**School Health**

Definition of school health: it is a combination of healthful environment that protect students from hazardous and unsanitary conditions, nursing and other health services, health education to raise awareness in the community, programs that promote the health of school faculty and staff and having counseling, psychological and social services.

### Why school health is important?

1- School children constitute a sizeable segment of the population.

2- To monitor for and control the spread of communicable diseases and to prevent outbreaks.

3- To provide emergency care for illness or injury while at school.

4- Health and education are interdependent: healthy students are better learners and better-educated individuals are healthier.

**Common health problems among students in school**

May be congenital or acquired.

Children with minor or mild cases of disability can attend regular schools,

Severe forms (e.g. the deaf, blind, or mentally retarded) can attend special institutes.

Examples

1-broncial asthma

2-anemia

3-obesity

4-infections

5-Heart disease(Rheumatic valvular disease)

6-Musculoskeletal deformities

7- Impaired vision

8- Impaired hearing

**School Health Promotion Services**

**1. Health Education**

Young children are at a greater risk of various infections and diseases. Schools have the responsibility to educate their students and foster among them healthy and hygienic behavior.

They need to warn their students about various health risks, and guide them how to protect themselves and others against diseases and other forms of ill-health by adopting health and hygiene promoting habits and practices.

Education of students on health and hygiene issues, through integration of health and hygiene information messages into the curriculum, and training of teachers on following themes form part of the School Health programmers .

Examples of Health Education in school :

1-Education about cleanliness, personal hygiene

2-Preventive information against various non- communicable common diseases

3-Prevention against communicable diseases, including H1N1 and Hepatitis,

4-HIV and AIDS Prevention Education

5-Guidance and Counseling for adolescent students on puberty issues

## 2. Physical Health Includes:

#### Physical education and activity:

* Reduces feelings of depression and anxiety.
* Improves students’ academic performance.
* Improves concentration and attentiveness in the classroom. (3),(4)

#### Nutrition services:

* Replace foods of minimal nutritional value in vending machines with more nutritional options.
* Provide students with adequate and pleasant dining space.

## 3. Mental health

Common mental health problems:

Anxiety, depression, peer pressure and bullying

A study was done to determine the prevalence rates of depression, anxiety and stress among Saudi adolescent school boys and concluded: “Out of 1723 male students recruited to this study, 59.4% had at least one of the three disorders, 40.7% had at least two and 22.6% had all the three disorders.” (4) (5)

**4. Psychological Services**

#### Counseling:

The provision of professional assistance and guidance in resolving personal or psychological problems.

A comprehensive intervention that combines teacher training, parent education, and social competency training for children had long-term positive impacts including:

* Enhanced greater commitment and attachment to school
* Better academic achievement
* Less school misbehavior (6)

**4. The physical school environment:**

#### What is a healthy physical school environment?

The physical school environment encompasses the school building and all its contents including physical structures, infrastructure, furniture, and the use and presence of chemicals and biological agents; the site on which a school is located; and the surrounding environment

**Components of school Environment:**

**1. Site and area:**

**-** easily reached.

- Located in quite area.

- 10 – 15 square m. / scholars

**2. School building:**

- Damp, fire and rat proof.

- 2 – 3 floors

- > 1 stair case.

**-** Governmental design( E, T, L types ).

**3. Class rooms:**

**-** Rectangular 6x8 = 48 m2

- 1-1.5m2 of floor area for primary students,

- 1.5-2m2 for intermed. & high school students.

- Windows location on left side.

- Allow best illumination.

- Natural & white ceiling.

**4. School furniture:**

**-** Suitably suspended writing board,

- Height & slope of desks ( 15 degree angle )

- Size of seats in relation to students age & built,

- Distance between columns of desk(60cm)

5**. Kitchen and Dining:**

- Proper illumination & ventilation,

- Rat & insect proof,

- Washable walls & floors,

- Cold & hot water taps,

- Refrigerators ,

- Sanitary refuse baskets ,

- > one door ,

- Proper control of food handlers.

**6. Water, Sewage and refuse disposal:**

**-** Drinking fountains,

- one tap / 40 students,

- one toilette / 30 students,

- Soap & Paper towels

**School nutrition:**

Nutritional level affects overall health, and consequently the pace of learning among the children

Nutritional inputs can increase both attendance and quality of education. Provision of following inputs to schools can be grouped under nutrition component of school health programme.

1-Good supplements for malnourished children

2-Promotion of use of iodized salt

3-School feeding or school lunch programme for all students in schools

In the developed countries, school lunch or school feeding programmers are widely supported. In a number of neighboring countries, school feeding programmes are in being implemented.

**Air pollutants:** Poor indoor air quality may increase rates of asthma, allergies, and infectious and respiratory diseases, and affect student performance of mental tasks involving concentration, calculations, and memory ,also children are exposed to outdoor air pollution from industry and traffic exhaust fumes on their way to school, and outdoor air pollutants may enter into the classroom.

**Ultraviolet radiation:** exposure and sunburn during childhood constitute an important risk factor for several long-term health effects, among them skin cancer and cataracts

#### Children are more susceptible to the harmful effects of chemical, biological and physical threats in their environment for the following reasons : (6)

* Exposure to environmental toxicants during certain stages of development.
* Young children breathe faster, and eat and drink more in proportion to their body weight than adults.
* Children often have a greater exposure to environmental hazards than adults.

**School Health Protection Services**

1-Mandatory primary examination at school entry**,** which offers the baseline for the follow-up of health status during schooling period. **The main GOAL** of this examination is the early detection of conditions or concerns to school program activities.

2- Screening tests**:** They are simple tests which can be carried out frequently to screen for certain pathological conditions or diseases "Case-finding", especially of unapparent or contagious diseases.

They are simple tests which can be carried out frequently to:

-To screen for certain pathological conditions or diseases.

-To screen suspected cases of disease, who need further investigation for final diagnosis.

Examples of screening tests include:

weight and height,

visual acuity

acuity of hearing,

IQ testing,

dental examination.

3- School Based Vaccination Program: The School Based Vaccination Program provides parents with the opportunity to have their child vaccinated for free through their school, Coordinated by Ministry of Health. The vaccination program in Saudi Arabia requires first grade schoolchildren to take the following vaccines: OPV, DTap(Td), MMR, and Varecilla vaccine.

# Other vaccination campaigns can be carried out in schools under the supervision of the ministry of health

**School Health Curative Services**

## Medical emergency:

* Every school district should identify the persons who are authorized and educated to make decisions when health emergencies occur. **Names**, **telephone numbers**, **and locations of these persons** should be provided to all staff members.
* Each school should have an **emergency plan** that specifies the responsibility for contacting these persons during an emergency.
* Two or more members of the school staff, depending on school size, should be identified and educated to handle emergencies according to established policies until the nurse, physician, or other emergency personnel can be contacted.

### What are heath promoting schools (HPS)?

A healthy school community promotes a culture of wellness for all its members: students, teachers, administrators/principals, staff, parents, and community partners.  These groups must work together to create an environment that supports healthy choices.

#### What is the aim of heath promoting schools?

They aim to improve everyone’s health and educational success through the creation of healthy school communities.

#### Principles of heath promoting schools:

* Promotes the health and well-being of students.
* Links health and education issues and systems.
* Upholds social justice and equity concepts.
* Enhances the learning outcomes of students.
* Collaborates with parents and the local community.
* Provides a safe and supportive environment.
* Seeks continuous improvement through ongoing monitoring and evaluation.