Grade 6 Sexual Health Education
Unit Plan

Unit Rationale:

This unit focuses on supporting students as they continue developing physically, socially, and emotionally. At this age, students may become more interested in understanding and building their identity. Throughout this unit, students will discover the importance of practicing self-care, explore concepts related to identity and respecting themselves and their peers, and learn to differentiate between the concepts of gender identity and sexual orientation.

In addition, this unit will review puberty, including how puberty prepares the body for the possibility of reproduction. Students will review reproductive anatomy and the steps of how a pregnancy begins, and learn common signs and symptoms of pregnancy. Students will then be introduced to contraception, or birth control, and learn introductory information about the different types of contraceptives that are available and how they are used. The basics of sexually transmitted infection (STI) transmission will also be covered, including sexual behaviors that can transmit STIs. Students will be introduced to condoms as a barrier method that can prevent the spread of some STIs. Students will learn that most young people their age choose to abstain from sexual activity and that abstinence is the only 100% effective way to prevent pregnancy and STIs.

As young people enter middle school, it is important for them to gain foundational knowledge about healthy relationships that they can apply to relationships now and in the future. Students will learn the importance of consent, including sexual consent, and differentiate between friendships and romantic relationships. Students wil also learn about harassment, including sexual harassment, and how to report it, which meets the requirements of Erin's Law (erinslaw.org), an Illinois Law requiring that schools offer sexual abuse prevention education for all school-aged children.

In this digital age, it is important to consider how young people interact with media. Students will learn how they can find accurate, reliable information online, and consider how media and things they may encounter online, such as sexually explicit images, may impact body image and the way they feel about themselves. As students get older, they have an increased desire for independence, and will need to navigate healthy decision-making on their own. The unit will conclude with a lesson on decision-making and introduce a 5-step decision-making model, which students will learn to apply in different situations.

Enduring Understandings:

- All people, including young people, deserve to be treated with respect.
- All people, including young people, have the right to express and assert their gender identity and sexual orientation in a way that feels right for them.

- Puberty is a natural process defined by social, emotional, and physical changes due to hormones.
- Pregnancy can occur as a result of sexual intercourse.
- There are a variety of ways to prevent pregnancy, called contraceptives.
- All people, including young people, have options to prevent unwanted pregnancy and STIs.
- Abstinence from sexual activity is the most common choice young people in middle school make about sex.
- No one has the right to touch your body in a way that makes you feel unsafe or uncomfortable, and there are many ways to report abuse.
- Consent should be an informed decision, and it is important in all interactions and relationships.
- Learning to navigate digital media safely provides ways to find and interpret content, support self image, and have healthy relationships.
- Trusted adults are available to support young people as they change and grow.

Essential Questions:

- *How can I practice self-care?*
- *How can we show respect for all people's names and pronouns?*
- *How can we support ourselves and others as we go through puberty?*
- *Why is identity, including someone's sexual orientation, important?*
- *How can I identify accurate and reliable information about puberty and sexual health online?*
- *What is the process of pregnancy?*
- *What options are there for preventing pregnancy and STIs?*
- *What factors impact a person's ability to give sexual consent?*
- *How are friendships and romantic relationships similar and different?*
- *How can a person intervene if they or someone they know is being sexually harassed?*
- *How can media influence someone's body image?*
- *How can I use a decision making model to demonstrate effective decision making skills?*

Standards:

All lessons are aligned with the [National Sex Education Standards (NSES), Second Edition](). By the end of each grade band, students will have received instruction addressing all standards in each topic for the designated grade band. In addition to aligning with the NSES, lessons meet several Illinois State Standards and National Health Education Standards.

Unit Outline:

	Lesson *NSES*	Objectives	Lesson Overview and Key Content
1	Take a Selfie… Strategies for	- State the importance of practicing self-care.	In this lesson, students will create classroom expectations that reinforce a

	Self-Care (50 minutes) *IV.8.ADV.1*	• List at least three ways to practice self-care. • Identify common barriers to practicing self-care and ways to overcome those barriers.	safe and respectful learning environment. Then, students will define self-care and explore the skills necessary to implement self-care. Through a worksheet, students will brainstorm strategies for implementing self-care in their own lives. Importantly, the limitations and barriers to self-care are discussed, so that students understand how to overcome some barriers while knowing that not everything can be solved through self-care.
2	Gender Identity: Respecting Pronouns (55 minutes) *GI.8.AI.1* *GI.8.IC.1* *SO.8.AI.1*	• Describe why using a person's correct pronoun is respectful. • Review terms that refer to gender identity. • Practice communicating respectfully with and about transgender and nonbinary people. • List at least two accurate and credible sources of online information about gender identity and gender expression.	In this lesson, students will use the Gender Unicorn to review terms about gender identity. Through a video and class activity where students practice using diverse pronouns, students will understand why it is respectful to call someone by their chosen name and pronouns. Finally, students will explore safe and reliable websites where they can find accurate and credible sources of online information and resources about gender identity and gender expression.
3	Change is Good (50 minutes) *AP.8.CC.1* *PD.8.AI.1*	• Classify physical, social, cognitive and emotional changes young people go through during puberty and adolescence. • Describe at least one strategy someone can use to manage a puberty change.	In this lesson, students will play a puberty review game, so that teachers can assess how much students already know about puberty. Then, students will complete a sorting activity, working together to classify puberty changes as physical, social, cognitive and emotional. Finally, students will work independently to think through advice they might give someone who was going through a puberty change to support them in managing that change.
4	Proud to Be Me! (50 minutes)	• Explain that everyone has a sexual orientation, and differentiate between	In this lesson, students will explore the definitions of identity terms through a sorting activity where they differentiate between gender identity and sexual

	SO.8.CC.1 SO.8.CC.2 SO.8.INF.1	gender identity and sexual orientation. • Communicate respectfully with and about people of all sexual orientations. • Explain why it's important for people to feel proud of their identities, including their sexual orientation.	orientation. Then, students will discuss the importance of feeling proud of their own identity and explore ways to connect with community, stand up for others who face discrimination based on their identities, and consider why learning about community history is important.
5	Being a Sex Ed Sleuth (50 minutes) PD.8.AI.1	• Name at least two characteristics of accurate, reliable websites on puberty and sexual health. • Demonstrate an understanding of how to determine whether a website is medically accurate, age-appropriate, and youth-positive.	In this lesson, students will identify how to find medically accurate, reliable information online to answer their questions and concerns about puberty and sexual health. Students will learn the skill of identifying valid sources of information through steps such as scanning the language of a website, looking for potential bias, and identifying the credentials of an author. In small groups, students will practice their research skills on age-appropriate websites and share what they learned with the class.
6	Reproductive Health and Pregnancy (55 minutes) AP.8.CC.1 SH.8.CC.1 SH.8.CC.4 SH.8.AI.2	• Name the reproductive system structures involved in pregnancy. • Explain puberty changes that prepare the body for a possible pregnancy. • List signs and symptoms of pregnancy. • Identify ways a pregnant person can take care of their health and the health of a fetus.	In this lesson, students will review the reproductive systems for people with testicles and for people with ovaries and the puberty changes that prepare the body for possible pregnancy. Students will then explore the connection between the menstrual cycle and pregnancy and review sexual intercourse as the behavior that causes pregnancy. Through a video*, students will learn common signs and symptoms of pregnancy and discuss the importance of prenatal care, healthy eating, and avoiding drugs and alcohol to give the fetus the best chance of developing in a healthy way. Finally, through group discussion, students will begin to contemplate healthy decision making around pregnancy.

7	To Abstinence and Beyond! Contraception & STI Prevention (50 minutes) *SH.8.CC.2* *SH.8.CC.3* *SH.8.CC.1* *SH.8.CC.5* *SH.8.CC.7* *SH.8.CC.10* *SH.8.SM.1*	• Define contraception and describe at least two different contraceptive methods. • Define sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and understand how they are transmitted. • Identify at least two ways to prevent the spread of STIs.	In this lesson, students will be introduced to contraception, examples of effective contraception methods, and how they are used. They will practice looking for reliable information about contraception on the internet in groups. Students will watch a video to learn the basics of sexually transmitted infections (STI), including sexual behaviors that can transmit STIs. Students will also learn about effective condom use and how barrier methods can prevent both pregnancy and STI transmission. Students will learn that abstinence is the only 100% effective method to prevent pregnancy and STIs, and that it is the most common choice middle schoolers make to support their sexual health.
8	Consent…It Goes with Everything! (50 minutes) *CHR.8.CC.4* *CHR.8.INF.3* ***This lesson supports Erin's Law requirements.***	• Define sexual consent. • Define sexual agency. • Identify at least two factors that can impact a person's ability to give consent.	In this lesson, students will define consent by completing prompts about what consent is and is not. Then they will watch a video that discusses sexual consent and introduces the students to the concept of sexual agency. Then the class will read scenarios and determine if the character's sexual agency was respected. Finally, students will complete a sorting activity that helps them explore what impacts a person's ability to give consent.
9	More than Friends (50 minutes) *CHR.8.CC.3*	• Describe at least two characteristics of a friendship and two characteristics of a romantic relationship. • Identify at least two similarities and two differences between friendships and romantic relationships.	In this lesson, students will describe the characteristics of relationships, determining if they are a friendship or a romantic relationship. Using scenarios in small- and large-group discussion, students will evaluate the components of healthy relationships by identifying the healthy and unhealthy behaviors displayed by each character in each scenario. As a class, students will consider the similarities and differences of friendship and romantic relationships.

10	It's Not OK…Harassment Prevention (50 minutes) *IV.8.SM.1* **This lesson supports Erin's Law requirements.**	• Define sexual harassment. • Describe at least one strategy a person can safely use to intervene if someone is being sexually harassed. • Describe at least one strategy a person can safely use if they are being sexually harassed. • Describe at least one strategy a person can use if someone they know is sexually harassing others.	In this lesson, students will be introduced to the concept of sexual harassment with a short video*, and will learn that harassment is never the fault of the person being harassed. Then, students will work in groups to come up with ways they could respond to sexual harassment, whether it was happening to them, if they were witnessing it, or if a friend was the one doing the harassment. Students will also learn that at CPS, harassment can be reported to the Office of Student Protections, and students will be reminded of how to make a report, and who they can talk to at school if they need support.
11	Image Overload (50 minutes) *SH.8.CC.12*	• Describe what body image is and its connection to self-esteem. • Identify at least two influences on body image. • Explain the impact that sexually explicit media can have on one's body image and self-esteem.	In this lesson, students will examine their body image through a visualization exercise. After, students will sort through a list of factors that can influence someone's body image, such as family/friends, social media, and shows/movies. Students will close the lesson by discussing how unrealistic or harmful sexually explicit images (pornography) can negatively influence body image and self-esteem.
12	When Should a Person… (50 minutes) *SH.8.DM.1*	• Identify at least two factors that are important in deciding whether and when to engage in sexual behaviors. • Describe a decision-making model related to whether or when to engage in sexual behaviors. • Demonstrate effective decision-making skills using a decision-making model.	In this lesson, students will consider the question of how to know when it is the "right" time to engage in sexual behaviors. Students will develop lists of factors, in the categories of: Healthy Relationships, Protection (ex: condoms), Consent, Personal beliefs, Peers/Friends, Family, and Media, that a young person might consider. They learn that the decision to have sex is a personal one, and a choice that everyone has to make for themself. Then, students apply a 5-step decision-making model to a decision they might make in their real life now or in the future.

*Visit the Grade 6 Unit Videos document to review the videos included in this unit

School to Home Connection:

Establishing a pattern of open and honest conversations at home can help protect students now and as they grow older. Throughout the unit, students will receive optional take home assignments to support the learning taking place in the classroom. While optional, families are encouraged to complete all assignments together. These activities are meant to help facilitate important conversations between students and their parents/caregivers.

The following lessons may include a School to Home Connection Component in the Grade 6 Unit:

Lesson 1: Students can finish the "Self-Care Action Plan" worksheet at home and share it with a trusted adult.

Lesson 2: Students can complete the "Gender Identity: Respecting Pronouns School to Home Connection" handout which provides the website used in class to practice pronouns. It asks students to teach a trusted adult about why pronouns are important and how to use a pronoun they are unfamiliar with.

Lesson 3: Students can complete the "Where Can I Learn More about Me?" worksheet at home and share what they learn with a trusted adult.

Lesson 4: Students can bring home the "School to Home Connection: Proud to Be Me!" with discussion questions to talk through with a trusted adult about identities.

Lesson 5: Students can bring home the "Reliable Health Websites For Young People" with discussion questions to talk through with a trusted adult about identities. Have students select a website from the list and ask them to visit at least one with a trusted adult and talk about what they saw and learned about online research.

Lesson 6: Students can complete the "Starting a Family Interview" by interviewing a trusted adult about their decisions around having a family.

Lesson 7: Students can use their guided worksheet to talk to a trusted adult about a contraception method they learned about in class.

Lesson 8: Students can talk to a trusted adult using the provided discussion questions to reflect on what they learned during the lesson.

Lesson 9: Students can complete the "Relationships on TV" School to Home Connection worksheet and share it with a trusted adult at home.

Lesson 10: Students can think through the second scenario on their handout at home, and identify how they would respond in all three roles as done during the lesson.

Lesson 11: Students can complete the "Social MEdia" activity about a celebrity, influencer, or streamer they follow online.

Lesson 12: Students can bring home the decision-making model and teach a trusted adult at home what they learned in class today. They can choose to use their decision-making model with a trusted adult to make a decision in their real life.