



# The California Healthy Youth Act & 2019 Health Education Curriculum Framework

LAW

## CALIFORNIA HEALTHY YOUTH ACT

### California Healthy Youth Act

The California Healthy Youth Act (CHYA), which took effect in January 2016, **is a law** that requires districts to provide students with comprehensive sexual health education, along with information about HIV prevention, at least once in high school and once in middle school.

CHYA goals include educating students to protect their sexual and reproductive health from HIV and other sexually transmitted infections and from unintended pregnancy, along with knowledge and skills for healthy attitudes on adolescent growth and development, body image, gender, sexual orientation, relationships, marriage, and family.

#### Is teaching comprehensive sexual health education and HIV prevention required?

Yes. The state legislation, AB 329, **requires** that students in grades seven through 12 receive comprehensive sexual health education and HIV

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## HEALTH CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

GUIDANCE

### Health Curriculum Framework

The 2019 Health Education Curriculum Framework for California Public Schools, K–12, **is a guidance document** that districts may use when developing health education programs for students. The framework provides guidance for teachers and administrators on how to teach California's 2008 Health Education Content Standards.

Health education, student success in school and a thriving future for California are linked: Healthy children make better students and better students become healthy, successful adults who are productive members of their communities.

#### Are districts required to use the framework when developing lessons for students?

No. The Health Education Framework is a **guidance** document for teachers and administrators in implementing California's

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### **CHYA continued...**

prevention education at least once in middle school and once in high school. Yet, districts under locally elected leadership are tasked with selecting the curriculum and instructional resources (including textbooks).

### **Can parents opt out of sex education lessons?**

Yes. Parents can opt their children out of comprehensive sex education per AB 329. School districts are required to notify parents/guardians a minimum of 14 days prior to the first day of comprehensive sexual health instruction. To opt-out, parents/guardians must request in writing that their child not participate in the instruction. (EC § 51938(a).)

### **Can parents opt out of instruction or materials that discuss gender, gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation?**

Parents or guardians can excuse their children from lessons about comprehensive sexual health and HIV prevention education, as well as research on student health behaviors and risks. However, as stated in EC 51932(b), the CHYA opt-out does not apply to instruction or materials *outside* the context of comprehensive sexual health education, including those that reference gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, discrimination, bullying, relationships or family (e.g. social studies lesson on U.S. Supreme Court's 2015 ruling in favor of same-sex marriage).

### **Health Framework continued...**

health standards. No mandates require schools to use the Health Education Framework.

### **What areas of health education does the framework cover?**

The framework covers six content areas of health education: **(1) Nutrition and physical activity; (2) growth, development, and sexual health; (3) injury prevention and safety; (4) alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs; (5) mental, emotional, and social health; and (6) personal and community health.**

### **I read that the framework “includes controversial teaching about sexual relations, sexual orientation and gender.”**

The framework *does not* mandate what should or shouldn't be taught. It provides guidance in using *inclusive classroom language to make all students feel comfortable at school*. The framework helps provide learning environments free from harassment. California results on the 2017 Youth Risk Behavior Survey show students, who identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual are twice as likely to be bullied as their peers who identify as heterosexual. Additionally, students who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual are three times more likely to seriously consider suicide than their peers who identify as heterosexual.

### **Dispelling myths, breaking down stereotypes and linking students to resources can help prevent bullying, self-harm, feelings of hopelessness, and serious considerations of suicide.**

Every school district has the autonomy to choose its own curriculum as long as it meets the state guidelines. If parents have questions or concerns about the specific lessons used in their child's class, they should contact the school or district. Please go to **[cde.ca.gov](http://cde.ca.gov)** for more information about the California Healthy Youth Act and the 2019 Health Education Curriculum Framework.