Scotland Chikwawa Health Initiative

Health Promoting School Orientation

School based health policies
“Good health supports successful learning. Successful learning supports health. Education and health are inseparable. Worldwide, as we promote health, we can see our significant investment in education yield the greatest benefits.”

Dr. Desmond O’Byrne
(Health Promotion, Non communicable Disease Prevention and Surveillance, WHO)
Remember the Purpose of HPS

- To enhance educational outcomes
- To facilitate action for health by building health knowledge and skills in the cognitive, social and behavioural domains
Aims of Health Promoting Schools (HPS)

The aim of this orientation is to:

- To enhance educational outcomes
- To facilitate action for health by building health knowledge and skills in the cognitive, social and behavioural domains
Recap of the previous HPS session...

What are the principles to be followed when implementing HPS?

- Child welfare and protection
- Sustainability
- Community participation and involvement
- HIV/AIDS
- Advocacy
- Confidentiality
Recap of the previous HPS session...

**Let's list the elements of Health Promoting Schools (HPS).**

1. School based healthy policy.
2. School physical environment.
3. School social environment.
4. Health services.
5. Community links
6. Individual health skills and action competences
What are school based health policies?

• The term ‘policy’ is most commonly understood to be a set of regulations, rules or procedures.

• They are clearly defined in documents or in accepted practices that promote health and well-being.
How important are School Based Health policies?

- Provide a set of procedures for managing incidents.
- Clarify expected behaviours and roles of school community members.
- Create a supportive school environment.
- Demonstrate to the school community that the school is committed to health.

*If you have ever tried to change the way things are, you will know how difficult it can be to sustain the change. Developing policy and documenting it can be a powerful tool in the change process.*
What are some of the School Based Health Policies?

• What are some of the policies that your school has currently?
  – Bullying policy
  – Drug and substance abuse policy
  – sexual reproductive health and health services policy
  – Productive land use policy

Not all ‘policy’ is about regulations, rules and procedures. The term ‘policy’ can also refer to a set of decisions and actions, or statements of intended action

(How do you decide on how to use Local Development Funds?)
Facts about School Based Health policies?

• An overall policy should be supported by school administration and management as well as teaching practice that help creates a healthy psychosocial environment for students and staff.

• A school based healthy policy is necessary in creating a health promoting school.

• policies can be about any issue which is a challenge and there is need for controlling it.
How can we develop school based health policies?

There are 7 steps to follow in policy development:

**STEP 1: Establish a core committee to develop the policy**

- It is recommended that a core committee representative of the whole school community be established to develop the policy.
- Structures for developing school based health policies should ideally be based on existing school structures for planning and curriculum change.
- Involve the participation of management, Headteacher, teachers, parents/guardians, students, and other relevant groups.
How can we develop school based health policies?

The following questions may help to clarify the working of the committee:

- Who will convene/chair the committee?
- Who will record the work of the committee?
- What assistance will the committee need and where can it be sourced?
- How will the committee consult with the various groups in the whole school community?
- Is there a role for additional representation from a relevant community based agency (youth or community services etc)?
How can we develop school based health policies?

STEP 2: Study relevant resource documents and legislation

• In recent years, many resource materials relevant to education on many issues use have been developed.

• Can be taken from various local departments.
How can we develop school based health policies?

STEP 3: Review the current situation in the school regarding the issue

Among the aspects of the current situation that may usefully be considered are the following:

a) Current provision regarding the issue

b) Existing school policies (e.g. school plan, the code of behaviour etc.)

c) Current understanding in relation to the issue

Consider current understanding, awareness and attitudes among the school community in relation to the issue.

- What is our understanding of the issue?
- Are we aware of the level and range of the issue now?
- What are staff views on current approaches concerning the issue?

The information gathered in Steps 2 and 3 will help the core committee to decide on what should go into the draft policy statement.
How can we develop school based health policies?

STEP 4: Prepare a draft policy statement

a) Policy Framework
• Title of Policy
• Scope
  – To whom does the policy apply—students, teachers, parents, users of the school building.
  – When does it apply—school time (including break times), to all school related activities......?

• Relationship to School’s Mission/Vision/Aims
  – Relate the policy to the philosophy and characteristic spirit (ethos) of the school.
  – Has an understanding of the characteristic spirit of the school (school ethos) been developed and agreed with the partners in the school community?
How can we develop school based health policies?

• **Rationale**
  – Why is this policy necessary?

• **Goals/Objectives**
  – In precise terms, what is the policy intended to achieve?

• **Policy Content**
  – State the content of the policy, indicating the school’s approach to this policy area.

• **Monitoring Procedures**
  – Who will do what, when, to see how the policy is working?
How can we develop school based health policies?

• Review Procedures
  – Who will do what, when, to evaluate the effectiveness of the policy and to ascertain what changes, if any, are necessary?

• Timeframe
  – When will the completed policy be circulated, when will it come into force, when will it be subject to review?

• Implementation Programme
  – What detailed procedures are necessary to implement the provisions of this policy? Who will devise the procedures? When? How will details be circulated to all concerned? Who will carry out the procedures when they have been devised?
How can we develop school based health policies?

b) Policy content in detail
It may be helpful to divide the policy content into three sections:

1) Education concerning the issue.
2) Management of the issue
3) Provision for training and staff development
How can we develop school based health policies?

b) Policy content in detail...

1) Education concerning the issue.
   • In what ways will education concerning the issue use be provided within the broad context classroom learning--through specific modules or programmes, existing school subjects, special projects....?
   • What considerations will inform the selection of content and methodologies?
   • What approach will be taken to co-ordination, teacher involvement, and time-allocation?
   • Other considerations?

The use of an outside visitor/speaker to enhance the work done in class should always be considered and should be undertaken in the presence of a/the teacher.
How can we develop school based health policies?

2) Management of the issue

- Incidents involving alcohol the issue should be known.
- The school should respond to incidents involving the issue in a planned and considered way.
- In certain cases it may be necessary to seek legal advice.
- Where a member of staff requires support, schools may consider facilitating links with an Employee Assistance Scheme.
- The school policy should inform teachers about issues relating to confidentiality and appropriate reporting procedures.
- It should also clarify an agreed procedure for involving parents/guardians.
How can we develop school based health policies?

2) Management of the issue ...

• In what situations and locations are learners found in violating the policy?

• How are incidents relating to the issue addressed in the school’s code of behaviour?

• What is the school’s shared understanding of the issue incident?

• What is the reporting procedure for such incidents?
How can we develop school based health policies?

- How will parents be involved in incidents relating to another child?
- What is the role of the school Management?
- Are there procedures in place for dealing with incidents?
- What support agencies are available at local level to which students involved in substance misuse might be referred?
- Are there adequate mechanisms in place to enable the school to follow up on incidents that may take place?
- Other considerations?
How can we develop school based health policies?

3) Provision for training and staff development

• An effective policy needs to be supported by an ongoing commitment from the Management and School stakeholders to training and staff development.
  – Are all staff members aware of the contribution they can make to the prevention of the issue?
  – Are all staff members sufficiently aware of and sensitive to the signs and symptoms of the issue?
  – Are all staff members sufficiently aware of laws relating to the issue?
  – What further training needs do we have in relation to the implementation of the policy?
  – Where can we access training?
  – How will new staff, in particular, be briefed on the substance use policy of the school?
  – How will parent education on the issue be promoted in the school community?
  – Other considerations?
How can we develop school based health policies?

**STEP 5: Publicize, revise /amend and finalize the draft policy**

- The draft policy should be circulated as widely as possible for the views of parents/guardians, teachers, students and management.
- Particular effort should be made to involve those parents and pupils who might not normally be reached.
- Revision of the draft policy should be informed by the feedback from this process.
How can we develop school based health policies?

STEP 6: Ratify, circulate and implement the agreed policy

- When the finalized draft policy has been ratified by the school Management, it becomes the school’s agreed .....Use Policy.
- It should then be circulated to ensure everyone in the school community is aware of it.
- The whole staff team must be familiar with the policy and ready to put it into practice in accordance with the Implementation Programme.
- It is important that everyone is aware of any changes implied in curriculum, school rules, sanctions and code of behaviour.
How can we develop school based health policies?

STEP 7: Monitor, review and evaluate the policy

- The policy should be reviewed regularly.
- In practice, this process might be co-ordinate by the core committee in consultation with the wider school community.
- Ongoing review and evaluation should take cognisance of changing information, legislation, developments in the school-based programme and feedback from parents/guardians, teachers and students.
How do we know that the policy is enough?

Use (Policy /content review checklist)

- Check on the review checklist and compare what is in your draft policy.

- Is every required aspect included.
NOTE: The School based health policies will complement the other HPS elements.
At the end make sure that...

- You have developed a draft policy.
- You have shared responsibilities.
- You have identified and put down a list of policies which are supposed to be made.
- You have made a plan of how you will work.