

FAMILY LETTER

GET | REAL



Comprehensive Sex Education That Works

Dear Parent or Caring Adult,

Your child will be attending a program called *GET REAL: Comprehensive Sex Education That Works* in Health class during PE. The program gives young people the facts, in an age-appropriate way, on a range of sexual health and relationship topics. GET REAL is based on Social and Emotional Learning (SEL). It teaches students five skills that lead to healthy behavior:

Self-awareness, or getting to know and trust yourself

Self-management and self-control to express feelings in healthy ways

Social Awareness, or being able to put yourself in “another person’s shoes.”

Relationship skills to build healthy relationships, deal with conflict, and seek help when needed

Responsible decision-making, such as how to think through pros and cons of choices and how your actions may affect others

GET REAL supports parents and other trusted caregivers as the primary sexuality educators of their children. The teen years and changes of puberty can bring lots of questions and concerns, for both parents and their kids. For many reasons, it can be hard to talk with children about sex. Results of a national survey show that parents have the most influence on their children’s decisions about sex. A recent study from the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy found that 87% of U.S. teens said it would be easier to put off having sex if they were able to talk more openly about sex with their parents. 37% of students said they had never had a talk with their parents about this topic.

Good communication between parents and children helps families share their values and enables young people to make healthier, safer and wiser decisions about sex. Remember, it is your right and responsibility to share your values and the facts about sex with your child.

According to State law, a child can be excused from this education after the parent/guardian reviews the curriculum. The curriculum will be provided at the March 20th and April 12th 2017 PTA meetings that start at 7:00 PM, and at Heatherwood’s main office from March 13th to April 19, 2017 between the hours of 7:30 AM - 3:15 PM. If after viewing the curriculum, you would like your child excluded from this curriculum, opt out forms will be provided for you.

Sincerely,

Ms. Barton (cbarton@everettsd.org), Mr. Brown (jbrown@everettsd.org), Mr. Burgess (rburgess@everettsd.org),

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Rights and Responsibilities

- As a parent, you have the right and responsibility to be your child's primary sexuality educator
- Children will get information about sex from the culture around them
- Taking action to teach your children about sexuality gives you the best chance of having a positive effect on their choices and experiences
- Children have a right to get information from their parents. They also have a responsibility to understand that their choices about sexuality can have consequences

Values

- Think about your own beliefs and values, so you can clearly share them with your child
- Look at where your beliefs and values come from. Which are universal? (For example, all children have a right to be safe) Which are more personal? (For example, people differ in their beliefs about when it's OK for you people to become sexually active.)
- Honest communication between parents and children is key.
- It's OK for parents and children to disagree about values. Examining values can be a powerful, positive influence on a child's developing sexuality.

Feeling and Self-Esteem

- Explore your own feelings around sexuality. Share some of these with your child. Encourage your child to share feelings too.
- Practice how to listen closely. Don't judge or criticize. This will build trust and help your child feel comfortable coming to you with questions or concerns.
- Help your children feel good about who they are. This will build healthy self-esteem and lead to good decisions.

Facts and Knowledge

- Find the resources you need to give your child clear and accurate information about sexuality
- If you don't know the answer to a question, say so. Promise to get back to your child with the answer, or look for it together.
- Connect. Keep talking in an ongoing, open way.