



HEALTHY SCHOOLS COMMITTEE

Member Handbook



Welcome to your Healthy Schools Committee Member Handbook

The purpose of this resource is to assist schools in creating a healthy school environment by providing strategies, tips and tools that focus on a comprehensive approach to school health. The Healthy Schools Committee Member Handbook will guide you through the four step process to help you along your Healthy Schools journey.



Look for this symbol throughout this handbook to identify which tool(s) can support the suggested activities.

For a complete list of available tools refer to page 12 of this handbook.

The benefits of creating an active, Healthy Schools community

Students in Healthy Schools will:

- Be able to concentrate and learn better in class because their basic nutrition, physical activity, mental and emotional well-being needs are met
- Develop greater confidence, motivation, self-esteem and will have the commitment and capacity to make important life and health choices
- Have access to community services
- Be more likely to achieve greater academic results
- Have strategies to interact effectively with peers
- Attend school more regularly

The Five Foundations for a Healthy School

1. Curriculum Teaching and Learning

Offering a wide range of opportunities for students to learn, practise and promote positive and healthy behaviours, and to practise how to lead healthy, active lives.

2. School and Classroom Leadership

Creating a positive classroom and school environment by identifying shared goals and priorities that are responsive to the needs of the school community.

3. Student Engagement

Students feel a sense of belonging at school and are informed about, engaged with and empowered to participate in and lead academic and non-academic activities.

4. Social and Physical Environments

Includes school led initiatives that support learning and contribute to the positive cognitive, emotional, social, and physical development of students.

5. Home, School and Community Partnerships

Engages parents, school staff, organizations such as public health, social services, parks and recreation, and local businesses and community groups to help address the school's specific health topic(s).



A comprehensive Healthy Schools approach is the most effective method to address the goals of children and families.

This integrated approach to health promotion gives students numerous opportunities to participate in, observe and learn positive health attitudes

Roles and responsibilities of the Healthy Schools Committee

A Healthy Schools champion

- Is enthusiastic about improving the health of the school community
- Is a role model for healthy behaviour
- Is someone who is in the school regularly such as a teacher, parent, administrator, child and youth worker or a community coordinator
- Is committed to the Healthy Schools approach and process
- Advocates for a Healthy Schools environment
- Is the contact person for all Healthy Schools related events, issues and inquiries
- Will be supported by a York Region Public Health Nurse

A Healthy Schools Committee member

- Is enthusiastic about improving the health of the school community
- Is a role model for healthy behaviour
- Is a member of the school community such as a teacher, parent, administrator or student
- Attends regular meetings and planned Healthy Schools activities
- Works as part of a team to plan and carry out a Healthy Schools action plan

How you can help

- Learn more about your committee's chosen health goal(s), check out the websites listed on this page, visit the library or call your Public Health Nurse and share your knowledge with others
- Volunteer to chair a committee meeting, take notes, lead an action plan activity or collect surveys and evaluations
- Recruit other members to join your committee
- Spread the word about your committee and all of the great things you are doing
- Bring this handbook to all your Healthy Schools meetings and help the committee stay on track



Web-based resources

York Region Public Health –
Healthy Schools
york.ca/healthyschools

Ministry of Education:

Foundation for a Healthy School
<https://www.ontario.ca/page/foundations-healthy-school-companion-resource-k-12-school-effectiveness-framework>



HEALTHY SCHOOLS PROCESS STEP 1

Identify and/or form
a committee

Goals

- Raise awareness of the benefits of becoming a Healthy School
- Motivate the school community to support Healthy Schools
- Recruit school community members for the Healthy Schools Committee

Part A: Determine level of interest and establish commitment

- Consult with your principal to discuss Healthy Schools and determine if the timing is right
- Contact a York Region Public Health Nurse for assistance
- Develop a plan to inform and educate the school community about Healthy Schools 
- Provide a presentation about Healthy Schools for staff and parents 
- Mobilize and empower students by explaining how they can have a voice in school decisions



Gaining support from school administration is key to achieving a school-wide commitment

Part B: Form the Healthy Schools Committee

- Promote the committee and invite interested school members to get involved 
- Your Healthy Schools Committee may be a sub-committee of the School Council or of another existing committee
- Recruit a diverse group that includes staff, students, parents, administrators and community members 
- Organize the first Healthy Schools Committee meeting 
- Come up with a name for your committee such as Healthy Champs, Snack Attack, Health Squad. Consider having a naming and/or logo contest
- Discuss the general vision of a Healthy School

✓ Checklist for step 1

- ☐ Educate the school community about the Healthy Schools approach
- ☐ Communicate with key school community members about Healthy Schools
- ☐ Form a diverse Healthy Schools Committee representing the whole school community
- ☐ Conduct the first Healthy Schools Committee meeting
- ☐ Establish a general vision of what a Healthy School looks like
- ☐ Determine readiness to move to step two



HEALTHY SCHOOLS PROCESS STEP 2

Assess the needs of the
school community

Goals

- Identify the strengths, goals, interests and health of the school community by providing a survey for staff, students and parents
- Review and discuss the results and identify priority areas for action

Part A: Survey your school community

- Review your School Climate survey data
- Develop a survey or adapt an existing one for students, teachers and parents to identify the current health status of your school
- Inform the school community that the committee will be conducting a survey and encourage their participation
- Create a Healthy Schools suggestion box, place the box in a central location and encourage the school community to voice concerns and ideas throughout the school year
- Survey your school community every two years



Consider paper, email, focus groups and tools like [surveymonkey.com](https://www.surveymonkey.com)

Part B: Share results, establish the vision and prioritize health topic(s)

- Examine the results of the survey and determine the current strengths, goals, challenges
- Communicate results of the survey to your school; present successes first
- Based on your vision in step one and survey results, prioritize the most important health goals your school can realistically commit to over the school year; it is okay to start small as many small changes can add up to big successes!



Keep a record of all the suggestions that you are not using this year for subsequent years

✓ Checklist for step 2

- ☐ Complete survey for:
 - Parents
 - Teachers/staff
 - Students
 - Administration
- ☐ Review and discuss the results of surveys
- ☐ Establish priority areas for your school
- ☐ Communicate the results and priority areas with the school community
- ☐ Determine if your committee is ready to move to step three



By identifying your school health goals, your committee will be able to consider:

- Activities the school will enjoy participating in
- The overall vision of teachers, students and parents
- The most important health priorities in your school



HEALTHY SCHOOLS
PROCESS
STEP 3
Develop and carry out
the action plan

Goals

- Develop an action plan to chart future directions and activities of the Healthy Schools Committee based on the health topic(s) identified
- Carry out your Healthy Schools action plan activities in the school

Part A: Develop the action plan

- Brainstorm and choose activities for your priority areas – start small and plan easy to accomplish activities:
 - Who is the activity intended for?
 - What resources are needed?
 - When will the activity be carried out?
 - Who is responsible for goal(s)?
- Address all [Five Foundations for a Healthy Schools](#):
 - Curriculum Teaching and Learning
 - School and Classroom Leadership
 - Student Engagement
 - Social and Physical Environments
 - Home, School and Community Partner
- Develop goals for the chosen activities
- Align activities with existing School Board priorities and school improvement plans
- Transfer your goals and activities to the action plan
- Ask yourself: How will we know if we have met our goals?
- Speak with others in your school community before you begin to carry out activities to ensure there will be adequate support to see them through
- Work with your Healthy School Student Club to develop and promote activities related to your action plan



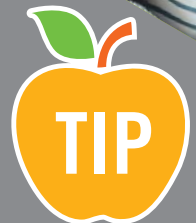
Part B: Carry out the action plan

- Share and promote action plan activities with the school community
- For example, you may choose to:
 - Post a Healthy Schools challenge pledge or mission statement where everyone in the school can see it
 - Send regular updates to parents and community partners to keep them informed of the Healthy Schools action plan
 - Host a Healthy Schools kick-off assembly for parents and community partners to see what your school will be doing to support health
 - Invite students to be actively involved in planning and carrying out the Healthy Schools program
 - Ensure school staff, students, parents and community partners are equipped to implement activities effectively
 - Review progress by discussing problems with certain activities, revision of timelines, communication issues or new resources
 - Prepare a participant evaluation and conduct it immediately after each activity



✓ Checklist for step 3

- ☐ Develop an overall goal for health topic(s) and select appropriate activities
- ☐ Develop an action plan addressing all Five Foundations for a Healthy School
- ☐ Communicate and promote the action plan with school community members
- ☐ Start working on the activities according to the action plan
- ☐ Review action plan progress and revise as needed
- ☐ Carry out the Healthy Schools action plan and activities
- ☐ Determine if the committee is ready to move to step four



Keep in mind that your action plan may not go according to plan. Don't be discouraged. Learn from the problems that arise and be prepared to adjust the plan accordingly.



HEALTHY SCHOOLS
PROCESS
STEP 4
Evaluate and celebrate
successes

Goals

Review, evaluate and celebrate
your Healthy Schools activities

Part A: Evaluate

- As you complete each activity from your action plan, evaluate what worked well and what didn't. Add this information to the action plan.
- Evaluation is key for identifying activities that were worthwhile, new ideas and challenges to expect and problems to avoid in the future.

Evaluation areas

- **The steps in the Healthy Schools process:** Were you able to complete them all? 
- **The school community:** Did the school enjoy the activities? Is there a difference in the health status of the school?
- **The action plan:** Have you met your activity goals as outlined?
- **The Healthy Schools Committee:** How effective was the committee?
- **Discuss and reflect on successes and challenges:** Identify and reflect on achievements, areas to reconsider and any new or emerging needs
- **Look for and record any changes** within the school that may be a result of Healthy Schools and record them as successes on your committee's Healthy Schools action plan 



Consider surveys, focus groups and interviews
to evaluate your activities

Part B: Plan for next year

- Discuss any changes that may affect next year's activities
- Set a date and plan the agenda for next year's first meeting
- Discuss next year's Healthy Schools action plan – include activities you didn't get to this year and identify new ideas 

Part C: Celebrate successes

- Provide opportunities for the school to hear about completed activities
- Share successes with students and staff through a newsletter or announcement 
- Acknowledge and celebrate the efforts of the Healthy Schools Committee and the whole school community to strengthen school-wide support and commitment 
- Plan a year-end celebration for the committee and for the whole school – check out the tip sheet for healthy celebration ideas 

✓ Checklist for step 4

- ☐ **Determine if you have met your activity goals**
- ☐ **Confirm completion of the steps in the Healthy Schools process**
- ☐ **Complete the Healthy School Committee year-end evaluation**
- ☐ **Gather feedback from:**
 - Parents
 - Teachers/staff
 - Students
 - Administration
- ☐ **Plan for next year's Healthy School Committee and activities**
- ☐ **Communicate achievements with the school community**



Celebrating the hard work of the school
community will encourage support for
Healthy Schools in the future and provide a
chance to highlight the school's successes.



HEALTHY SCHOOLS PROCESS TOOLS

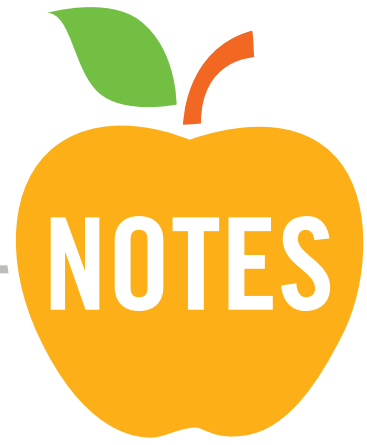
Goals

Bring your Healthy Schools
activities to life

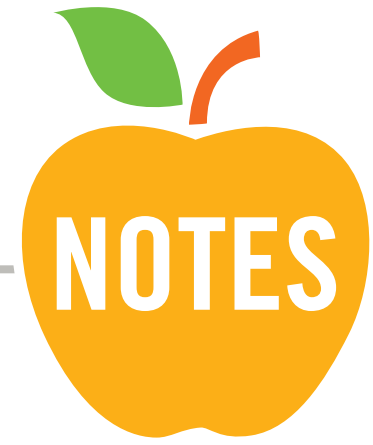
List of available tools

1. Benefits of Creating a Healthy Schools Community
2. Tips: Recruitment Strategies
3. Sample Recruitment Flyer
4. Raising Awareness Newsletter Insert
5. Presentation Invitation
6. Volunteer Recruitment Form
7. Sample Announcement
8. Getting Organized for the First Meeting
9. Sample Agenda – First Meeting
10. Meeting Minutes Template
11. Visioning Exercise
12. Setting Smart Goals
13. Sample Roles and Responsibilities
14. Roles and Responsibilities Template
15. Working Effectively as a Group
16. Committee Member Contact List
17. Sample Survey Letter
18. Sample Student Survey: Grades JK to 3
19. Sample Student Survey: Grades 4 to 8
20. Sample Teacher/Staff Survey
21. Sample Parent/Family Survey
22. Sample Survey Summary
23. Year-End Committee Evaluation
24. Participant Activity Evaluation
25. Healthy Schools Process Implementation Checklist
26. Reflection and Planning for Next Year
27. Year-End Celebration Ideas
28. Recognition Certificate Template
29. Sample Year-End Update





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