



Healthy Schools



National Healthy School Standard  
**Getting started**  
*- A guide for schools*



# Ministers' foreword

We believe that schools are one of the key settings in which to promote the health of young people and the wider community. The knowledge, skills and attitudes which we learn and practise whilst at school stay with us for life. Schools can be springboards to future long term health contributing to reductions in coronary heart disease, cancer and accidents. That is why the Government has consistently identified personal, social and health education as a vital element of both the public health strategy and the overall mission to raise educational standards and achievements and reduce inequalities and social exclusion. We set up a joint Ministerial group to advise on the place of personal, social and health education in the curriculum and announced our determination that all schools should be helped to become healthy schools in the *Excellence in Schools* White Paper (1997) and the *Our Healthier Nation* Green Paper (1998). This message was reiterated in the *Saving Lives, Our Healthier Nation* White Paper earlier this year.

The review of the National Curriculum is now complete and personal, social and health education and citizenship are assured of their place in the curriculum. The National Healthy School Standard and the new personal, social and health education framework support each other and engage everyone - staff, pupils, governors, parents and the wider community.

This document sets out the benefits to schools, pupils, staff and the community of taking part in healthy school activities. They are illustrated by real examples of the experience of healthy schools work and the testimony of headteachers, teachers and pupils about the difference that participating in healthy schools work has made to them and their schools. We must build on this if we are to improve educational achievement, health and emotional well-being, and make schools a safe, secure and healthy environment in which young people can learn and develop.

The strength of the National Healthy School Standard is that it combines a national quality standard with the flexibility for local partnerships and schools to decide on what they need and what works for them. The links with other Government actions are clear. Health and Education Zones, Health Improvement Plans and Education Development Plans and the range of work on promoting social inclusion, reducing truancy and exclusion and reducing teenage pregnancy will all support and benefit from the National Healthy School Standard.

We are very grateful to the partnerships and schools in the eight pilot health and education partnership areas for piloting this initiative and for their commitment to the Healthy School ideal. Many other people involved in all aspects of health and education from all over the country, such as Drug Action Teams and the School Nursing Service, have also contributed their expertise and knowledge.

There has been a magnificent response to the early phase of the Standard. Every local education authority in England has joined forces with their local health authorities to participate in working towards the National Healthy School Standard. It is important that we make the most of this enthusiasm and commitment and ensure that the standard reaches everywhere. It remains our ambition that all schools should become healthy schools. Our target is that this should start to happen in the majority of schools by 2002. We owe this to our children still at school and to future generations.

Signed



*Tessa Jowell*

Tessa Jowell for DH



*Jacqui Smith*

Jacqui Smith for DfEE

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# Introduction

Every school wants to help its young people shine.



It's self-evident that pupils can fulfil their potential only when they are healthy, happy and at ease in all areas of their lives.

The National Healthy School Standard is designed to give as much practical support as possible for schools to create an enjoyable, safe, productive learning environment and minimise potential health risks.

This means specific work on issues like drug use, sex and relationships education, physical exercise, safety, bullying and healthy eating, as well as strengthening an overall awareness of pupils' and staff's social and emotional well being.

The National Healthy School Standard has been designed to support and complement the new Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) framework to be available to all schools in November 1999. Schools with a successful PSHE programme will be able to apply the learning and experience gained to the work involved in attaining the National Healthy School Standard. Similarly, schools which are looking at working across the range of themes covered by the Standard, will be strengthening their PSHE programme and involving the whole school community in health issues.

Healthy school activities are intended to be holistic in the truest sense - embraced and emphasised across every curriculum area and actively backed by every section of the school community: parents, pupils, staff, governors and external partners.

A healthy school is not a new concept - there are activities running in schools throughout the country. The aim of the new National Standard is to extend this good practice throughout every area of school life, and to ensure every school develops a healthy school programme. March 2002 is the target date to give every school the chance to work with a nationally accredited programme.

All school programmes will work within a wider accredited local programme, which is supported by a local programme co-ordinator. Because every area and school has unique health challenges, the co-ordinator will help individual schools tailor their own healthy school programme, keeping local and national priorities in mind and giving training and support throughout.

Working towards achieving the Standard is a continuous process. Each school will have a different starting point and plan for how it addresses different themes within the Standard. Assessment will be in stages agreed with your local programme co-ordinator. For example, you may wish to start on physical activity or sex and relationships education if these areas are under-developed in your school.

This guide is for head teachers, staff, parents, governors, students, health professionals and anyone else who wants to take part in a healthy school programme. It gives practical advice on starting out, what to build into your plans, and where to find the support and guidance you need.

This guide is one of three documents published as part of the Healthy School Standard.

Also available are:

- The National Healthy School Standard Guidance - a practitioners' guide
- The Healthy School Standard - information on what being a healthy school is about for staff, parents, governors, pupils and community partners.

All are available on the Healthy Schools Programme page on the Wired for Health website ([www.wiredforhealth.gov.uk](http://www.wiredforhealth.gov.uk)).



# Why get involved with the National Healthy School Standard?

Aside from the obvious benefits of having happier, healthier pupils and better motivated staff, signing up to the National Healthy School Standard will lift your school performance and add value in a number of ways.

## Pupils:

- will be more confident, more motivated and have the skills and information to make important life and health choices
- are more likely to achieve good academic results within a setting that supports their health and well being
- gain access to a range of support services and have their personal and social development valued

## Schools:

- improve their performance in academic and non-academic areas
- get involvement from the whole school community, strengthening links within the school "family": parents, governors, staff, pupils and community partners
- develop stronger external partnerships, including sharing good practice with other schools
- get greater support and professional development for staff
- gain maximum support from external agencies and coherence between national initiatives

- shape their own programme through local target setting, action planning and adapting to their own school's changing needs
- get opportunities to positively promote the school locally, regionally and nationally
- improve reputation and status by achieving recognition under the National Healthy School Standard
- gain cross-working opportunities to link with and complement other school-based programmes
- engage the interest and contribution from young people in being good citizens
- benefit from closer ties and greater understanding between schools and health authorities, social services, the police and other agencies
- have the chance to influence and contribute to what goes on in schools
- work alongside schools in reducing social exclusion, disadvantage and disaffection

## Communities:

- have fewer problems with truancy, juvenile crime, unwanted teenage pregnancies and drugs

Much of the healthy schools content will echo other school plans, priorities and nationally-driven targets. Rather than being duplicated, these links should be identified and developed.

### TARGETING ATTENDANCE

*Newell Green High School, Manchester*

A "first day response strategy" has been introduced at Newell Green High School, which has seen a 20% improvement in attendance since 1992 / 93. If a child is not in school by 10am, a dedicated staff member contacts parents. If they cannot be reached by phone, the staff member walks or cycles to their house. Parents cite this strategy as a factor in boosting relations with the school - one comment is that "the school really cares about the children". Staff are convinced the combined changes at Newell Green have helped it improve academic performance: pupils getting at least one GCSE grade A - G has risen from 88% in 1996 to 100% in 1998.

# How to get started

The first step in starting up a healthy school programme, is to contact the the local programme co-ordinator for your area, through your local education or health authority.

## COUNTERING DISADVANTAGE AND DISAFFECTION

*Forest Hill  
Secondary School*

A focused disaffection project with an in-school unit for pupils likely to face exclusion, is one of several special initiatives at Forest Hill Secondary School in Lewisham.

Sited in an area with pockets of severe disadvantage, exclusion was identified as an important target area. Other strands include a peer mentoring scheme, work on social and ethnic diversity and work on men and masculinity (the roll is all boys till sixth form). Their work to re-integrate disaffected pupils was cited by the HMI in early 1999 as "exemplary practice".

Your local programme co-ordinator should be in touch with you, and will be available to advise you in setting up your programme.

- **Discuss healthy schools work with your school community.** Gain their support and commitment to a healthy school programme at your school.
- **Set up a school task group, with a co-ordinator.** The group should represent the whole school community - including parents / carers, pupils, staff, governors and other local support agencies and partners. Are there individuals or groups in the community with useful skills or knowledge that you could co-opt?
- **Audit your healthy schools work.** You may already have good projects and progress in specific areas. Work with your local programme co-ordinator to identify strengths and weaknesses, decide your starting point and themes to focus on.
- **Set targets.** These must be agreed with your local programme co-ordinator, based on the results of your audit and will be set out in your healthy school action plan. They should be closely linked to the priorities already in your school development and management plans.

There are several important factors that your school's action plan need to take into account:

### Equalities issues

Every step in the process of designing and delivering a healthy school programme needs to consider equalities and social inclusion issues. Are disadvantaged pupils getting the right level of support? Do pupils of all backgrounds and abilities have an equal chance of taking part?

### National and local priorities

There are various national initiatives which mesh with the aims of the Healthy School Standard - for example, national strategies on drugs and teenage conception. There will also be local priorities specific to your area, guidance on which will come from your local programme co-ordinator. All school programmes should fit with these.

### Legal requirements

What are the legal requirements your school must fulfil, for example on anti-bullying strategies, smoking policy, road safety, provision of school meals and home-school agreements? This should be well understood and used to inform your school programme.



### Non-statutory guidance

Non-statutory guidance must be taken into account in the design of your programme to ensure there is no conflict with other initiatives. For example, look at good practice guidance on drug education and sex and relationships education.

### National Healthy School Standard

Criteria for the National Healthy School Standard will inform the nature of your targets. Check with your local programme co-ordinator or see the National Healthy School Standard Guidance.

- **Agree an action plan.** This should contain a reasonable timescale in which to achieve your school's particular targets.
- Once these steps are in place, a **service level agreement** will be reached with your local programme co-ordinator. This will include any training, consultancy or school-based support you may need to deliver your plan.

There are clear roles and responsibilities for different groups within your school community, when it comes to putting your healthy school programme into action.

### Head teachers should:

- be responsible for setting a climate conducive to healthy schools work
- be responsible for raising awareness of the issues among staff, governors, pupils and other members of the school community
- take the lead in planning a whole school approach, inviting all sections of the school community to get on board
- allocate resources to make sure healthy schools projects have enough practical back-up to be effective

### School governors should:

- support head teachers in delivering the National Standard
- support Healthy School projects and aims when making budget decisions
- promote the involvement of the whole school community in planning and delivering the programme
- be involved in monitoring and assessing the programme to see which areas are succeeding and which need work

### School staff should:

- canvas pupils' views to find out their own health priorities and ideas for the most effective ways to deliver the key messages
- use healthy schools work to inform their curriculum planning
- deliver healthy schools content within class lessons, and back this up with consistent messages in all aspects of school life

### External support workers should:

- gain a strategic commitment within their organisation at local level, to becoming involved in healthy schools partnerships
- provide an effective, high quality service to schools
- offer expertise to help school staff in delivering healthy school activities



# Involving the Whole School Community

Picking up a few aspects of the Healthy School Standard and introducing it in a piecemeal way, won't work.

Likewise, if it is driven only by a small group without involvement from the wider school community, it won't be effective.

To succeed, the programme needs involvement from everyone - pupils, staff, parents, governors and partner agencies. Its key messages need to be supported and emphasised in all facets of planning and learning.

To gain recognition, schools will have to show that their programme does this - that it is designed from the bottom up, taking into account all spheres of school activity and views of the entire school community. This whole school approach will be something local programme co-ordinators particularly look for, in helping design and assess your school's programme.

- Improving the school's health, helps improves the school - this should be borne in mind in all policy and management discussions. Are there other priority areas - for example, literacy - where healthy school themes can be introduced?
- Policies should clearly show the different roles and tasks of the whole school community. Are there forums, councils and working groups to feed everyone's views (pupils, parents, staff, external partners) into the policy as it is drawn up?

## HELPING PUPILS TO HELP EACH OTHER

*Tanfield Secondary School, Durham*

Peer projects are central to Tanfield's healthy schools work. Projects include training Year 10 pupils to work with slow readers in Year 7 for ten-week periods, and Year 11 pupils have produced a booklet on stress management to help other pupils manage exam times.

Pupils are involved in a school council and school nutrition action group, and teachers comment that there is greater awareness of the importance of consulting with pupils.

One governor described Tanfield as "a happy school", while parents have commented that "kids of all abilities are equally valued" and that the school focuses on "fulfilling each child's individual potential".

- In planning the curriculum, there are wide-ranging health resources to draw on: for example, the Wired for Health website ([www.wiredforhealth.gov.uk](http://www.wiredforhealth.gov.uk)), the school nursing or counselling service. Health links with other curriculum areas (e.g. science, art, media, technology) should be picked up and exploited.
- Varied teaching styles can help give personal social and health education, and citizenship real impact. Role-playing, getting into the community, shifting class layout, bringing older pupils in to work with young classes, may be effective ways to do this.
- A school's environmental health sends a strong signal to pupils, staff and visitors. The grounds, buildings and rooms should be welcoming and secure. And is that positive, friendly culture echoed in school handouts / publications?
- Encouraging pupils to become healthy, mature grown-ups means taking note of their ideas. Do they have a means to influence school policy, teaching styles, lessons in personal social and health education / citizenship? Charging them with important tasks - like graffiti control or anti-bullying strategies - will help.

## HEALTHIER PUPILS, HEALTHIER STAFF

*Parkside Special School,  
Norfolk*

Boosted staff morale and a reduction in absenteeism is one of the positive shifts noted by the school's head teacher as a result of healthy schools work. In particular, a programme of structured activities at lunch times, including juggling, disco-dancing and football, with seating plans and greater supervision, has seen less disruption. In the six months before the re-organisation, nine major incidents were recorded which either happened at lunch or directly afterwards: in the six months since the change, there were only three.

One teacher said it produced "a calmer atmosphere with more purposeful interaction". A pupil's view: "we don't whistle anymore and we all have our own places".



- Staff well being is important too. Are they consulted on what development and support they need? Are they thanked and recognised for their efforts? There should be a range of training options, possibly within the Investors in People framework. Enough non-contact time is important to visit other healthy schools and to plan, review and develop activities.
- Contributions from parents, carers and the local community should be encouraged. Are there ways they can contribute to policy and healthy schools activities? Open days, mentoring, coaching, work placements, sponsored events, fundraisers could all be ways of boosting their participation.
- Positive results need celebrating. Pupils' progress in Personal, Social and Health Education and Citizenship should be noted and the whole school made aware of achievements. Reviewing the programme, future planning and setting new targets works best with their contribution - and it will help them at the same time.

The benefits of a whole school approach cannot be stressed enough. It should be applied in each of the specific theme areas, which are outlined in the next sections. The themes outline criteria which will help schools set their targets.

- Whether medical, emotional or academic, pupils with special needs should be sure of support. How and where is pupils' health information (asthma, epilepsy, depression) reported? Is mentoring and counselling offered within the school? Do they get sound information about where to seek help locally?

## BUILDING LINKS WITH THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

*St Clements Church of England Primary School, Manchester*

A branch of the local Credit Union was established in St Clements Primary School to both help parents, and get them visiting the school.

Parents' confidence and relationships with the school were targeted, as parents had felt they may not be welcome at school, and parent / school relations were further hindered by poverty, a major source of stress.

Parents are now far more involved in school life: in 1998/99 they organised the first school summer fair in ten years, started developing materials for the numeracy strategy, and more are applying to be parent governors.

Ofsted's 1998 report said: "One of the strengths of this school is its very effective links with the community. The school and parents support and value each other's contributions and this aids pupils' attainment and progress".

# Personal Social and Health Education

What happens in assembly, on the hockey pitch, on work placements, on the school bus, has as much or more impact on how pupils grow socially and personally, as what they learn in class.

Which is why it's so important that a healthy school programme recognises that personal, social and health issues in all facets of school life are inter-linked. There need to be consistent, positive messages. For example, class exercises exploring personal integrity and respect for others, can be negated by an environment which condones abusive behaviour. Or enhanced with a constructive approach to discipline.

Pupils need to be encouraged to recognise their own achievements and strive to do their best. A system for rewarding those who try hard in sports, rather than just the top achievers, is one possibility. Peer opinions are often more critical than adult praise - could there be a scheme for nominating classmates for awards when they have pushed themselves further, or shown special qualities? How can the whole school community be brought into delivering this - external partners, parents, governors, staff, pupils?

- Personal Social and Health Education has an important place within the curriculum, but needs to be emphasised in the wider school context
- The national framework for personal, social and health education in the National Curriculum Handbook offers guidelines on broad areas in PSHE.
- Within their professional development plans, staff should get specific training in this area.
- Involvement should be invited from the whole school community.



## PSHE BELONGS ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

*Chapel Break First School*

At Chapel Break First School in Norfolk, one of its main actions in becoming a Healthy School was to build its personal social and health education into other curriculum areas. The reception class over three terms worked on three health-related modules: "me and looking after my body", "me, my environment and community - growing and changing" and "me and my relationships - family and friends". In the four years that it has been working towards the Healthy Norfolk Schools Award (achieved in 1998), the school's SATs have steadily improved. In science, it has attained an A in its Performance and Assessment report - the highest compared with equivalent primary schools nationally. Teachers felt the boost in results, particularly science, was thanks to integrating health issues and science in the curriculum.

# Citizenship

Social health naturally embraces pupils' relations with the wider world. Just as learning about personal and social health highlights the effects of our actions on each other, citizenship takes personal responsibility further. It highlights the opportunities we all have to make a positive contribution to society. In growing into informed, responsible citizens, everything that happens in and around school can be influential for children and young people.

Are pupils aware of what's happening in their community and how important decisions are made? Do they have opinions, and are they encouraged to express and act on them? Ensuring pupils' views and contributions count in the school community, is important. You probably have student forums and councils. Are pupils given genuine decision-making responsibilities - helping develop school policies on behaviour and bullying, for example? Are their efforts in fundraising and charity work recognised?

When there are local, national or European elections, could the school mirror this and hold its own debates and polls? Could every pupil pick a social or community issue they feel strongly about and keep an activity book to log actions they've taken and the results?

- Learning about citizenship within the classroom is important - but these messages should be endorsed and reiterated in all other aspects of school life and within the local community.
- All pupils need real opportunities to become actively involved in the life of the school and its community.
- Requirements for citizenship are contained in the National Curriculum Handbook.
- Within their professional development plans, staff should get specific training in this area.



# Drugs, alcohol and tobacco



**There's no way even the most pro-active schools can eliminate drugs, alcohol and tobacco from pupils' wider environment.**

But arming them with up-to-date information and skills to assess and resist the risks to their health, is essential. Alerting them to the dangers of abuse and addiction and ensuring they know how and when to find support for themselves or others, are important in ensuring their choices are healthy ones.

- There should be a named staff member and governor with overall responsibility for drug education
- The school needs a planned drug education programme. This should start from early years and fit with pupils' age, ability and level of maturity. It should include specific learning outcomes and should take into account pupils' own assessment of their needs.
- Staff's understanding of drugs issues is important. On a wider level, they should know about the National Drugs Strategy and understand the role that schools can help to play. When pupils need to talk about drugs and what support services are available, staff should be confident discussing the issues with them - whether in a formal class setting or not.
- When there are incidents involving drugs at school, the policy for dealing with this should include putting pupils in touch with support services, and a range of positive sanctions and measures should be considered before exclusion. Again, the whole school community - particularly parents and carers - should be involved in devising and implementing the policy.
- In drawing up all its policy on drugs, alcohol and tobacco - including education and responding to pupils' problems - the school should work with parents and governors, the police, youth service and local drugs services including the local Drug Action Team. This will also help give the school a good understanding of specific local drugs issues.

# Emotional health and wellbeing (including bullying)

Physical health issues are usually easy to spot and respond to, but outward signs of emotional health are more subtle. A healthy school needs to make sure that when pupils are unhappy, anxious, disturbed or depressed there are open channels for them to seek or be offered support, without stigma and with appropriate confidentiality.

Also, pupils should be made aware of emotional health issues for other people, and be encouraged to support their peers. The emotional health of staff is equally crucial, and recognition of this needs to be built into school policies.

- No one is in a better position to understand pupils' emotional health needs than children and young people themselves. All school policy and practice on emotional health and wellbeing, including bullying, should take pupils' views into account.
- There should be a clear policy and code of practice for dealing with bullying. Devising this and putting it into action, should bring in involvement from the whole school community.

- Pupils should be encouraged to express and understand their feelings. The wider school environment should enable this, and help build their confidence by openly addressing issues of emotional health and wellbeing.
- The needs of staff should be identified and when it is needed, support offered. Are staff attuned to signals of difficulty among their colleagues? Are they clear about where to find confidential support at school?



## FOCUSING ON MENTAL HEALTH

*Tanfield Secondary School, Durham*

The school's approach to emotional health embraces staff, parents and pupils. Initiatives include stress management courses for both staff and pupils facing external exams, drop-in sessions with the school nurse where pupils can talk about problems, and a drugs awareness night for parents.

One parent described in detail how the school had supported her and her children through the death of their father. Another parent said there was "a caring atmosphere".

The school nurse said the school had "a good philosophy of caring and the school is very receptive to visitors".

# Healthy eating

It is hard for pupils to make healthier food choices if they don't understand about the importance of diet for maintaining good health, or healthier options are not available. Which is why it is so important that pupils understand the role that different foods play in a balanced diet.

## FINDING INPUT FROM NEW SOURCES:

*Newell Green High School*

Inviting local sports celebrities to talk to pupils about diet and sport success, is one of the innovative moves at Newell Green High School in Manchester that has seen the take-up of healthy meals rise by 50%. Other actions which helped change the meal-time atmosphere were encouraging staff to sit with pupils during lunch time and training lunch time organisers about positive behaviour management and communication. Pupils commented on the change in student / staff relationships their new lunch times had brought, saying they could "have a laugh" with their teachers, who were "down to earth".

Equipped with a broad knowledge of a balanced diet, the nutritional value of various foods and the positive effect they can have on their short and long-term health, pupils may even become advocates for healthier eating at home.

Emphasising the link between diet and good health, including the ability to participate in sports can be highly motivational for helping adolescents make changes to their diet.

- All messages about food at school should be consistent. The school should make sure that healthier options are available at break, lunchtimes\* and in breakfast clubs. The choices should reflect what is taught in class. The credibility of teaching about the need to limit consumption of foods high in salt, sugar and fat will be undermined if pupils can only buy crisps and confectionery at break times.

- Healthy food choices should be actively promoted. This should apply to food available at any school activities, including trips and out-of-school events. Pupil's menus and food choices should be monitored.
- Food studies should be included in the curriculum. Children should learn about different types of food in the context of a balanced diet, nutrition, safety and hygiene. While there are formal opportunities to teach about food within the curriculum i.e Science, Design and Technology and PSHE, numerous opportunities exist to link the importance of healthier eating to the teaching of a wide range of subjects.



\* As of 1 April 2001 all school lunches have to meet, by law, minimum nutritional standards. Guidance to the new standards is available on the DfEE website at [www.dfes.gov.uk/schoollunches](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/schoollunches)

# Physical activity

Not every pupil, by any means, is a budding athlete with fantasies of olympic glory. Which is why carefully designing the school's approach to physical exercise is so important - children and young people with physical prowess need encouragement and those who detest it should be steered to find ways of exerting themselves which are fun and non-threatening.

Giving pupils a chance to sample a wide range of different activities can generate enthusiasm in otherwise non-sporty youngsters. Maybe pupils with a lack of confidence or co-ordination for team sports, will respond to classes in yoga, martial arts, jazz dance, orienteering? Parents, carers, governors and the wider community could all be valuable resources to draw on. Again, linking the value of exercise to other curriculum subjects, like science or arts, will help emphasise key messages.



- All pupils, regardless of age or ability, should get a minimum of two hours physical activity a week.
- There is a wide range of relevant initiatives and networks relating to physical activity for children and young people. Schools should take advantage of all opportunities they can to promote and develop physical activity, like fostering links with sports clubs or offering aerobics classes for parents.
- Promoting exercise should have input from the whole school community. Pupils, staff, parents / carers and other adults in and around the school such as sports and leisure officers, can all play a valuable part in promoting sports and exercise. The right training should be used to develop their skills and knowledge where necessary.

# Safety



Educating children and young people about health awareness, exercise, drugs and nutrition won't amount to much if it takes place in an unsafe environment.

As with every school activity, the basics should not be overlooked in putting other aspects in place. Safety awareness in the school environment, and during out of school activities, is important to ensure the school isn't contributing to problems at the same time as it is trying to improve the health of its pupils.

Involving the whole school increases the likelihood of safe solutions being found and raises awareness of potential risks.

- Each school should identify a health and safety representative - this person should regularly carry out risk assessments.
- Health and safety should include discussing issues like child protection and domestic violence, within the curriculum. There should be clear procedures for dealing with incidents, and every member of the school community should know what their own roles and responsibilities are.
- All pupils should have the opportunity to learn about first aid and to assess risks for themselves. Play areas should be designed with health and safety in mind, which includes shady spaces for protection from the sun, a quiet area, and supervisors at break times who can stop bullying and organise activities.
- Staff and pupils should be encouraged to walk or cycle to school - with proper training and advice about safety measures, such as careful road crossing and wearing bike helmets.

# Sex and relationships education

One of the toughest and most worrying issues for young people, is to do with their developing sexual and emotional lives.



When they make hasty decisions based on peer pressure or lack of information, the results can be devastating - one obvious example being unwanted teenage pregnancies.

Even without such awkward outcomes, relationships and sex is bound at some point to be a preoccupation and source of confusion for pupils.

How can a school cope effectively with issues such as sexual pressure, sexual diversity, sexual risks, fidelity, romance, heartbreak, contraception?

Often, sex education in school can be viewed by the young people who most need it, as embarrassing or patronising.

Getting it right means asking young people what they need to hear.

- The school's policy on sex and relationships education should be delivered in partnership with local health and support services, such as family planning advisory services. The whole school community, particularly parents and pupils, should be consulted on its development.
- There needs to be a planned education programme for sex and relationships. This should include useful information, developing social skills, and discussing morals and values. The programme should have identified learning outcomes and be designed to match pupils' age, ability, gender and maturity. Pupils' own assessment of their needs should contribute to this.
- Staff themselves, need a good knowledge of sex and relationship issues. They should be aware of the role schools can play in important national priorities, like reducing teenage pregnancies and sexually transmitted disease. Importantly, staff need to feel comfortable talking with pupils about sex and relationships, whether in class or out.

## BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS

*Chase Terrace High School*

Staff at Chase Terrace High School in Staffordshire felt the division between staff and pupils - "us" and "them" feelings - had diminished because of their involvement in healthy schools work.

Other changes noted were a loss of the stigma pupils attached to academic success and a greater bond between staff and pupils. Pupils said there was less shouting and violence between pupils, and that they could talk about academic and personal problems with their teachers.

One of the features of this work is a Life Studies programme which includes citizenship, health, careers guidance, understanding economics and industry and education about the environment. All teaching staff including senior managers are involved, as well as external agencies.

Ofsted's 1996 report said: "High standards of behaviour are maintained within a caring, supportive and harmonious environment. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good".

# Recognising Success

Setting up ways to monitor and evaluate how well your school's programme is meeting the action plan, is essential.

Your local programme co-ordinator will help you with this.

- Evaluation should focus particularly on changes in pupils' knowledge and attitudes about health
- Developing future activities should be based on the results and feedback from evaluation
- Your monitoring should look at how staff training and professional development has contributed to success
- The lessons learned in evaluating your healthy school work, should be shared with other schools. This feedback will contribute to the development of the programme locally and nationally.

Running a healthy school programme should be a continuous process, evolving as needs and priorities shift.

Celebrating success is an important element in the healthy school strategy. Just as recognising pupils' progress is important in motivating them, making sure there is an ongoing enthusiasm and commitment to healthy schools ideals, should be helped by celebrating each step forward.

Some ways of doing this could be press releasing your achievements to local and regional media; inviting families and members of the local community into school for award-giving ceremonies or open / demonstration days; putting information on healthy schools work and success into regular newsletters to parents; throwing parties, trips or picnics as rewards for pupils and staff.

Achievements should be shared outside the school community: all external partners, government agencies and regional and national level, and potential programme partners could be alerted to your success.

## FINDING WAYS TO REWARD SUCCESS

*Newell Green High School*

Celebrating success and progress has become an integral part of Newell Green High School's healthy school programme. Pupils set their own targets for academic and other achievements - including punctuality, sports and service in the community. On meeting them, they are rewarded with prizes like ties, pens and clocks. Parents' evenings are described by staff as more celebratory, with the introduction of a record of personal achievement for pupils.



# Gaining Recognition

Local healthy school programmes are assessed nationally, and accredited when they can show they are meeting the National Standard. Actively recruiting schools and giving them high levels of support are important in gaining this accreditation.

Once accredited, local programmes can assess schools. Schools which belong to an accredited scheme can start to use the Healthy Schools logo.

Schools can achieve recognition for individual theme areas, for example, citizenship, drug education or healthy eating. To do this, your school must be able to show it has achieved the targets identified in the school's action plan. Your local programme co-ordinator will advise you on gathering evidence.

Your school's progress will be assessed against your plans and the criteria for the Standard from the evidence you present. This will be quality assured by national assessors.



Some of the evidence which may be taken into account in recognising your school as being actively involved in the National Healthy School Standard are:

- school development and management plans
- prospectuses, staff and parent handbooks
- tools and methods used in your auditing and target-setting
- intention to improve on baseline data: for example, attendance levels, SAT scores, take-up of healthier food
- school targets, action plans and self-evaluation tools
- examples of relationships with external agencies, for example, codes of practice
- work outputs: for example, healthy schools policies and schemes of work
- lesson observation notes, pupils' work and assessment records
- how the views of staff, governors, pupils and parents influence plans
- methods of recognising and celebrating success

When your school re-works its targets and action plans in the light of its achievements, the local programme co-ordinator will continue to work alongside your task group and support the school throughout.

# Checklist



Have you made contact with your local Healthy School Standard programme co-ordinator?

Have you started to gain commitment to healthy schools work from your school community?

Have you looked at setting up a healthy schools task group?

Have you invited input to the task group from:

- Senior management
- Staff
- Pupils
- Governors
- Parents / carers
- All relevant partner agencies, e.g. the Drug Action Team, School Nursing Service

Are you clear about what progress the school has made in:

- Personal, social and health education
- Citizenship
- Drugs, alcohol and tobacco education
- Emotional health and well being (including bullying)
- Healthy eating
- Physical activity
- Safety
- Sex and relationships education

Are you clear about how to audit these key themes to define a starting point and set targets?

In setting targets for these key themes, have you taken account of:

- Equalities issues
- Legal requirements and non-statutory guidance
- National and local priorities
- National Healthy School Standard guidance

Have you identified all the potential links with existing priorities and curriculum areas?

Are your targets realistic and achievable?

Are you clear about how to monitor and evaluate your progress?

In designing your programme, does your whole school approach include:

- Leadership and management
- Developing policy
- Curriculum planning and resourcing
- Teaching and learning
- School culture and environment
- Giving pupils a voice
- Staff professional development
- Partnerships with parents / carers and local communities
- Assessing, recording and reporting pupils' achievements

Does everyone within your school community (management, staff, governors, pupils, partner agencies) understand their roles and responsibilities in the key theme areas of:

- Personal, social and health education
- Citizenship
- Drugs, alcohol and tobacco education
- Emotional health and well being (including bullying)
- Healthy eating
- Physical activity
- Safety
- Sex and relationships education

Where necessary, do you have a named staff member with overall responsibility for a key theme area?

Have you identified staff professional development needs and designed an appropriate training and development programme ?

How will you celebrate achievements,

- within school?
- in the wider community?



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