**SECTION 3:** SCHOOL HEALTH **PROGRAMMES**

**Introduction**

When a child reaches school going age, it is necessary that, the health care that was provided when they were under five years is continued.

School health focuses on ensuring health promotion, conservation, protection and correction of abnormalities of the school population.   
  
A school health programme is an integral part of community health. A school health approach is advocated in the provision of health services as school children are easy to reach, they also disseminate health messages to the   
larger population.

It is therefore important to consider school health programmes as a priority need of the community.

**Objectives**

By the end of this section you will be able to:

* Describe how to organise a school health programme
* State the objectives of a school health programme
* Explain how to plan and implement school health services
* State the activities undertaken during a school   
  health service
* Evaluate school health programmes

**Organisation of School Health Programmes**

In Kenya, it is your responsibility as a community health nurse to design school health programmes. In order to organise a practical school health programme you need to involve the rest of the health team members, the school administration and the community.

**Who are members of school health committees?**

The following are members of the school health team:

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

To organise 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.

**What are the needs of the 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 there 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 immunised 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.

**Objectives of School Health**

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 specialised/continued care.

**Planning and Implementation of School Health Services**

The first step in organising a school health programme is to   
assess the health problems. One way of doing this is by conducting a survey.

**Assessing Health Needs**

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

**The Clinic Records**

Clinic records from the health care facility near the school. This will provide information about the health problems that are commonly seen among school children who attend the centre.

**Reports**  
Previous reports on school health services at the health centre and at the district level. These reports are given monthly and quarterly.

**Health Team Workers**

You can hold discussions with the health care teams in your catchment area, to find out health problems of school children and their possible solutions.

**Teachers, Students and Parents**

Discussions with teachers, students and parents will yield useful information about their problems, and will also give you a chance to explain the importance of school health services.

**Personal Observations and Experiences**  
  
You can gather a lot of information merely by observing and listening to people, as you make contact and interact with them.

**Formal and Informal Leaders**

Village leaders usually have a repotoire about the most disturbing health care problems, and can assist you to plan school health services.

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 medical officers of health
* District public health nurse
* Transport officers
* District health administrative officer
* District health education officer
* District public health officer
* District 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**

**Manpower**

Personnel from the ministry of health and education need to be trained on relevant issues for the implementation process.

More human resources can also be sourced from the community by training the community leaders, and the communities own resource personnel to ensure support and sustainability of the programme.

**Materials**

Policies, guidelines and training materials, drugs, vaccines, supplies and transport.

**Time**

Time is required for the planning, implementing and evaluating.   
The time for the programmes should not interfere with school activities, and should be convenient for both the implementers and the beneficiaries. There should be sufficient time for the implementation process.

Like all good programmes, you will require some resources to implement a school health programme.

**What resources do you think you would you require for a school health programme?**

**Money**

Funding for school health programmes mainly is the responsibility of the government. Stakeholders also give financial support to the government through procurement of equipment, drugs and supplies, vehicles, training of personnel, supporting advocacy,   
meetings and development of policies, guidelines and standards.

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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 acquire the knowledge, attitudes, values and skills needed to adopt healthy lifestyles, and to support health and education for all.

**Implementing School Health Services**

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 organise 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**

**Head**Tinea capitis(ring worms), hair colour, texture, cleanliness and lice.

**Eyes**

* Visual acuity.
* Colour of conjunctiva.
* Discharge.
* Pallor would indicate anaemia.
* Yellow discolouration would indicate jaundice.
* Redness would indicate conjunctivitis such as trachoma.
* Check for ulceration and softness, which would indicate signs of keratomalacia (vitamin A deficiency).
* To determine the eye sight. A snellen eye chart is used to check left and right eyes.

**Nose**Check for, nasal discharge, deviated septum and polyps.

**Ear**Ear discharge or pain, tinnitus and impacted wax.

**Mouth**Cleanliness or oral hygiene, smooth appearance, swollen beefy red sores and atrophic papillae.  
  
**Teeth and Gums**Dental cavities, malpositioned, molted appearance (fluorosis), bleeding   
and cleanliness.

**Neck**  
Enlarged cervical glands, distended jugular veins and enlarged thyroid gland.

**Arms**Absence or presence of B.C.G scar.  
Weak and tender or swollen arms and presence of oedema.

**Hands**Cleanliness.

**Nails**If short and clean. Colour: Pallor indicates signs of anaemia.   
Shape: Spoon shape indicates iron deficiency anaemia.

**Skin**Rashes, cuts, scabies, lack of fat under the skin. Rough and dry swollen.  
 **Body**Tinea corporis, cleanliness and signs of malnutrition.  
 **Legs**Orthopaedic problems, jiggers, injuries, deformities, bowed and knock knees.  
 **Clothing**Cleanliness.  
 **Height and Weight**Screening the children for height and weight to assess their development.

**Physical Examination**

The objective of carrying out a physical examination is to recognise the signs of common ailments, treat the minor ones and refer those which require specialised 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 immunisations should be kept for each child.

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**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.   
 **Location of the School**

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

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

**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.

**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

**Evaluating School Health Services**

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.

**Gathering Information**

This is done using the same sources that you used earlier during planning.

**Analysing Information**

Compare the work actually done with what you had indicated in your work plan.

For example,

* How many schools were included in your plan and how many actually received the services?
* What is causing the difference between planned activities and the actual work done?

**Identify Areas Needing Improvements**

You can gather this information from your analysis once you identify the type or nature of improvement needed, you will then need to decide your course of action.

It might be that you will need to change the roles   
and activities of the team.

**Take Corrective Action**

Make a list of things that should be done and then go ahead and do them.