders.

Mixed-gender classes foster mutual respect and understanding among all genders. In addition, delivering content in single gender groups can create significant challenges for students who either do not identify with a specific gender or who are transitioning from one gender to another.

**Can I opt-out my child from participating in the Health Connected program?** Yes, the District understands that this subject may be something you prefer to discuss with your child and supports that choice. The law allows parents or guardians to remove their child from comprehensive sexual health and HIV prevention education, as defined in the statute (EC 51931(b), (d), 51932, using a passive consent or “opt-out” process. Schools may not require active consent “opt-in” for participation in comprehensive sexual health and HIV prevention education in any grade, including elementary school. (EC 51938(a).) Parents must make their request in writing to the school or district.

**Are the materials still available for parent review?** Yes, the Puberty Talk curriculum is available online for any parent that would like to review it. Parents are also welcome to contact Health Connected to discuss parent questions or to see the curriculum.

**If I have further questions and concerns, who may I contact?** If you have questions or concerns, please contact any of the following staff members:

Jennifer Thornton, District Nurse: [jthornton@mvwsd.org](mailto:jthornton@mvwsd.org)

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