

SCHOOL HEALTH PROGRAMMES

Organization of School Health Programmes

Members of the school health team:

- Teachers
- Pupils and students
- Parents
- Community formal and informal leaders
- Community health nurse

To organize a good school health programme, you need to do the following:

- Assess the problems of school children
- Establish practical goals for the school population
- Carry out the needed activities
- Evaluate the process and results of the programs

The whole idea behind a school health programme is to ensure that the needs of the school child are met.

Needs of school child

A Stable Home

The home should provide basic needs especially shelter and security.

Proper Nutrition

The child needs to grow well physically and mentally. It is therefore important for the child to take adequate nutrition at least three times a day. The diet should have extra proteins and vitamins to meet their nutritional needs.

This will help the child to cope with demands of school life. The meals may be provided at home, school, or may be packed.

Freedom from Fatigue

The child needs to have enough rest at home from school activities.

The evening meal should be taken early so that the child will have enough sleep and rest.

Clothing

This is normally provided as school uniform, which should be clean and tidy. The child needs to wear shoes to prevent injuries and hookworm infestation

Good Sight, Hearing and Speech

Defects of sight, hearing and speech interfere with the learning process of a child. Early detection of all disabilities and referral to appropriate specialist is a very important activity of a school health programme.

Freedom from Infection

All school children should be immunized against childhood diseases. Treatment of common conditions, for example colds, skin rashes, sore throat and cuts should also be given. The treatment could take place in the school clinic or in the local health care facility.

Pure and Safe Water

This should be provided in the school and at home to prevent water related diseases. Adequate sanitation, proper excreta and refuse disposal is important at home and in school.

Clean Buildings

The home and school environment should be kept clean.

The health programmes aim at:

- Promoting and maintaining the health of the school children.
- Promoting positive health behaviour among staff and students.
- Bringing up citizens who understand basic good health habits.
- Ensuring general community health by using the child as a channel for health messages to the family.
- Improving the physical and social environment of the school.
- Providing the following aspects of prevention of disease; Primary prevention, for example eating diets rich in vitamins A and C, iron and protein; Secondary prevention, that is, early diagnosis and treatment; Tertiary prevention which includes rehabilitation.

The following activities are undertaken to achieve the objectives of the school health programme:

- Carrying out observation, screening, physical examination and epidemiological investigations.
- Rendering emergency services and care of a continuing illness.
- Counselling or arranging for counselling of pupils, teachers and other persons in the school population.
- Involving parents, pupils and teachers in planning and conducting health care activities.
- Contributing to the development of a curriculum in health related matters, through clubs such as, biology, mathematics, scout association, Red Cross, social clubs and home science.
- Consultation with teachers and other personnel.
- Referral for specialized/continued care.

Planning and Implementation of School Health Services**1. ASSESSING HEALTH NEEDS**

Where can you source information about school health needs in your catchment area?

- Clinic records

- Report
- Health workers
- Teachers , students and parents
- Personal observation and experience
- Formal and informal records

2. PLANNING

Once you gather the information regarding the health needs of school children in your catchment area, you then need to discuss your findings, and plan your programme with stakeholders from the Ministry of Health.

These include the:

- District/sub-county medical officers of health
- District/sub-county public health nurse
- Transport officers
- District/sub- county health administrative officer
- District/sub-county health education officer
- District/ sub-county public health officer
- District/sub-county medical records officer

Implementing a school health programme requires quite a lot of resources. You will require funds for equipment, drugs, supplies, fuel and staff. You will also need cooperation from your team members. It is therefore very important for you to carefully identify each member of the team, and discuss with them their roles during the school health services.

Resources Required for School Health Programmes

- Money
- Manpower
- Material
- Time

During the planning phase you also need to consider the following supporting activities.

Effective partnerships between **teachers and health workers** and between **the education and health sectors**.

The success of school health programmes demands an effective partnership between ministries of education and health, and teachers and health workers.

The health sector retains the responsibility for the health of children, but the education sector is responsible for implementing, and often funding the school based programmes. These sectors need to identify responsibilities and present a coordinated action, to improve health and learning outcomes from children.

Pupil Awareness and Participation

Children must be important participants in all aspects of school health programmes, and not simply the beneficiaries.

Children should participate in health policy development and implementation efforts, to create a safer and more sanitary environment.

Health promotion aimed at their parents, other children, community members is taught during school health services. Children in turn disseminate. This is an effective way to help young people and the community to acquire the knowledge, attitudes, values and skills needed to adopt healthy lifestyles, and to support health and education for all.

3. IMPLEMENTATION

You should start by preparing a work plan together with members of your health facility team. Make sure you allow enough time, depending on the number of schools to be covered and their health needs.

You should also organize the resources you will need to perform the tasks at hand, so that you and your team can be punctual on the day of the service. Since some of the resources at your disposal will be teachers, pupils and community leaders, remember to promote teamwork during implementation.

Their morale and enthusiasm should be kept high as they participate.

ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT DURING SCHOOL HEALTH SERVICES

Physical Examination

The objective of carrying out a physical examination is to recognize the signs of common ailments, treat the minor ones and refer those which require specialized attention. This examination should be done systematically from head to toe for every child. A cumulative record of a child's history, medical examination and immunizations should be kept for each child.

Referral Services

This service is given to children who have ailments needing care outside the school. They are referred to the nearest health facility or hospital, depending on the nature of illness and if it requires to be seen by a specialist.

Inspection of the School Environment

Since the children spend a lot of the time in school, it is important to ensure that their environment is safe and clean. The following aspects are inspected:

1. Location of the School

Surroundings should be clean, free from noise pollution, away from industrial and other waste or swampy area.

2. Sanitation

The school should have a good water supply, clean and enough latrines, and solid waste disposal systems. There should be separate toilets for female and male students. The environment should be clean and well maintained.

3. Playground

It should be dry with no potholes or stones to prevent accidents.

4. Classroom

This should be clean, well ventilated with adequate lighting. It should not be overcrowded and the students should be able to hear the teacher and see the black board from where they sit.

5. Furniture

The seats should be simple and not attached to each other so that the pupils can move them. The children's feet should be able to touch the floor when they are seated

Promotion of Proper Nutrition

This consists of the importance of eating a balanced diet and good feeding habits.

If there is a feeding programme observe the following:

- Methods of cooking and storage of food
- Personal hygiene of food handlers and children
- Cleanliness of the utensils
- Cleanliness of the kitchen
- Screening of the food handlers

Sharing Health Messages

You should identify and plan to share the appropriate health messages with the school

population. The health messages shared should include prevention of common health problems, such as, sexually transmitted infections, HIV/AIDS, skin conditions amongst others.

Promotion of Personal Hygiene

This is done by advising the children to do the following:

- Taking a daily bath
- Brushing teeth after meals
- Washing of hands before eating and after visiting the toilet
- Keeping the hair and nails short and clean
- Wearing clean clothes

Record Keeping

It is important to record every health activity that you undertake.

This applies to school health service activities. These records are used for evaluation.

The records should reflect:

- The number of schools covered.
- The number of pupils treated and types of ailments
- The number of pupils referred
- Activities carried out
- Health messages shared
- Information on the environmental health
- Effectiveness of the school health services

4. EVALUATION

When you started planning your school health services, you formulated objectives. It is important to find out whether you have achieved them. This is where you start when evaluating your school health services. You should also ask yourselves the following questions:

- Did you follow the work plan?
- Were the services geared towards meeting the priority health needs?
- Did you carry out all the necessary activities during the school health services?
- How effective were the services you provided?

You can use the following steps to evaluate your school health services.

- Gather information
- Analyze
- Identify areas of improvement
- Take action