

Gr. 3s learn life cycles, body health

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development and health - from good eating habits in Grade 1 to issues dealing with sexuality, alcohol, drugs and cigarettes in the later grades.

In Grade 1, students will learn simple life cycles of plants and animals, including humans.

They will also recognize that the heart is always beating and pumping blood to the muscles and the rest of the body, and that increased activity increases both the work of the heart and the speed of breathing.

In Grade 3, students will outline the basic human and animal reproductive processes, including the union of egg and sperm.

Students in Grade 8 will identify symptoms, methods of transmission, prevention and high-risk behaviors related to common sexually transmitted diseases.

Abstinence will be emphasized and other methods of birth control can be discussed but the approach will be left up to each individual board.

The Ministry has also said school boards may offer a program that goes beyond provincial standards.

That means anything in place at the public board will remain intact, including including the controversial Sensitive Issues document created two years ago to assist teachers when dealing with subjects such as abortion.

And many of the issues the new curriculum appears to be highlight, such as abstinence, have been part of classroom teaching in York Region for some time.

The new Health and Physical Education Curriculum will be used for the first time this fall. The material will be released to school boards later this summer with implementation occurring throughout the 1998-99 school year.

The announcement comes as teachers and students leave for summer vacation - timing that mirrors the launch of last year's new curriculum for language and mathematics and technology.

"We will see it in August and analyze it then," Craigen said, adding teachers now have health and physical education, arts, social studies, history and geography curriculum to learn before September.

New programs for arts and French were also released today.

The Ministry of Education said yesterday that training sessions have already been planned to ensure that each teacher has the information required to introduce the new programs.

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