

Healthy Schools

**A Toolkit for Creating a
Healthy School Environment**

durham.ca/schools



Healthy Schools Toolkit

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Introduction: Creating a Healthy School

Creating a healthy school environment is an ideal way to affect student health, attitudes and behaviours by providing a supportive social and physical environment for learning. The school environment is a valuable place to influence children's health behaviours as they spend a large amount of their time in this setting.

The Foundations for a Healthy School (2014) document aligns with the components of the School Effectiveness Framework K-12 (2013) and contributes to a learning environment that promotes and supports child and student well-being. "The research is clear: healthy students are better prepared to learn, and education is a key determinant of health" (Foundations for a Healthy School, 2014).

This toolkit provides all members of the school community with strategies to build a healthier school using a comprehensive approach. This includes administrators, teachers, students, parents and community partners. We invite you to explore it and consider using the resources in this toolkit in your school.



What are the benefits of becoming a healthy school?

Using a comprehensive approach to school health helps to influence students and promotes health within and beyond the classroom. The benefits extend beyond the students to school staff, parents and the community at large. Good health supports successful learning and successful learning supports health.

Benefits for Children are:

- Improved academic success
- Better physical, psychological and social health
- Better school attendance
- Improved relationships with teachers and peers
- More parent involvement in school activities
- The development of skills that support healthy choices

Benefits for Parents are:

- Increased communication and parental involvement within schools
- Improved health knowledge and behaviour of the entire family
- An opportunity for parents to advocate for their child's wellness

Benefits for School Communities are:

- Healthy school activities can be combined with an existing school improvement plan or with safe school committee work
- An opportunity to hear new ideas from parents and community members
- Better access to community services and resources
- Higher staff morale which supports their own health
- Staff feel supported in a more productive workplace



Foundations for a Healthy School

What is a Healthy School?

A healthy school takes a comprehensive approach to health in order to affect individual health behaviours and to improve the environments where children, staff and parents live and learn.

In Ontario, the Ministry of Education has provided a framework for healthy schools in a document called Foundations for a Healthy School that follows a comprehensive approach. The Foundations for a Healthy School resource aligns with the components of the K-12 School Effectiveness Framework by including the following five interconnected areas:

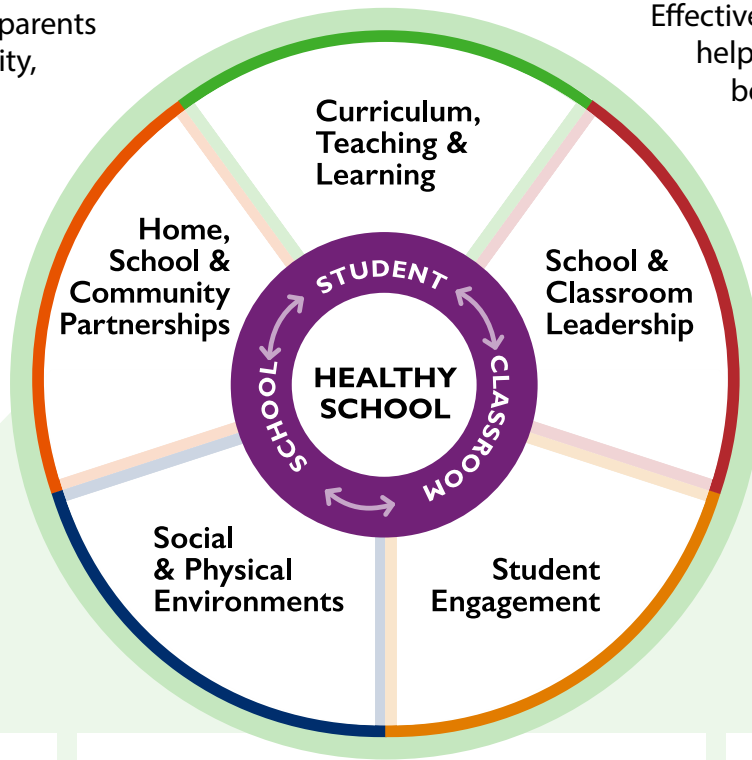
1. Curriculum, Teaching & Learning
2. School & Classroom Leadership
3. Student Engagement
4. Social & Physical Environments
5. Home, School & Community Partnerships

The Foundations for a Healthy School resource addresses six curriculum-linked health topics including:

- Healthy Eating
- Physical Activity
- Personal Safety and Injury Prevention
- Substance Use, Addictions and Related Behaviours
- Growth and Development
- Mental Health

Foundations for a Healthy School

This resource outlines how schools and school boards, in partnership with parents and the community, can develop a healthier school. The foundations for a healthy school are built within five broad areas that have strategies and activities for the school, classroom and student.



These broad areas align with many of the components of the School Effectiveness Framework to help schools and school boards use Foundations for a Healthy School as part of their planning process and as a resource for implementation.

INTEGRATED APPROACH

Key to building a strong foundation is the use of an integrated approach to address a range of health-related topics.

HEALTH-RELATED TOPICS

This resource provides many sample strategies and activities related to six curriculum-linked, health-related topics. A school may choose to address these topics and related living skills in its efforts to become healthier.

- Physical Activity
- Healthy Eating
- Personal Safety and Injury Prevention
- Growth and Development
- Mental Health
- Substance Use, Addictions and Related Behaviours

POSITIVE SCHOOL CLIMATE

Collectively, strategies and activities undertaken within these areas also contribute to a positive school climate, which is also key to a healthy school.

FOUNDATIONS FOR A HEALTHY SCHOOL



Six Steps to Creating a Healthy School Environment

Step 1: Getting Started

The drive for making a healthier school environment may come from anyone in the school community. However, the involvement and support of the school administrator is essential. The idea can be discussed formally or informally within the school community. The idea is to gauge interest, garner support and identify champions. When a school is ready to start the healthy school process, the first step is to contact a public health nurse.

Early on, the concept should be shared with the entire school community. This can be done at a School Community Council (SCC) meeting, school assembly and/or in a newsletter. Students can be informed by school staff, during an assembly or through the school website. Informing the entire school can increase interest and help recruit members for the healthy school initiative.

Establish a Health Action Team (HAT)

Once the entire school has been told about the health initiative and there is interest, a Health Action Team (HAT) can be formed.

The HAT should ideally consist of the principal, vice principal, parents, students, teachers, support staff, community partners and public health nurse. Students are an essential part of the healthy school committee from the very start. They often have excellent ideas for their school and can benefit from an opportunity to explore their creativity. Students in grades 4-12 would be ideal members. Students working on a team will be empowered to make a difference in their school and their example will influence others. As an added bonus, students can use committee time towards their volunteer/community service hours.

The presence of parents on the team is also important. When adults connect with youth, they both can benefit. The adults come to understand the power of youth as effective leaders and the youth need adults to help them with the activities. Parents bring a wealth of knowledge and skills to the team and links to the community.

A HAT can be formed as a sub-committee of the school council or another existing group/club that is already working on health issues such as an Eco School Team, a Safe School Committee or School Improvement Committee.

Team Members

- Students
- Parents
- Administrator
- Teachers
- Public health nurse
- Support staff
- Community partner



HAT Leadership

Choosing a leader is an important step for ensuring the effective functioning of the HAT. The leader can be a parent, teacher, administrator or student. A leader should be someone who is interested in protecting the overall health and well being of the school community. This includes:

- Providing direction for promoting health in the school
- Maintaining open communication among all members of the school
- Encouraging all members of the school community (students, parents and staff) to be involved in school health initiatives
- Taking the lead in planning, implementing and evaluating school health initiatives

The leader of the committee plays a vital role. This can include facilitating meetings and ensuring all members of the committee have an equal opportunity to participate. The leader also assists the other members to stay on track and maintain a vision of the committee's goal.

Other strategies for ensuring the effective functioning of the HAT include:

- Creating a terms of reference
- Holding regular meetings (monthly)
- Preparing agendas and recording minutes
- Evaluating meetings yearly

It is important to keep all school community members updated on the progress of the HAT. HAT meetings should be open to all school members to provide input and suggestions throughout the school year. Meetings and highlights of current committee activities can be promoted via bulletin boards, website or newsletters. This helps to keep the entire school community involved and aware of the school health initiatives. This may also assist in recruiting future HAT members.

See Appendix A and Appendix B for a sample HAT terms of reference and sample HAT agenda.



Step 2: Identify Strengths and Areas for Improvement

Once the HAT has been created, the group needs to decide how to identify the school's strengths and areas for improvement. This can be done through interviews, focus groups or surveys of students, teachers, parents and other staff. Several provincial and national organizations have developed assessment tools that schools can use. A school may wish to develop their own assessment tools. Your school's public health nurse can give information about how to assess the school.

Once the surveys have been done, the data needs to be analyzed. There may be several areas identified to work on and these should be prioritized. Starting "small" may help to prepare the team for tackling larger issues later on when the committee is well established.

See Appendix D for a list of websites that support healthy schools.

Students can benefit from being involved. The healthy schools process encourages collaborative problem solving and group decision making. Students can help in identifying the school health issues and in planning activities to address them. A group approach can be used to broaden their knowledge of health, factors that influence health and their own role.

See Appendix E for sample student focus group discussion questions.

Step 3: Develop a Health Action Plan

Once the priority needs have been identified, the team develops a health action plan to address them. A written health action plan helps schools to visualize their goals, objectives and the strategies required to meet the health need. The health action plan should include strategies and activities within the five areas at the school level, in the classroom, or among students to influence the health of the school community.

1. Curriculum, Teaching & Learning
2. School & Classroom Leadership
3. Student Engagement
4. Social & Physical Environments
5. Home, School & Community Partnerships



Durham Region Health Department has a series of health topic support documents (located in the back pocket of the toolkit or consult your public health nurse) to assist all members of the school community in creating a healthy school environment using a Healthy School approach.

The support documents include the following health topics:

- Healthy Eating
- Tobacco-Free Living
- Physical Activity
- Sun Safety
- Alcohol and Marijuana-Free living
- Mental Health
- Road Safety

The **health topic support documents** include sample strategies and suggested activities within the five areas of the Foundations for a Healthy School. These samples are categorized to be used at the school level, in the classroom or among students to influence the health of the school community.

STEPS FOR A HEALTHY SCHOOL



Creating a Healthy School that supports: **Mental Health**

Mental health is defined as "a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community" (World Health Organization, 2002).

The percentage of students reporting fair to poor mental health in Durham Region is significantly increased.

11% of elementary school students and 22% of secondary students report fair to poor mental health.

48% of elementary school students and 58% of secondary school students report fair to poor mental health.



Creating a Healthy School that supports: **Tobacco-Free Living**

11% of Secondary School students in Durham Region are current smokers.

88% of Durham Region Youth in grades 9-12 have reported using smokeless tobacco at least once in their lifetime.

Tobacco-free living is part of a healthy lifestyle.



Creating a Healthy School that supports: **Sun Safety**





The health action plan should include:

- Identification of the health topic/school health need
- Goals and objectives
- Strategies and activities to be completed (to address health topic/school health need)
- Individuals responsible for each activity
- Timeline for completing each activity

For each health need identified, the HAT should consider:

- What is it that we want to achieve? (health goal)
- Who are the individuals we want to affect? (target group)
- What kinds of strategies will we use to achieve the health goal?
- What resources will be required to complete this activity? (time, people and money)
- What is the expected outcome of the activity?
- How will the success of the activity be evaluated and or measured?

The health action plan should be shared with all school community members. The plan can be combined with the school's growth plan or improvement plan to ensure that progress is sustained.

See Appendix F for a Health Action Plan template.

See Appendix G for a sample Health Action Plan.

Step 4: Implement the Plan

In this step, the plan is put into action. Continue to make sure that the entire school community is aware of the work that the team is doing. This can be done by using school announcements, websites and newsletters.

Recognition can be a good incentive for sustaining the work of the team. Durham Region Health Department offers the Healthy School Award to local elementary and secondary schools. Contact your school's public health nurse for information.

Many schools have completed successful activities. Several of their stories are highlighted in Appendix H.





Step 5: Review and Adjust the Plan

Evaluating the team's progress is important and will help to improve and expand plans for the future. This may be done at the end of the school year. During this step, the HAT can:

- Refer back to their action plan
- Review the goals, objectives and indicators of success they identified for their chosen health topic
- Think about what has been achieved
- Decide what changes could be made to the plan
- Decide on future directions

Some questions to consider when evaluating the plan are:

- What were the successes?
- What were the challenges?
- Who was involved (e.g. students, parents, staff and community partners)?
- What feedback did participants give about the various initiatives?
- What could be improved for next time?
- Did the activity assist in achieving the goal?
- Has there been any positive change in behaviour and/or attitudes?

See Appendix I for a sample Healthy School Evaluation Tool.

Step 6: Celebrate

Finally, take the time to celebrate all of the hard work and dedication of the team and the entire school community. The work and commitment of a HAT can take a lot of time and energy but working together can be fun and rewarding. The end results of changing health behaviours and attitudes have positive life-long effects for the individuals and the community.

To get started with your Health Action Team, call your school's public health nurse or call the Durham Health Connection Line at 905-666-6241 or 1-800-841-2729.

The Role of the Public Health Nurse in Durham Region Schools

Each school in Durham Region has an assigned public health nurse working in the area of chronic disease prevention and prevention of injury and substance misuse. The public health nurse works with schools to promote and assist in the implementation of healthy schools initiatives.

Your school's public health nurse can provide support with:

- Health Action Teams and initiatives
- Assessing the needs of the school
- Developing strategies to meet the school's identified health needs
- Assisting the school community in carrying out planned activities
- Evaluating the success and challenges of planned activities
- Developing policies and guidelines
- Linking to other Health Department programs/divisions or community agencies

Here are some examples of the activities:

- Consultations with school staff on a variety of health topics and health events
- Curriculum support to teachers
- School Community Council support
- Consultation on developing a Healthy School Guideline or a school board Healthy School Policy
- Supporting the school community through welcome to kindergarten events

Contact your school's public health nurse or call Durham Health Connection Line at 905-666-6241 or 1-800-841-2729.



Appendix A: Health Action Team Terms of Reference

Sample

Goals:

- To have a healthy school environment that includes social, emotional, spiritual and physical well-being of the entire school community
- To broaden emphasis on health education beyond the classroom curriculum (e.g., hallways, school yard, home, etc.)
- To identify and support healthy activities already taking place as a foundation for new ideas

Objectives:

- To prioritize the identified issues and concerns
- To develop a health action plan collaboratively including members of the school community, using sub-committees, whenever necessary
- To review/evaluate the progress and outcomes of the committee activities at the beginning of each meeting
- To advise the School Community Council and principal on matters related to a healthy school community
- Place a Healthy School Suggestion Box in the library and review any suggestions at the meetings
- Provide information about the Health Action Team on the school website, including a place for suggestions

Membership:

Representatives from the following groups:

- students (grades 4-12)
- staff and parents
- principal or vice principal
- public health nurse

The number of committee members can be flexible except for student representatives, which should be limited to two per grade. Membership is voluntary. One member of the committee should also be involved with the School Community Council.

Chairperson:

- One person from the committee should be the Chairperson, or shared Chair with the public health nurse
- Duties include chairing the meetings, writing and sending out agendas, assigning someone to take minutes from each meeting (this duty can be rotated)

Meeting Time:

- Meetings shall take place on _____
- Meetings to be held monthly, until the committee is established, then a minimum of five meetings per year
- Evaluate frequency of meetings every year



Appendix B: Agenda for Health Action Team Inaugural Meeting

Sample

Agenda for Health Action Team Inaugural Meeting

Durham Region School

Health Action Team Meeting

Date: September 7, 2016

Time: 3:30 – 4:30 pm

Location: Library

- 1.0 Welcome and Introductions
- 2.0 Volunteer to Take Minutes
- 3.0 Approval of Agenda
- 4.0 Overview of the Healthy School Process
- 5.0 Establish Health Action Team (HAT) Name
- 6.0 Review Terms of Reference
- 6.1 Establish Roles and Responsibilities
- 7.0 Next Steps
- 8.0 Next Meeting Date: _____

Appendix C: Creating a Healthy School that supports:

Creating a healthy school that supports: (identified health topic)

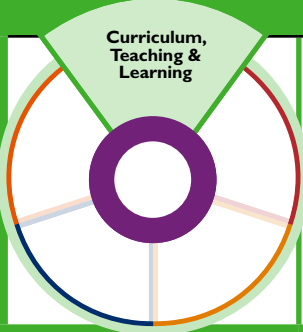
This appendix describes how the health topic support documents (located in back pocket of toolkit or consult your public health nurse) can be used to support your school in creating a healthy environment.


Health topic support documents provide all members of the school community with strategies to build a healthier school. Using a healthy school approach to contribute to a positive school environment involves coordinating strategies that have a common purpose and set of values in the following areas:

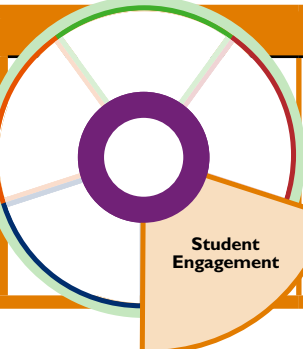
1. Curriculum, Teaching and Learning
2. School and Classroom Leadership
3. Student Engagement
4. Social and Physical Environment
5. Home, School and Community Partnerships

The table on page 20 and 21 reflects the model used by the Ministry of Education's Foundations for a Healthy School (2014). Summarized are descriptions of the five areas and sample strategies and suggested activities. These samples are categorized to be used at the school level, in the classroom or among students to influence the health of the school community.

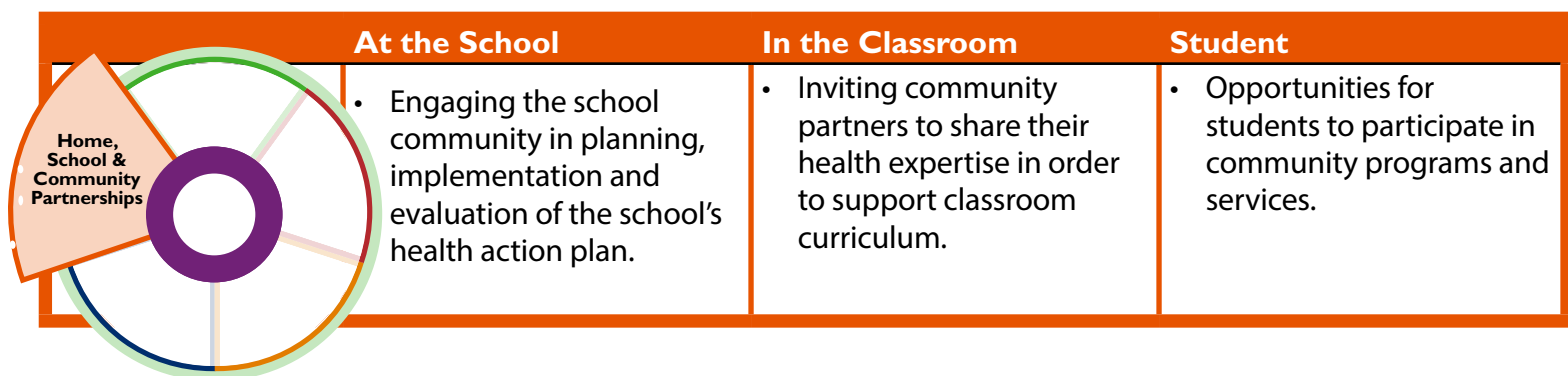
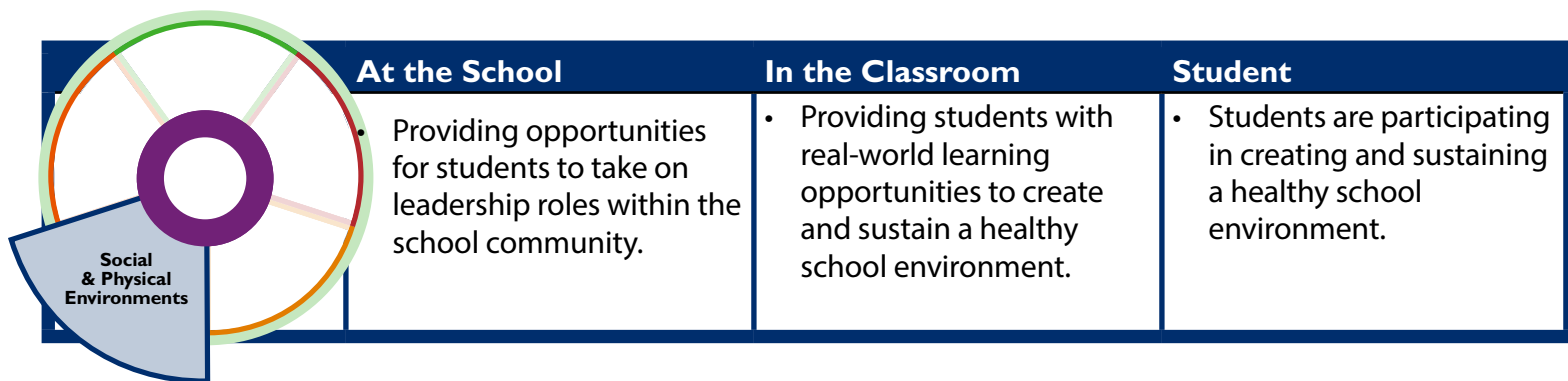
Foundations for a Healthy School model

	At the School	In the Classroom	Student
 <p>Curriculum, Teaching & Learning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School-wide focus on learning that enables students to align health related learning with a variety of curriculum programs and initiatives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaging the classroom to learn about importance of health. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assisting students to identify reliable sources of health information.

	At the School	In the Classroom	Student
 <p>School & Classroom Leadership</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conducting health surveys of the school community to assist in the development and implementation of a health action plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creating a learning environment that positively role models healthy behaviours and assists students to make decisions about their own health. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students are being engaged in implementing healthy school policies and programs.

	At the School	In the Classroom	Student
 <p>Student Engagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Making sure there are opportunities for students to engage in school-wide programs and initiatives such as, health action teams. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing opportunities for students to use technology to get engaged on real-world health topics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students are being engaged to plan, implement and evaluate health initiatives.





For sample strategies and activities related to specific health topics, consult with your public health nurse. Your public health nurse will assist your school in using a healthy school approach to address the following health topics:

- Healthy Eating
- Tobacco-Free Living
- Physical Activity
- Sun Safety
- Alcohol and Marijuana Free Living
- Mental Health
- Road Safety
- Other

Also review the Ministry of Education's Foundations for a Healthy School: Promoting well-being is part of Ontario's Achieving Excellence Vision, A companion resource to the K-12 School Effectiveness framework (2014).

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Appendix D: Websites to Support Healthy Schools

Durham Region Health Department (Healthy Schools Website) – www.durham.ca/schools

Durham Catholic District School Board - www.dcdsb.ca

Durham District School Board - www.ddsb.ca

Kawartha Pine Ridge School Board - www.kprschools.ca

Peterborough Victoria Northumberland and Clarington Catholic District School Board - www.pvnccdsb.on.ca

Canadian Association for School Health - www.cash-aces.ca/index.asp

Ministry of Education - www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teachers/healthyschools.html

Ontario Healthy Schools Coalition – www.ontariohealthyschools.com

Ontario Physical and Health Education Association (Ophea)- www.ophea.net

Public Health Agency of Canada - www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/hp-ps/index-eng.php

Safe and Healthy Schools - www.safehealthyschools.org

World Health Organization (WHO) - www.who.int/topics/school_health_promotion/en

Health Canada - www.healthycanadians.gc.ca/healthy-living-vie-saine/index-eng.php

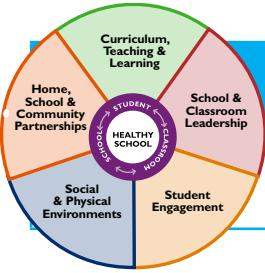
Physical and Health Education Canada- www.phecanada.ca/programs/healthy-school-communities



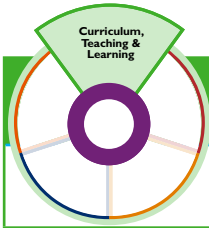
Appendix E: Student Focus Group Questionnaire

1. What does health mean to you?
2. Is this school a happy, positive place to learn and play? Why or why not?
3. What people are available in the school to help you stay healthy and happy? (public health nurse, social workers, education assistants)
4. How does the school encourage you to be healthy? (health topics, physical activity, healthy eating, field trips, hot lunch/breakfast programs, smoke-free)
5. Is the school safe and healthy inside and outside the building? (washrooms, air quality, cleanliness, traffic safety, etc.) Why/Why not/Suggestions?
6. How does the school encourage students to get along with each other? (peer mentoring programs, anti-bullying campaigns, code of conduct)
7. Picture your school in 5 years from now. What would you like to see? How would you do this?

School Name: _____
 School Year: _____
 Priority Health Topic: _____
 Goal: _____
 Objectives: _____



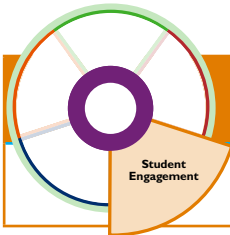
Existing Activities/ Strengths	Plan For New Activities and/ or Action	Indicators of Success	Timeline	Who is Responsible?
	(school, student, classroom)			




Existing Activities/ Strengths	Plan For New Activities and/or Action	Indicators of Success	Timeline	Who is Responsible?
	(school, student, classroom)			




Existing Activities/ Strengths	Plan For New Activities and/or Action	Indicators of Success	Timeline	Who is Responsible?
	(school, student, classroom)			



Existing Activities/ Strengths	Plan For New Activities and/or Action	Indicators of Success	Timeline	Who is Responsible?
	(school, student, classroom)			



Existing Activities/ Strengths	Plan For New Activities and/or Action	Indicators of Success	Timeline	Who is Responsible?
	(school, student, classroom)			



Existing Activities/ Strengths	Plan For New Activities and/or Action	Indicators of Success	Timeline	Who is Responsible?
	(school, student, classroom)			

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School Name: ABC School

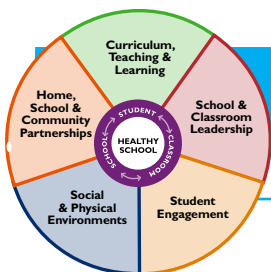
School Year: 2015/2016

Priority Health Topic: *Tobacco-Free Living*

Goal: *To improve the health of our school community (e.g. students, staff and parents) through tobacco-free living awareness and healthy behaviours*

Objectives:

- *To enhance the school environment to support tobacco-free living.*
- *To increase students, staff and parent's knowledge of the effects of tobacco use and emerging issues and how to be tobacco-free.*

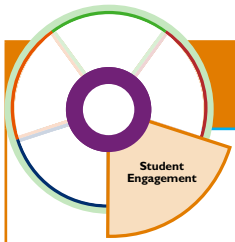


Existing Activities/ Strengths	Plan For New Activities and/or Action	Indicators of Success	Timeline	Who is Responsible?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (school, student, classroom) 			

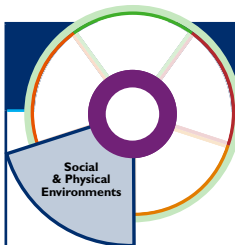
Existing Activities/ Strengths	Plan For New Activities and/or Action	Indicators of Success	Timeline	Who is Responsible?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include tobacco-free messages/content in all courses • Use of Health Department "Be tobacco-free curriculum support" resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have students create a school-wide anti-smoking campaign • School announcements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are better informed about tobacco-free living 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May • Daily 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher/Students • Student rep

Existing Activities/ Strengths	Plan For New Activities and/or Action	Indicators of Success	Timeline	Who is Responsible?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No smoking decals on doors • Smoke-Free Ontario Act is enforced on school property 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with a public health nurse to offer Brief Contact Intervention (BCI) training for teachers to help students quit • Partner with your school's public health nurse to plan a quit smoking program for students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff can support students to quit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • December • January 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrator • Administrator/Teacher






Existing Activities/ Strengths	Plan For New Activities and/or Action	Indicators of Success	Timeline	Who is Responsible?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students, your school's Public Health Nurse, and school staff all form a Health Action Team (HAT) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include the topic of tobacco use prevention into school leadership or peer helper programs Fundraising events that support the Smoke Free Ontario Act 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students are not smoking and learn about the harmful effects of tobacco Fundraisers support tobacco-free living messages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> November Annually 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher/Students Administrator/ Teachers



Existing Activities/ Strengths	Plan For New Activities and/or Action	Indicators of Success	Timeline	Who is Responsible?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-smoking signs are posted on school property Teachers do not smoke where students can see them Tobacco-free living newsletter tips 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote tobacco-free living at parent information nights, student assemblies and staff meetings Display posters/ resources that encourage students to quit smoking Encourage the school community to follow the tobacco-free policy through awareness raising activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A healthy environment for students and staff. Guidelines/Policies are created to include tobacco emerging issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> October November June 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher/Students Teacher/Students Administrator/ Teachers



Existing Activities/ Strengths	Plan For New Activities and/or Action	Indicators of Success	Timeline	Who is Responsible?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner with the school's Public Health Nurse to assess the tobacco needs in your school community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invite a guest speaker (e.g. local athlete) to talk about the health effects of tobacco and sports Connect with a community agency or your school's Public Health Nurse to offer quit smoking programs for youth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff and students work towards a tobacco-free school environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> October January 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administrator/ Teacher/Parents Administrator/ Teacher

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Appendix H: Healthy School Success Stories

Valley View Public School wins Premier’s Award for Accepting Schools

For the past several years, a priority of Valley View Public School has been to provide the school community with a safe, accepting, friendly, and welcoming environment. Valley View Public School actively collaborates with their school’s public health nurse to create an environment supportive of health. In keeping with Durham District School Board’s new Ignite Learning initiative, “Valuing the richness in the diversity of our community”, Valley View has been determined to meet the needs of all learners and enhance the celebration of diversity. The school’s Safe Schools Team (WHTH – We’re Here To Help team) decided to make this initiative a major focus at Valley View.

With the learner in mind, WHTH decided to look at the “whole child” and develop a variety of initiatives that would encourage parents as partners, enhance inclusiveness within the student body, and engage staff in providing an energetic and academic agenda that would meet everyone’s needs.

The growing student population is quickly made to feel at home within Valley View’s walls through many welcoming initiatives such as the annual Moms Meeting Moms night or its school-wide Peer Awareness Day. Valley View prides itself on its warm, safe, inclusive, and welcoming community, and will strive to maintain this for years to come. Recognizing the commitment of all members of the school community in developing a welcoming and inclusive school, the staff, students, parents, and community partners nominated Valley View Public School for the Premier’s Award for Accepting Schools.

In November 2014, Valley View Public School was honoured to be a recipient of the Premier’s Award for Accepting Schools for 2013-2014. For a complete review of initiatives set by the WHTH team, visit <https://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/safeschools/2014award.html>

Along with the Premier’s Award, Valley View Public School has also been recognized for achieving The Healthy School Award 2014 and 2015 (Gold level) in Resiliency and Positive Mental Health.



Students at Bolton C. Falby Public School rethink their drink

A group of intermediate students on a health team at Bolton C. Falby Public School in Ajax noticed a lot of students drinking sugary drinks.

“Every day at school I see students drinking pop, energy drinks, sports drinks and juice boxes. Just look in the recycling bin and you will see all the empty containers. This is too much sugar!”

Here are the Facts:

- 38 % of elementary and secondary students in Durham Region drink pop/sports drinks 2-4 times a week (OSDUS, 2010-2011).
- Sugary drinks are the main source of added sugar in the daily diets of children and youth.

Too many sugary drinks can lead to tooth decay, weight gain and obesity.

The health team was motivated to help staff and students live healthier. With support from the school’s public health nurse and the Oral Health division, they developed a “Rethink your Drink” school health plan.

Goals:

- To raise awareness about the negative health effects of drinking too many sugary drinks.
- To encourage the school community to “Rethink your Drink”.

Actions:

- The health team developed fun presentations for primary, junior and intermediate students. The presentations included: a skit, cartoon clips, an action song about drinking water, the sugar shocker activity and a student quiz.
- In the sugar shocker activity, students had to guess how much sugar was in different sugary drinks. This promoted skills in counting, reading the nutrition facts table and calculating which drinks had the most sugar. Students were excited to be involved and shocked to find out how much sugar they were drinking.
- To test their knowledge and engage the entire school community, a contest was held where students developed posters promoting water as the best choice. The top winners received prizes and the posters were displayed on the healthy schools bulletin board.
- Students also delivered morning announcements promoting healthier choices and all students brought home a Health Department “Rethink your Drink” resource to share with their parents.



Results:

- The team raised awareness about the health risks of drinking too many sugary drinks.
- Staff and students are excited to “live healthier” and choose water more often.
- This student engagement opportunity was a great way for youth to actively contribute to school health, their learning and well-being.

Tobacco-Free Living: Local Success Stories

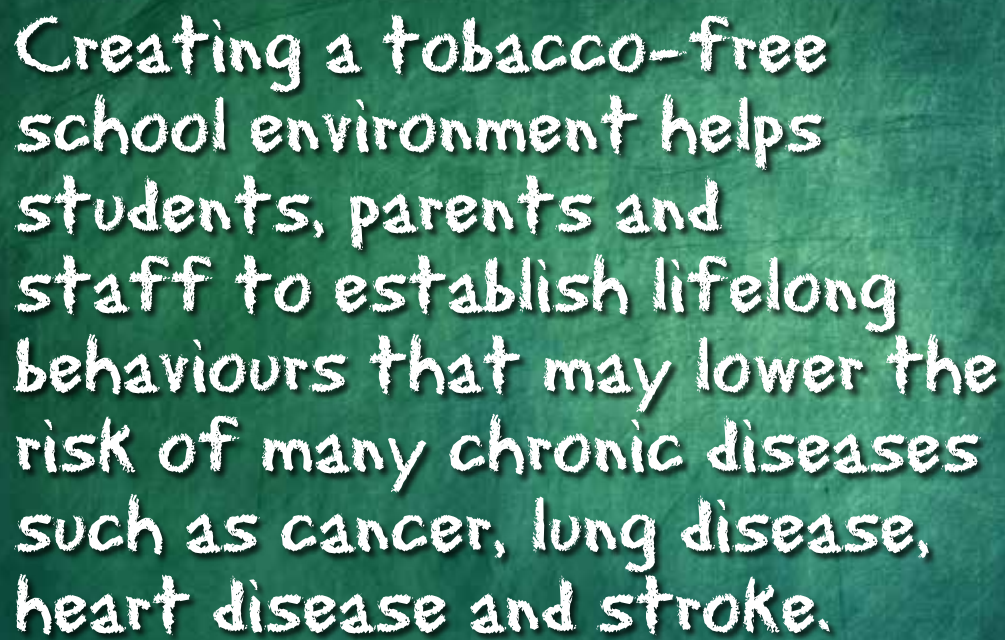
Almost everyone who smokes begins during their school-aged years. Preventing children from starting to smoke will result in fewer new smokers (Propel Centre for Population Health Impact, 2012). Creating a tobacco-free school environment helps to influence students and promotes health within the classroom and beyond. Youth who are empowered to plan and carry out tobacco prevention activities, can make a difference in their school on issues that affect them. This engagement helps youth to develop positive assets, including life skills (Centres of Excellence for Youth Engagement, 2003).

In collaboration with the public health nurse (PHN), a tobacco-free school environment was created at **Notre Dame C.S.S.** This school incorporated an authentic youth engagement design through a tobacco-free living prevention program, Know What’s in Your Mouth (KWIYM). The KWIYM is a campaign developed to increase awareness of chewing tobacco and its health effects. 10% of Durham Region Secondary School Students reported using smokeless tobacco products at least once in their lifetime (RRFSS). This school engaged their youth by creating a youth and adult partnership, and sharing the decision-making for the initiated projects. Students increased awareness of smokeless tobacco through a school assembly, public announcements, and displays. This creative group of youth designed the graphics for their stress balls and t-shirts, used as promotional items for their activities. Students were encouraged to sign a banner pledge in support of increasing awareness of the harms of smokeless tobacco and included messaging “Did you know?Now I know!” Students also provided information on healthy alternatives to smoking such as healthy eating by providing healthy snacks during their anti-tobacco week at the school.

Student leaders and staff at **O’Neill C.V.I.** took steps towards creating a tobacco-free school environment together with the public health nurse (PHN) by promoting and implementing the Quit 4 Life (Q4L) program. The Quit 4 Life Program is a program designed to help youth quit smoking cigarettes and exists because smoking is the leading preventable cause of serious illness and death in Canada. According to the Tobacco Use in Canada survey 2011, 60% of smokers aged 15 to 19 were seriously considering quitting. The cessation program at this school ran for 5 weeks over the lunch period. The Quit 4 Life program was promoted using posters, flyers and public announcements. Students were encouraged to



bring a friend and/or a support person to the sessions. Throughout the sessions, the students attending the group were engaged in activities and expressed that the program supported them in quitting smoking or cutting back. Upon completion of the sessions, students received a Q4L certificate.

A green chalkboard with a brown wooden frame, containing white text with a drop shadow effect.

Creating a tobacco-free school environment helps students, parents and staff to establish lifelong behaviours that may lower the risk of many chronic diseases such as cancer, lung disease, heart disease and stroke.



Appendix I: Sample Healthy School Evaluation Tool

Evaluating the team's progress is important and will help to improve and expand plans for the future. This may be done at the end of the school year. During this step, the HAT can:

- Refer back to their action plan
- Review the goals, objectives and indicators of success they identified for their chosen health topic
- Think about what has been achieved
- Decide what changes could be made to the plan
- Decide on future directions.

Some questions to consider when evaluating the plan are:

1. What were the successes?
2. What were the challenges?
3. Who was involved (e.g. students, parents, staff, community partners)?
4. What feedback did participants give about the various initiatives?
5. What could be improved for next time?
6. Did the activity assist in achieving the goal?
7. Has there been any positive change in behaviours and/or attitudes?

References

Ontario Ministry of Education. (2014). Foundations for a Healthy School. Retrieved from <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/healthyschools/resourceF4HS.pdf>

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