

PARENT/GUARDIAN NOTIFICATION LETTER – PLACE ON SCHOOL LETTERHEAD

Dear Parent or Guardian:

HIV and AIDS are among the most serious health problems Americans have ever faced. Advances in medicine now allow people with HIV to live long and healthy lives, but there is still no cure. Health education plays a critical role in helping students learn to make healthy choices and to protect themselves and others.

The New York State Education Department and New York City Public Schools require that HIV education be taught annually to all students in kindergarten through grade 12, as part of comprehensive health education. This year, your child will have the opportunity to learn from a new curriculum, called *Growing Up and Staying Safe*, that is medically accurate, inclusive, age-appropriate, and developed in partnership with national experts, local community leaders, parents/caregivers, and educators. Topics that will be covered at each grade level include:

- Middle school students learn how HIV affects the immune system, characteristics of healthy relationships, and the importance of communicating with parents/guardians or caregivers.
- High school students learn how to avoid behaviors that put them at risk for HIV, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and unintended pregnancy.

We respect your role as parents/guardians in teaching your child about healthy behaviors that support your family's beliefs and values. We encourage you to discuss with your child what they are learning in school and share your beliefs and values with them.

You have the right to excuse your child from certain lessons that teach about methods of HIV prevention. If you would like your child to be excused, you must write a letter to me stating that:

- Your child should not be in the classroom during lessons about methods of HIV prevention; and
- You will teach your child about HIV prevention at home.

Parents, guardians, and schools share a common goal: we want students of all ages to be healthy in all aspects of their lives. We encourage you to speak to your child's teacher, parent coordinator, or me if you'd like to learn more about the curriculum. Please also review the included grade level overview(s) to learn more about the lessons. If you have any questions, please call me at \_\_\_\_\_.

Sincerely,

Principal