

Become a healthier school

Speak with your school administration about Healthy Schools.

Step 1: Form a Healthy School Committee

Form a committee or link with an existing one. Ideally members should include students, staff and community partners.

Identify your leaders – a student-staff partnership is ideal. These consistent, committed people will provide direction to your Healthy Schools initiative.

Call *York Region Health Connection* to link with the Secondary School Program. They will support your leaders and school by providing consultation and resources.

Step 2: Survey your school to identify strengths and needs

Take a closer look at your school from a health perspective. Identify areas of strength and areas where improvements could be made. Based on your findings, you may decide to take on a topic such as injury prevention, tobacco and substance use or nutrition.

Step 3: Develop and carry out the Action Plan

Meet regularly to work through the steps to a healthier school. Use a comprehensive approach, and recognize this process takes time.

Step 4: Evaluate and celebrate achievements

Review and evaluate your committee work and activities, and celebrate your accomplishments.

The Secondary School program was created to support schools incorporating a Comprehensive School Health approach. Our programs and services are funded by the Ministry of Health Promotion and the Regional Municipality of York. Our team consists of Public Health Nurses, Public Health Nutritionists, Health Educators and Public Health Inspectors.

We can provide:

- Ongoing consultation
- Resources
- Support for health policy development
- Links to community organizations
- Referrals to public health services
- Educational workshops
- Displays

Topics include:

- Environment: energy conservation, climate change and improved air quality
- Food Safety: safe handling and preparation of food
- Healthy eating and nutrition
- Injury prevention: recreational and road safety
- Physical activity
- Sexual health
- Substance use and abuse prevention
- Sun safety and planning for shade in your school
- Tattooing and body piercing
- Tobacco-free living



Make **choices** today
for a **healthier** tomorrow

Healthy Secondary Schools

The York Region Community and Health Services Department is committed to supporting schools to promote, protect and enhance the health of everyone in the school community.

www.york.ca/health

 York Region

For more information, please contact York Region *Health Connection*

1-800-361-5653

Healthy Schools have learning environments where youth are supported and encouraged to make healthier lifestyle choices.

The Healthy Schools approach:

- ✓ Focuses on health issues specific to the needs and concerns of your school community
- ✓ Is comprehensive and includes four components:
 - 1 high quality instruction and programs
 - 2 a healthy physical environment
 - 3 a supportive social environment
 - 4 community partnerships
- ✓ Is ongoing (instead of one-time events), with participation and collaboration from your entire school community including: students, school staff and community partners

Why a comprehensive approach?

Being comprehensive enhances the physical, mental, social and spiritual health of the whole school community. It can strengthen your school's capacity to be a healthier setting for living, learning and working.

Best practice findings

There is an inextricable link between students' health and their ability to learn.

WHO, 1996

A resiliency focus allows us to see all individuals as being "at promise" instead of "at risk". We are facilitating rather than fixing, pointing to health rather than dysfunction, turning away from limiting labels to wholeness and well-being.

Search Institute 2003

Encourage youth to help one another through peer-to-peer programs.

Centre for Excellence for Youth Engagement 2007

Research in the areas of educational improvement and health promotion show that interventions to support student learning and health are best implemented within the context of a comprehensive school health (Healthy Schools) approach.

Ophea, 2009

Youth need accurate, developmentally appropriate information delivered in a non-judgemental format, which emphasizes their choices, responsibilities and consequences. Youth need to be prepared, not scared.

Wolfe, Jaffe & Crooks 2006

The Healthy Schools approach complements school improvement, safe and supportive schools and the Ministry of Education's Healthy Schools Recognition Program.

Healthy Schools promote engaged, motivated learners, and help to:

- focus on academic achievement and health for all
- promote access to community resources
- develop positive relationships and environments
- use multiple approaches to address identified problems
- support student-led youth engagement
- build resilience and developmental assets
- encourage sustainability and capacity building
- provide leadership experience
- earn community service hours
- implement a year-long plan for healthy school policy
- acknowledge accomplishments



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