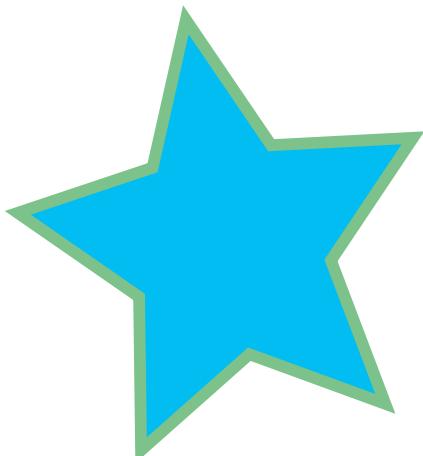




Healthy School Award



durham.ca/schools

Healthy School Award

Durham Region Health Department (DRHD) is pleased to offer the Healthy School Award to elementary and secondary schools in Durham Region. This award has been offered for over 10 years. It recognizes schools for their commitment to a Healthy Schools approach by creating an environment that is supportive of student health and well-being. A Healthy Schools approach helps students, staff and parents adopt lifelong healthy behaviours that may reduce:

- Bike and traffic injuries
- Injuries related to substance misuse
- Heart disease
- Cancer
- Obesity
- High blood pressure
- Type 2 diabetes
- Osteoporosis
- Stroke
- Depression



The Healthy School Award recognizes schools for supporting at least **ONE** of the following health topics:

Healthy eating	Other health topics: <input type="checkbox"/> Concussions and injury prevention <input type="checkbox"/> Food safety <input type="checkbox"/> Growth and development <input type="checkbox"/> Health equity <input type="checkbox"/> Healthy sexuality <input type="checkbox"/> Immunization <input type="checkbox"/> Infectious disease prevention <input type="checkbox"/> Off road safety <input type="checkbox"/> Violence and bullying <input type="checkbox"/> Visual health
Mental health promotion	
Physical activity and sedentary behaviour	
Road safety	
Substance-free living	
Tobacco-free living	
UV exposure	

- The award complements the Ontario Ministry of Education's Foundations for a Healthy School. There are several health-related topic checklists that have strategies and activities in the 5 broad areas that contribute to a Healthy School:
 - Curriculum, Teaching and Learning
 - School and Classroom Leadership
 - Student Engagement
 - Social and Physical Environment
 - Home, School and Community Partnerships

"The research is clear: healthy students are better prepared to learn, and education is a key determinant of health. Elevating well-being as a goal for education in Ontario recognizes its fundamental importance to our learners and their futures."

(Ministry of Education: Foundations for a Healthy School, 2014)

What are the benefits to a Healthy School approach and the Healthy School Award?

Education and health are closely linked. Good health supports successful learning and successful learning supports health. Healthy school initiatives have many benefits for the entire school community including, students, staff and parents. They can contribute to learning environments that promote and support student health and well-being.

Benefits for students include:

- Improved academic success
- Better physical, psychological and social health
- Better school attendance and sense of belonging
- Enhanced relationships with teachers and peers
- Increased skill development to support healthy living
- Increased opportunities for leadership roles
- Informed decision making
- Increased parental engagement in school activities

Benefits for parents include:

- Increased communication and involvement in their child's school
- Improved health knowledge and behaviours that support the entire family
- Increased opportunities to advocate for their child's well-being

Benefits for school communities include:

- Supports school improvement plans for student achievement and well-being
- Increased awareness of health curriculum within and beyond the classroom
- Increased student engagement
- Increased parental engagement
- Promotes a positive school climate
- Supports professional learning for staff and their own health
- Encourages a shared responsibility for health
- Empowers students, staff and parents
- Profiles the school as a leader in the community
- Enhanced partnerships between home, school and community
- Better access to community services and supports

"Ontario's education system needs to help students build the knowledge and skills associated with positive well-being and become healthy, active and engaged citizens."

(Ministry of Education: Achieving Excellence, 2014)

Six Steps to Creating a Healthy School Environment and the Healthy School Award:

Step 1: Connect or Getting Started

- Establish a school team/committee that addresses student health and well-being or link to an equivalent one (e.g., Health Action Team, Safe & Accepting Schools Team).
- Ideally, the team/committee should consist of members from the whole school community (i.e., administrator, staff, students, parents and community partners).
- Student engagement is an essential part of the healthy schools approach.
- Connect with your school's public health nurse and other members of the DRHD school health team. They can assist you in the planning and implementation of healthy schools initiatives.

Step 2: Assess or Identify Strengths and Areas for Improvement

- Gather feedback from school community and local data on student health and well-being (e.g., School Climate Survey, COMPASS, Ontario Student Drug Use and Health Survey, Evaluations, Durham Region Health Neighbourhoods) to complete an annual school assessment.
- Review feedback and data with the team.
- Identify the great work that your school is already doing to support student health and well-being.
- Together identify one or two priorities that the team will address using a comprehensive approach to school health.

Step 3: Plan or Develop a Healthy School Action Plan

- Develop a plan to address your health-related topic (see sample template) or incorporate student health and well-being into an existing school plan (e.g., School Improvement Plan for Student Achievement and Well-Being, Safe School Plan).
- Include goals and objectives, strategies and activities, who's responsible, timelines and evaluation (e.g., Target Areas/Smart Goals, Actions, Monitoring/Indicators of Success).
- Start small but move toward including strategies and activities in the 5 broad areas that contribute to a comprehensive approach to school health.
- The health-related topic checklists in this award and the DRHD Creating a Healthy School that supports:...placemats can provide you with some great ideas.

Step 4: Implement or Implement the Plan

- Put your plan into action with all members of your school community.
- Raise awareness of the great work that your school is doing to support student well-being (e.g., school announcements, websites, social media, newsletters).

Step 5: Monitor or Review and Adjust the Plan

- Review the progress in your school plan and adjust as needed.
- Evaluate the success/outcomes of your plan.
- Consider your next steps and future directions.

Step 6: Celebrate

- Complete the Healthy School Award application form and health-related topic checklist with your team.
- Submit all completed forms to Durham Region Health Department by the deadline.
- Recognize the hard work that your school has done to promote student health and well-being at a year-end celebration (e.g., school assembly, staff meeting, team meeting).