



## What is the Healthy Schools approach?

The Healthy Schools approach engages the whole school community to promote and enhance the health and well-being of children, youth, school staff, and the broader community.

The school community includes:

- students
- parents, guardians, caregivers, and family members
- school staff (e.g., educators, administrators, support staff)
- community partners such as public health, recreation and sport groups, police and fire services, municipalities, other schools, not-for-profit organizations, local social services and businesses)

The Healthy Schools approach can result in the creation and/or sustainability of a healthy school.

## Why implement the Healthy Schools approach?

The Healthy Schools approach motivates and supports school communities in establishing healthy, safe, inclusive, and accepting learning environments in which all students can reach their full potential.

## Benefits of a Healthy School

- Healthier Students! And healthy students are better prepared to learn and enjoy the time they spend at school.
- Healthy Choices! It is easier for children and youth to make healthier choices when everyone around them is working together to create a healthy school.
- Lifelong Healthy Living! The healthy skills students develop and practice now can lead them through a life of healthy living.

## What is Ophea's HS Certification?

HS Certification supports schools in addressing health and well-being in their school community by following the 6-Step Healthy Schools Process:

- Step 1 - Establish Your School Team
- Step 2 - Assess Your School Community Needs and Assets
- Step 3 - Identify Your Priority Health Topic
- Step 4 - Develop an Action Plan
- Step 5 - Take Action and Monitor Progress
- Step 6 - Celebrate and Reflect

School teams can choose from six health topics:

 Physical Activity	 Healthy Eating	 Personal Safety and Injury Prevention
 Growth and Development	 Mental Health	 Substance Use, Addictions and Related Behaviours

While schools select a priority health topic, they are still encouraged to promote health in all areas.

### HS Certification Goals

- to support and increase the capacity of school communities across Ontario to effectively implement the 6-Step Healthy Schools Process
- to celebrate and formally recognize an individual school community's achievements related to the 6-Step Healthy Schools Process

### HS Certification Quick Facts

- HS Certification follows a point-based system in which participating schools earn points as they complete each of the six process steps.
- Schools will be able to plan and report on the 6-Step Healthy Schools Process online and apply for Gold, Silver, or Bronze certification.
- HS Certification is an annual process (running from September to April). School certification levels are announced in late May/early June of each year.
- HS Certification is based on a school's ability to follow the process steps, not on the type or number of activities. This allows for the process to be flexible and adaptable to meet the needs of each unique school community across Ontario.
- An important component of HS Certification is student engagement (at both the elementary and secondary levels). This means that students are a fundamental part of the school team, helping identify what the school has and what it needs, choosing the school's priority health topic, and playing a lead role in planning and running activities and celebrations.

### What is my role in a healthy school?

A key component of HS Certification is promoting relationships between school communities and their community partners. Schools benefit from their services, resources and expertise as they plan and implement activities, and community partners benefit from the connection to the school community.

Community partners can play an integral role in supporting the Healthy Schools approach by sharing their time, expertise, services and resources.

### How can I get involved in HS Certification?

If you are a community partner who wants a school in your area to participate in Ophea's HS Certification, talk to the school's administration or a school staff member about this opportunity.

For more information, visit: <http://www.ophea.net/healthy-schools-certification>

For specific questions, email: [healthyschools@ophea.net](mailto:healthyschools@ophea.net)

