



Dear Parents/Guardians of Brooksbank Elementary Students,

Each year, students in all elementary grades throughout BC receive instruction in health education. This information is included in the Physical and Health Education program mandated for all BC students by the Ministry for Education. From time to time, schools bring in experts in the field to address this topic with the school community. We are excited to inform you that this year Saleema Noon of Saleema Noon Sexual Health Educators will be visiting our school to work with parents and students Kindergarten to Grade 7.

Young enough to relate to children and teens, but experienced enough to understand the issues faced by parents, educators, health care professionals, Saleema Noon earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in Family Sciences at UBC. She then researched the quality of sexual health education in B.C. high schools, earning her a Master of Arts degree in sexual health education in 1997, also from UBC. Since then, Saleema has been teaching not only in the field of sexual health, but also in the areas of empowerment, assertiveness training, internet safety, healthy relationships, body image and self-esteem. Step-mom to two teenaged girls, she is the creator of the popular *iGirl and iGuy Empowerment Workshops* for 9-12 year olds.

Respected by the media as a sexual health expert, Saleema has appeared as a regular guest on CTV News, Global News, CBC News, CBC Radio, CKNW Radio, Shaw TV, CityTV *Breakfast Television*, CTV *Morning Live*, *The Kid Carson Show* on KiSS Radio, and also appeared in CBC's *Passionate Eye* documentary *Secrets* and CBC Doc Zone documentary *Sext Up Kids*. Saleema has been featured in *Canadian Living*, *Chatelaine* and *Today's Parent* magazines along with several other national publications, and is the recipient of the Options For Sexual Health's Educator of the Year Award. In 2011, Saleema also received the YWCA Vancouver's Women of Distinction Connecting the Community Award and is a member of the Order of British Columbia. Her book for parents, *Talk Sex Today*, was released in September 2016.

In their Body Science presentations, Saleema Noon and her team of educators work with children of all ages, teaching them about healthy bodies and healthy sexuality in ways they find non-threatening and entertaining. In their own language, children learn about how their bodies change, and what those changes mean.

Based on research and her experience as a sexual health educator, Saleema identifies three reasons why providing this information starting at kindergarten is crucial:

1. Most importantly, studies from all over the world consistently show that children who are educated about healthy bodies, healthy boundaries and healthy sexuality are protected from child sexual abuse. Even if children are not asking questions yet (some never will) we need to give them information about their bodies and help them to develop strong personal boundaries. Sexual offenders (85% of which are known to the victim) prey on children who aren't educated about their bodies and therefore lack the skills to differentiate between appropriate and inappropriate touching. These children find it hard to say "no", especially to an adult, and may not report abuse for fear of getting in trouble.

Smart decisions start here.

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2. Young children are easiest to teach. They are excited to be body scientists, and accept the information very matter-of-factly. Older children and teens, however, often find it difficult to talk about sexual health openly, especially with their parents! This means we have to surmount the embarrassment barrier before they can accept the information they need. The good news is that young children only absorb information they are ready for...everything else just goes above their head. More good news, studies show that children who learn about healthy bodies at an early age from reliable adults in their life delay sexual intercourse.
3. Unfortunately, children today are exposed at earlier and earlier ages to all things involving sex. We, as responsible adults, need to stay one step ahead of this by arming our children with accurate information about sexual health before they get their questions answered on the playground, by older friends or on the internet. We need to teach them to think critically about what they hear, and this allows parents need to establish themselves early as their child's number one source of sexual health information throughout their development.

Please join us for an informative **Presentation for Parents on Tuesday, January 24th from 6:30-8pm**. In this session, Saleema Noon will give an overview of student presentations and, using humor and straight talk in an open, interactive environment, she will show parents how easy it is to convey healthy, meaningful messages about sex and growing up to young children.

The content of these sessions is supported by current research as being age appropriate and we believe that it contributes to healthy child development. Some of the topics Saleema Noon Sexual Health Educators cover in their workshops extend beyond the learning outcomes of the BC Physical and Health Education curriculum. For this reason, participation of students is not required. Attendance at the parent presentation is strongly encouraged, but not required.

Please inform you classroom teacher if you do not wish your child to participate in these workshops.

Please also feel free to phone me at the school if you have any questions and/or concerns about Saleema Noon Sexual Health Educators' presentations.

Sincerely,

Spencer Kelly
Principal, School