



Healthy Schools

## National Healthy Schools Programme A guide for parents and carers



# What is the National Healthy Schools Programme?

It is a joint Department for Education and Skills and Department of Health programme presently working with over half of the 23,000 state schools in England.

Its three overall aims are to:

- help raise pupils achievement
- help reduce health inequalities
- help promote social inclusion

The National Healthy Schools Programme (NHSP) means that the health service, schools, parents and carers work together to help children and young people be healthier, more comfortable and relaxed in school and to learn better.

It will ensure that half of all schools are healthy schools by 2006, with the rest working towards healthy school status by 2009.

The Programme has the following key themes: Personal, Social and Health Education; drug education (including alcohol and tobacco); emotional health (including bullying); healthy eating; physical activity and sex and relationship education.

Your local area has its own programme co-ordinator who works closely with schools to ensure they receive the necessary support needed. They find out what the school needs before taking action.



Local healthy schools programmes are jointly managed by health (primary care trusts) and education (local authorities). The national team in London keeps a keen eye on what is happening and is supported by other local agencies.

The Government wants all children to achieve the five outcomes of *Every Child Matters* as they are important for wellbeing in childhood and later on in life. They are:

- Being healthy
- Staying safe
- Enjoying and achieving
- Making a positive contribution
- Achieving economic wellbeing

*Every Child Matters* was passed into law in the Children's Act 2004. It means that there will be a great many changes in local children's services. Schools for example, will be judged on how well they support the five outcomes above.



**Some examples of activities in the programme are:**

1. Drug education: learning the difference between medicines and harmful drugs and smoking cessation
2. Healthy eating: your children will learn about what kind of food is good for them and are encouraged to bring healthy lunchboxes to school
3. Physical activity: your child is encouraged to walk or cycle to school where safe and participate in physical activity
4. Emotional health and wellbeing: learn how to resist bullying, taking part in a school council, learning about your own feelings
5. Sex and relationship education: learning how to make and keep friendships. Learning about making informed choices
6. PSHE: learning about living in a multi-cultural society and developing better personal skills such as assertiveness.



## What is a healthy school?

A healthy school promotes the health and wellbeing of its pupils and staff both by what is taught in the school and through the wider school environment.

A healthy school improves pupils' life-choices, achievement and opportunities by providing a comprehensive programme of: Personal, Social and Health Education, drug education, emotional health, healthy eating, physical activity and sex and relationship education all within an emotionally supportive environment that enables pupils to learn.

A healthy school achieves national standards that demonstrate a key contribution to the education and health priorities found in the outcomes of *Every Child Matters*.



## What are the advantages of participation for children, schools and communities in being involved in Healthy Schools?

### Children

Your child/children will be more confident, motivated and will have the skills and information to make important life and health choices. They will be more likely to achieve good academic results within a school that supports their health and wellbeing. Children will gain access to a range of support services and schools will invest in their personal and social development. Healthy schools work hard to ensure that they deal effectively with issues such as bullying.


### Schools

Your child's school will improve its performance in academic and non-academic areas and get involvement from the whole school community. It will strengthen its links within the school 'family' (parents, governors, staff, pupils and community partners).

Schools develop stronger external partnerships, including sharing good practice with other schools and receive greater support and professional development for their staff.

### Communities

School communities involved in the NHSP can have fewer problems with truancy, juvenile crime, unwanted teenage pregnancies and drugs.



By involving your children in being good citizens, your community will benefit. In creating opportunities for good citizenship there will be closer ties and greater understanding between schools and health authorities, social services, the police and other agencies.

There is also the chance for communities to influence and contribute to what goes on in schools and work alongside schools in making children feel more comfortable, more interested and positive about their school experience.

### **Continuing Professional Development for teachers and school nurses.**

These two programmes are managed by the NHSP. They aim to promote and improve the knowledge and skills that both teachers and school nurses bring to the teaching of sex and relationship education and drug education, within the context of Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE). This is an essential part of a young person's development and experience. School nurses support PSHE in a unique way as they have the knowledge, expertise, skills and links between school, home, communities and local health services.

The NHSP highlights the important contribution that school nurses make in reducing inequalities and raising achievement in schools.

For more information about the National Healthy Schools Programme, please first contact your local school. If need be, contact your local programme co-ordinator for your area, through your local education authority or primary care trust.  
[www.lhsp.org](http://www.lhsp.org)

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