GUIDELINE

Health promotion in schools

Scope (Staff): Community health nurses
Scope (Area): CAHS-CH, WACHS

This document should be read in conjunction with this DISCLAIMER

Aim
To provide nurses with a framework for supporting and delivering health promotion activities in schools using a health promoting schools approach.

Risk
Non-adherence to this guideline could result in missed opportunities to support the health of all in the school community.

Definitions
The terms health promotion and health education are often used as interchangeable concepts. In reality, they are distinct activities which are defined below.

**Health promotion** focuses on ‘socioeconomic and environmental determinants of health and participatory involvement, and includes the narrower concept of health education.’ In a school setting this could be defined as any structured or planned activity undertaken to improve and/or protect the health of all school users, e.g. policies and environmental changes.

**Health education** involves ‘giving information and teaching individuals and communities how to achieve or improve health.’ In the school setting this would include activities, such as, nurse conducting education sessions related to the health curriculum in collaboration with the teacher.

Background
The concept of Health Promoting Schools (HPS) is based on the understanding that positive health and education outcomes can only be achieved through a comprehensive, coordinated and sustained approach which addresses the physical, social, mental, emotional and environmental dimensions of health and wellbeing. There is evidence to support that students who are healthy and happy learn better and that improved educational outcomes have a positive effect on health outcomes for children and young people.

Schools play a major role in developing health knowledge, attitudes and skills, and influencing health behaviours. Health promotion can therefore be cost effectively incorporated into this pre-existing structure. In addition, schools provide an opportunity to reach all children, regardless of socioeconomic background, ethnicity or geography.

The World Health Organization (WHO) developed a framework for health-promoting schools during the 1990s and has continued to support this through their Global school health initiative. The concept of the health-promoting school is international in its scope,
with many countries around the world, including Australia, working on programs which support schools and their communities in better health actions. This model is used at local, national, regional and global levels.\textsuperscript{6} In Western Australia, the Department of Education (DOE), Child and Adolescent Health Services-Community Health (CAHS-CH), WA Country Health Services (WACHS) and the Western Australia Health Promoting Schools Association (WAHPSA) endorse this same model.

**Key Points**

- Nurses are encouraged to work with school staff, and staff from other government or non-government agencies when appropriate, as part of a collaborative approach to developing health promoting behaviours in schools.\textsuperscript{7}

- Nurses’ knowledge of local and school specific health and wellbeing needs can assist schools with prioritising health promotion activities.

- School health promotion priorities and strategies are identified in school Service Level Agreements or other local plans as negotiated between regional Health and Education providers.

- The use of the Health Promoting Schools Framework is encouraged when supporting schools to plan, implement and evaluate school-based health promotion programs.

- Familiarity with the Department of Education’s *Behaviour and Wellbeing* policies, which include the *Healthy Promoting Schools Framework* as a model for promoting health in schools, is important.

**Principles of Health Promoting Schools**

“A health promoting school:

- promotes the health and well-being of students
- enhances the learning outcomes of students
- upholds social justice and equity concepts
- provides a safe and supportive environment
- links health and education issues and systems
- addresses the health and well-being of all school staff
- collaborates with parents and the local community
- integrates health into the school’s ongoing activities, curriculum and assessment standards
- sets realistic goals built on accurate data and sound scientific evidence
- seeks continuous improvement through ongoing monitoring and evaluation.”\textsuperscript{4} p.9

**Health Promoting Schools Framework**

The recognition that any approach to improve outcomes needs to encompass a broader inter-relationship between health and education is the basis of the World Health Organization’s *Health Promoting Schools Framework*. This is what most contemporary school health frameworks are based upon.\textsuperscript{6}
The health promoting schools approach involves people from across the whole school community working together and using the Health Promoting Schools Framework to plan and deliver positive and comprehensive health promoting action.

The Health Promoting Schools Framework is one which considers the broad health needs of all school community members. These health needs are addressed collaboratively using a combination of strategies linked to the three interrelated components of the framework which is illustrated in Figure 1 below: **Curriculum, teaching and learning**; **School organisation, ethos and environment**; and **Partnerships and services**.4, 5, 8

![Figure 1: Health Promoting Schools Framework](image)

Examples of how nurses can use the Health Promoting Schools Framework are shown in Table 1 below.

**Table 1: Strategies for implementing the Health Promoting Schools Framework**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education (curriculum, teaching, learning, professional development)</th>
<th>Actively seek to be informed about and support curriculum in learning outcome areas.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Facilitate access to health related resources and information to assist teachers in delivery of teaching and learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Collaborate with school staff and others to provide evidence-based growth and development education to students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Provide professional health-related development sessions for staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment (physical, cultural, policies, procedures)</td>
<td>Advocate for the development of health promoting policies within the school community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Advocate for health promoting changes to the physical and</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Health promotion in schools

| Partnerships (students, families, staff, professionals and agencies, community) | Be informed about external services, programs and resources which can add value to the health and wellbeing of students, staff and the broader school community.

Assist the school to engage and involve parents in the life of the school community.

Assist the school to build partnerships with external stakeholders.

Collaborate with student services teams and be a key resource to school-based health and wellbeing committees. |

Community Health resources

The following resources have been developed for the topics listed below using a Health Promoting Schools Framework approach and include strategies specific to each topic area; evidence-based resources; curriculum support materials; and, professional support materials in each topic area. These endorsed resources, along with other endorsed school health resources, can be accessed from the Primary and Secondary school health pages on HealthPoint under Staff resources.

- Alcohol and other drugs
- Controlling infections in the school setting
- Healthy eating (includes dental health)
- Injury prevention
- Tobacco use prevention
- Mental health and resilience (includes bullying)
- Physical activity
- Relationships and sexuality
- Sun protection

The information provided in the resource documents is intended as a guide to support health promotion activity around these various topics. When approaching these topics with individuals or groups, it is important to consider the specific needs of the target audience to ensure age appropriateness, literacy and cultural sensitivity.

Related internal policies, procedures and guidelines

The following documents can be accessed in the Community Health Manual via the HealthPoint link or the Internet link

Confidentiality and adolescents

School Health Service Policy
# School Health Service Rationale

## Related internal resources and forms

The following resources and forms can be accessed from the HealthPoint CACH Intranet link:

**Health Promotion in Schools resources** – CAHS-CH developed resources which align with the *Health Promoting Schools Framework* approach. The resources include: evidence-based resources, curriculum support materials and professional support materials for 11 topics.

**Presentation Template** - *Note:* this template should be used for all presentations delivered by CACH staff in schools to ensure consistency of information delivery.

**School-aged Health Service Review: Report and Recommendations (2018)**

**Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)** – A copy of the current signed MOU is available

**Service Level Agreements (SLAs)** - templates are available for primary, secondary, district high and education support schools

## Useful external resources

- **Australian Health Promoting Schools Association** - The association has joined with the Australian Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation (ACHPER) and advocates and supports a whole school and community approach to health and wellbeing. Provides resources and links to organisations and programs that work with schools to promote health and wellbeing.

- **Department of Education (Behaviour and Wellbeing)** – Whole school approaches including Health Promoting Schools Framework

- **Duty of Care for Students (Department of Education)**

- **The International Union for Health Promotion and Education** (IUHPE) – IUHPE provides information and evidence-base reference documents for health promotion in schools. There are also links to resources and international examples of Health Promoting Schools.

- **Student Health Care Policy**

- **WA Health Promoting Schools Association** – WAHPSA is an advocacy group which provides state, national and international resources; discussion forums and website links to organisations and resources.

## References

1. Rainburger B. Contemporary Health Promotion in Nursing Practice. Second ed.


