

# UNIT 5 HEALTH AND NUTRITION PROMOTING SCHOOL





# Introduction

- Good health and proper nutrition are prerequisites for effective learning.
- Healthy, well-nourished children learn better.
- School health and nutrition programming is recognized as a means of improving children's nutritional status, learning achievement and general well-being.
- Children are exposed to many physical and physiological threats that jeopardize their health.
- Child- friendly schools and learning spaces mitigate these problems by creating a healthy school environment.
- In this unit we will focus on concepts related to health and nutrition, legal framework for health and nutrition, benefits of the health and nutritional friendly school, components of the health and nutrition promoting school and the skills required to implement the health and nutrition promoting school.



## Expected learning outcomes

Upon completion of this unit, you will be able to:

- a) Define the concepts related to health and nutrition
- b) Describe the legal framework for health and nutrition
- c) Explain the benefits of the health and nutritional friendly school.
- d) Discuss the components of the health and nutritional friendly school
- e) Apply the skills required for implementing health and nutrition in schools.



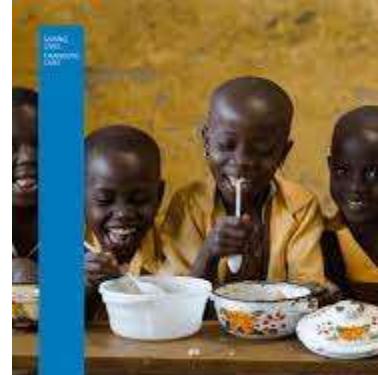
## Definition of a health and nutrition promoting school

**(a). Health:** Is the complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease. In human beings health relates to the general condition of a person's mind, body and spirit usually meaning freedom from illness, injury or pain.

**(b). Physical health:** Is important to overall health and wellness because injury of the body makes it difficult to undertake physical and mental tasks well. It subsumes the consumption of foods that enhance good health and the maintenance of physical fitness through regular exercise.

**(c). Social health:** Entails living in harmony with fellow human beings, seeking positive, interdependent relationships with others and developing healthy sexual behaviours.

**(d). Spiritual health:** Equips people with the ethics, values and morals that help to guide decision making and is a determinant of overall health. *Emotional health* is the ability to get through the rigors of life, to function autonomously while being aware of personal limitations and the value of seeking interpersonal support and assistance. It is a continual process of change and growth.



**(e). Occupational health:** Applies to the personal satisfaction that people derive from their careers and may be achieved by working towards set career goals and choosing a career path compatible with ones interests, talents, and personality.

**(f). Sanitation:** Refers to the disposal of human and animal excreta, vector control, solid waste management and drainage while *nutrition* is the science that explains the role of food and nutrients in the human body during growth, development and maintenance of life.

**(g). Intellectual health:** Addresses mental activities and openness to new ideas and may be achieved by engaging in lifelong learning through both formal education and informal life experiences.

**(h). Social wellness:** Entails living in harmony with fellow human beings, seeking positive, interdependent relationships with others and developing healthy sexual behaviours.



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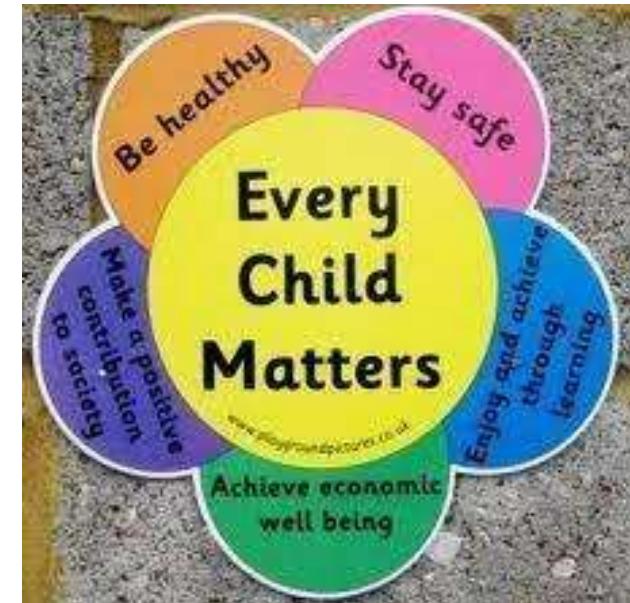
## Legal framework for health and nutrition

Health and nutrition are enshrined in the following legal instruments:-

### **(a). Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), Article 24:** States

Parties recognize the rights of children to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health and agree to take appropriate measures to ensure the provision of necessary medical assistance and health care to all children, to combat disease and malnutrition, to provide adequate nutritious foods and clean drinking water, taking into consideration the dangers and risks of environmental pollution, to ensure that parents and children are informed, have access to education and are supported in the use of basic knowledge of child health and nutrition, hygiene and environmental sanitation and the prevention of accidents.

**(b). Children Act 8 of 2001:** This Act of Parliament makes provision for parental responsibility, fostering, adoption, custody, maintenance, guardianship, care and protection of children. Every child shall have a right to health and medical care the provision of which shall be the responsibility of the parents and the Government.



## Benefits of the healthy and nutritional friendly school

- i. It enhances teaching and learning thereby contributing to improved academic performance. It results in enhanced retention and transition, and prevents children from dropping out of school.
- ii. The health benefits of safe and adequate water, improved sanitation and hygiene range from reduction in diarrhea, intestinal worms, and eye infections.
- iii. It leads to enhanced psycho-social wellbeing that accompanies the use of clean facilities (such as latrines) thereby contributing to development of life skills such as high self-esteem;
- iv. Health and nutrition education enables learners to develop life skills as values imparted onto them eventually translate to the general populace hence a national health and nutrition culture;
- v. Improving health and nutrition brings the greatest educational benefits to the poor and the most vulnerable as in the case of deworming;
- vi. Improving health and nutrition through schools can be highly cost effective. Their cost effectiveness compares favorably with other programs geared at improving educational outcomes hence they can have a massive global impact.



## Components of a health and nutrition promoting school

- 1. Health-related policies** in schools that help ensure a safe and secure physical environment and a positive psychosocial environment, and address all types of school violence, such as the abuse of students, sexual harassment and bullying, and that help maintain the education system in the face of HIV and AIDS.
- 2. Provision of safe water and sanitation facilities**, as first steps in creating a healthy school environment that reinforces hygienic skills and behaviors; providing separate sanitation facilities and privacy for girls is an important contributing factor in reducing dropout during and before menses.
- 3. Skills-based health education** that focuses on the development of knowledge, attitudes, values and life skills needed to make appropriate positive decisions, to establish lifelong healthy practices, and to reduce vulnerability to substance abuse and HIV/AIDS.
- 4. School-based health and nutrition services** that are simple, safe and familiar, and address problems that are prevalent and recognized as important in the community, including the provision of counselling to cope with the AIDS epidemic.



## **Health and nutritional related policy:**

- School health and nutrition policies state the actions that schools should take to improve the overall health, hygiene and nutrition of all learners.
- The following are examples of school health and nutrition policies:
  - a) **Physical and mental health :**
    - Games, sports and clubs activities are COMPULSORY;
    - Smoking is prohibited on school grounds;
    - All prescription drugs MUST be deposited with the school nurse for safe administration.
  - b) **Food safety and hygiene**
    - Hawking of food is OUTLAWED within the school and its
    - ALL potential food vendors MUST be regulated to determine the quality, hygiene and standards of their foods before they are allowed to practice at the school.



**c) Sanitation :**

- Personal hygiene is a FIRST for ALL learners;
- You are expected to be APPROPRIATELY dressed at all times,
- in clean and full school uniform with hair and nails neatly trimmed;
- The school environment should be kept clean at ALL times;
- daily and weekly cleaning activities are COMPULSORY.

**d) Life skills**

- High levels of discipline are expected of ALL learners at all times;
- Respect is important for peaceful co- existence!
- Learners should take personal responsibility of their belongings by ensuring their safe use and storage.



## Provision of safe water and sanitation facilities

Schools should provide safe water and sanitation facilities as follows:-

**(a). *Water availability and quality:*** School children and teachers require a safe water supply, accessible and sufficient quantities for drinking, food preparation and personal hygiene. Expected water consumption varies from 15- 30 litres per day per learner in a day school and 90- 140 litres per day per learner in a boarding school. Institutions are expected to adopt suitable water storage and disinfection mechanisms and to liaise with relevant Government agencies to ensure regular water quality surveillance and monitoring especially before and after the long rains, and during disease outbreak and droughts. Fresh potable water should be availed within the school with proper plumbing infrastructure that allows for its distribution. If such a setup is not possible, a borehole or well should be included in the school compound. This can be augmented with a rainwater catchment system in roofs as appropriate.



**(b). Sanitation infrastructure:** These include all the structures constructed for disposal of human waste and for body cleanliness such as toilets, latrines, urinals and ablution. It is fundamental for schools to provide adequate excreta disposal facilities as it is frustrating for children to study hygiene and not be able to practice learnt behaviours.

- Ablution blocks should be attached or adjacent to dormitories and a high degree of cleanliness observed.
- For mixed schools, independent sanitation should be provided for girls, boys as well as staff. These should be well ventilated and offer complete privacy such as with the use of shutters and screens. They should also be sensitive to the varying categories of users by age group, and special needs, based on standards relevant to the different geographic conditions in the country.
- For ECD learners, pit latrines should have smaller apertures (holes) suitable for the learners' ages.
- In addition, latrine doors should be lockable from inside but must open outwards.



- A minimum number of toilets accessible for persons with disabilities should be provided with western closet or an adapted form of it.
- Latrines for girls should have in-built or separate cloak rooms with running water in addition to disposal facilities for used sanitary towels such as pedal operated bins (in the case of water closet toilets).
- Adequate anal cleansing materials such as tissue paper, soap and water should also be provided in the latrines for use.
- Latrine cleaning should be performed at least once daily, preferably in the morning by applying a germicidal detergent solution to prevent contamination and to remove odour.
- Latrine walls should be painted with gloss paint for ease of cleaning.
- Use of footwear by learners should be encouraged so as to prevent the infestation of worms.



- In order to encourage proper use of latrines, their location should allow for ease of supervision so as to ensure their proper use and reduce the risk of vandalism.
- In addition, schools should ensure the right capacity of latrines considering the total enrolments, the school timetable and the future growth of the school population.
- Appropriately site latrines considering the following criteria:
  - Away from water wells, at the lower side of a slope, so as to minimize the risk of groundwater contamination;
  - Open up and clear access routes to ensure that latrines are in the hearing or visual distance of the school so that assistance can be called for if necessary;
  - Locate latrine access routes away from busy public places and roads, while still being open and clear for safety reasons.



## Skills-based health education

- Schools should provide life skills education

**(a). *What is life skills education?*** The term life skills refers to a large group of psycho-social and interpersonal skills that boost individuals' abilities for adaptive and positive behavior and enable them to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life.

**(b). *Aim of life skills education:*** It aims at equipping learners with psychosocial competencies that help them make informed decisions, solve problems, think creatively and critically, build healthy relationships, empathize with those in need and manage their life in a healthy and productive manner.



**(c). *Importance of life skills education:***

- i. Life skills-based health education contributes to the promotion of personal and social development, the prevention of health and social problems, and the protection of human rights.
- ii. Life skills are abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life.
- iii. Life skills are psychosocial competencies that help people make informed decisions, solve problems, think critically and creatively, communicate effectively, build healthy relationships, empathize with others, and cope with emotions and stress to manage their lives in a healthy and productive manner.
- iv. Life skills may be directed toward personal actions or actions toward others, or they may be applied to actions that alter the surrounding environment to make it conducive to health and wellbeing.

**(d). Categories of life skills:** The following categories of life skills can contribute to creating a safe school if appropriately utilized:

- Interpersonal skills
- communication Decision making Skills
- Skills of increasing internal locus
- Problem solving skills:
- Negotiation skills:
- Empathy:
- Critical thinking skills:
- Cooperation and team work:
- Skills for managing feelings
- Goal setting skills:
- Advocacy skills:
- Stress management skills:



## School-based health and nutrition services

- Schools should have hand washing facility, garbage disposal solutions, food storage, preparation and dining facility, and emergency care facility as follows:-

**(a). Hand washing:** Hand washing dispensers come in different forms. They may be static (fixed) or portable and include tippy taps, hand washing basins and pipe type outlets. They should be designed in such a way that the supply of water for hand washing is consistent and the water source cannot be contaminated through contact with dirty hands. If there is no tap, a vessel should be provided for scooping water from a container. Schools should ensure adequacy of the hand washing facilities in relation to their enrolments in addition to:

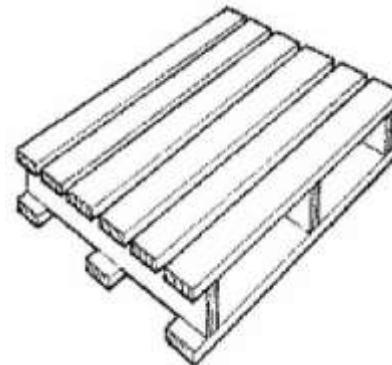




- Strategically locating hand washing facilities to maximize on their accessibility by children of all ages;
- Using a system that doses the quantity of water, recycling or channelling wastewater to growing plants to conserve both the water and the environment;
- Regularly drain and clean the washbasins to avoid the spread of pathogens.
- Without proper drainage surroundings become muddy, discouraging children from washing hands and attracting mosquitoes.



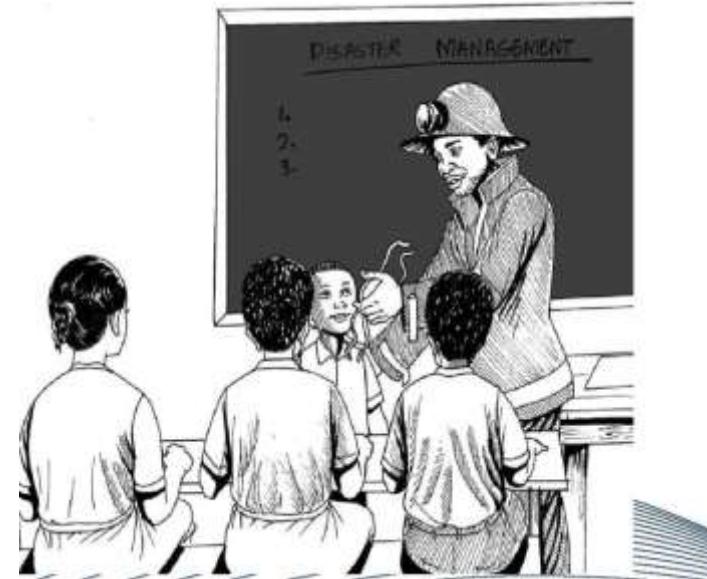
**(b). Garbage disposal solutions:** Garbage management solutions of schools should correspond to local conditions and be accepted by their communities. The collection and disposal of/ or recycling of waste should also be safe, efficient and hygienic to avoid the spread of communicable diseases, discourage the presence of pests and vectors as well as prevent human contact with hazardous materials. Sufficient and strategically located litter bins, garbage disposal pits, incinerators should be provided to ensure proper disposal of both liquid and solid refuse. Dumping of solid waste such as used sanitary towels into the sanitary system may lead to frequent blockages of discharge pipes, unnecessarily fill up pits and decrease their lifetime considerably. All waste disposal sites should also be located in isolated places within the school compound, away from learners' activity, fenced off and access to learners restricted. Animal waste could be utilized in the production of compost manure, generation of biogas or mixed with waste paper and vegetation to produce briquettes for cooking fuel. Water for hand washing should be recycled or channeled to vegetable gardens.



**(c). Food storage, preparation and dining facilities:** Food storage and preparation are important aspects of nutrition and food safety and, an effective hygiene control program is vital to avoid the adverse effects of food borne illnesses and food spoilage. As such, schools are expected to ensure appropriate storage of their perishable and dry foods (pullets for maize, beans, green grams and racks for perishables). Food storage rooms should be well aerated with high standards of hygiene (clean and dust free). During storage, food and non- food items such as chemicals should be separated as should raw meats from cooked meats (MOE, 2009). Safe and adequate amounts of water should be provided within the kitchen and dining facilities and learners should be supervised to wash their hands well before eating or to use spoons for eating. Rubbish pits and latrines should be sunk a safe distance away from food stores, kitchens and halls of residence to avoid contact between food and pests.

- Food preparation surfaces, utensils and other equipment should be made from easy-to- clean materials, which should be thoroughly cleaned and regularly aerated as shown in these pictures.
- The use of energy saving stoves in schools should also be encouraged in order to reduce the amount of firewood used.
- Energy saving stoves (pictured below) are also cleaner and healthier.





**(d). Emergency care facilities:** All schools should have mechanisms such as sanatoria and functional first aid kits for timely and effective emergency response in the event of personal injury to the learners. First aid training and support for teachers and learners should be regularized to enable them deliver simple health interventions and health services should be located a reasonable distance away from schools for ease of accessibility. Schools should also maintain contacts with their local in health officers and, inform them immediately in the event of suspected outbreaks of contagious diseases.



# Skills required to implement a health and promoting school



## **Skill 1. Ensure that there are adequate sanitation facilities**

- Provide latrines for girls and boys
- Toilets should be properly used and well maintained
- The school has and enforces a policy to provide adequate numbers of clean, separate, and private toilet facilities for girls and boys, as well as female and male teachers.





- Have adequate numbers of clean, well-maintained toilets and hand washing facilities are available with separate, private latrines for girls and boys, as well as female and male teachers.
- School waste is disposed of properly to avoid spreading diseases, to reduce pests, and to prevent human contact with potentially hazardous material
- Schools act to prevent the breeding of mosquitoes and other disease vectors on or near school grounds and reduce the risk of vector-borne diseases.
- School food services (if any) ensure safe, hygienic, and healthy food and prevent food-borne diseases.

## **Skill 2: Ensure that food is provided in the school as follows:**

- Provision of nutrition services in school (e.g. school feeding, deworming, vitamin "A" supplementation)

## **Skill 3: Ensure that water is available with adequate supply as follows:**

- Provide access to safe clean water for drinking and washing.
- Provide clean and safe drinking water is provided to all students and school personnel.



## **Skill 4: Provide life skills based health education and treatment as follows:**

- Health, hygiene and life skills education is part of the curriculum and is regularly taught.
- The school has and implements skills-based health education including prevention of risk behavior for substance abuse and HIV/AIDS.
- The school integrates [life] skills-based health education in its curriculum.
- The life skills-based curriculum targets students of different ages and developmental stages with appropriate, relevant messages.
- Students learn subject matter that can be utilized in real life in their locality.
- The curriculum has clearly defined indicators for skills development. Life skills programs are adapted to meet local socio-cultural norms, values and religious beliefs.
- The school uses participatory activities to personalize information, explore attitudes and values, and practice skills. (FRESH)





- The school provides teacher training to help them master basic information about HIV/AIDS and become confident with life skills training methods.
- Families and communities are mobilized through the schools and PTA to assist teachers and students to utilize what is learned and practice skills outside the classroom.
- Teachers are provided with lesson planning guidelines that aid in life skills development and in self-assessment.
- The school has developed appropriate linkages to physical and mental health services, including counselling, and access to the commodities that will promote safer behavior.
- School has easy access to health services/sick bay/first aid (immunization/ vaccination, reasonable distance to health center).

## **Skill 5: Provide sex education and HIV/AIDS education**

- Provision of outreach activities done by school club to prevent HIV/AIDS each term.

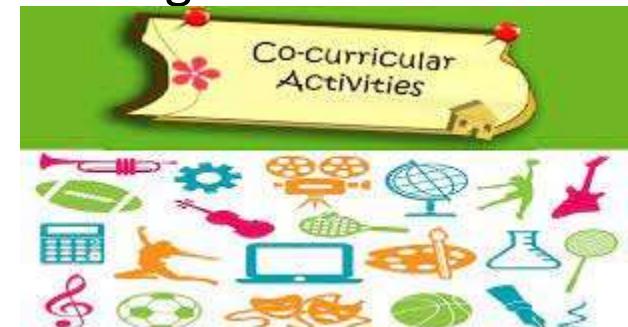
## **Skill 6: Ensure adequacy of physical facilities**

- School compound is clean and well maintained.
- Appropriate use of available resources.
- All classrooms to have proper ventilation, lighting and adequate learning space for children.



## **Skill 7: Provide co-curricular activities**

- Availability and use of well-defined play areas with recreation time allocated on time table (including for learners with special needs).
- There are regular times available for recreation and play during the school day.
- All students to have opportunities to experience creative learning experiences that are free from the stress of competition and examinations, e.g. music, art, drama.
- There is a programme of activities outside of school hours that boys and girls can join according to their interests, such as informal sports teams, youth clubs, and community service organizations.





- In this unit we have looked at the concept of health and nutrition in child friendly schools.
- We have examined the legal provisions for health and nutrition in schools.
- We have come to appreciate the many benefits accruing from health and nutrition in schools
- In addition, we have looked at different components of health and nutrition and the skills required to implement health and nutrition in schools/
- We hope you can now enhance health and nutrition services in your school as you work towards making it child-friendly.