

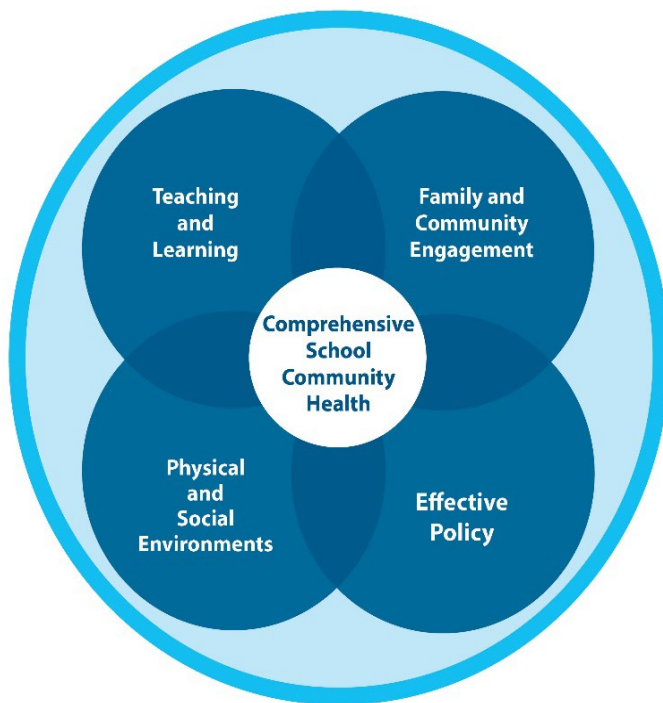
Comprehensive School Community Health

What is Comprehensive School Community Health?

Comprehensive School Community Health (CSCH) is a whole-school approach internationally recognized for supporting student success while addressing school community health in a planned, integrated and holistic way.

CSCH recognizes that health and education outcomes are interdependent. Healthy students are better learners and education is a determinant of health. People with higher education tend to be healthier than those with lower educational attainment.

The CSCH framework encompasses four integrated components for a whole-school approach:



How Does Comprehensive School Community Health Support Student Success?

Research has shown that CSCH facilitates improved student learning and well-being. CSCH encourages and supports children and youth in becoming physically, mentally, spiritually and emotionally safe and healthy.

Using CSCH, health, education and other sectors can work together to share a common vision of student success.

How Do Schools Incorporate Comprehensive School Community Health?

CSCH provides a foundation for staff, families, students and communities to work together to support students' full potential as learners, engaged citizens and healthy community members. This can be done by:

- considering all four components when responding to students' needs;
- strengthening school community capacity as a healthy setting for learning, working and living;
- including equity, diversity and inclusion as part of planning and implementation;
- encouraging and supporting a healthy school environment which promotes students' health and well-being;
- reinforcing an inter-agency approach; and,
- developing meaningful community partnerships.

Different Terminology – Same Ideas

The term “Comprehensive School Community Health” may be known as “Comprehensive School Health” or “Health Promoting Schools”. The four integrated components may be expressed in different ways; however, the underlying concepts are the same and all based on the World Health Organization’s Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion (1986). Below is a description of each component.

The concept of Health Promoting Schools [CSCH] embodies a whole-school approach to promoting health and educational attainment in school communities (WHO, 2021).

Teaching and learning include high-quality curriculum and instruction, effective assessment practices, a wide range of resources, and supportive families and communities to prepare students to live full and rewarding lives, embrace opportunities and challenges, and actively engage with their communities. Diversity, inclusion and equity considerations support the development of knowledge, abilities and confidence toward life-long health and well-being.

Physical and social environments enhance well-being by promoting a positive school climate where students feel safe and valued, can connect and practice social skills with peers and community members, and are supported to develop good mental health and well-being. A positive social environment fosters respect, engagement, connectedness, autonomy and trusting relationships between all members of the school community. The school’s physical environment also supports health-enhancing behaviours and includes the school buildings, grounds, play spaces, eating areas, canteens and cafeterias. It may also consider crosswalks, bicycle stalls, parking spaces and community facilities used by the school.

Families and communities are engaged when the communication channels are open for families to voice students’ needs to support their learning, physical and mental health and well-being. Local community partners are invited to share their expertise, assets and resources which align with school specific needs and context. Relationships with Elders and Knowledge Keepers are fostered and strengthened to ensure meaningful engagement to meet the needs of all students.

Effective policy identifies processes for collaboration on policy development or renewal and identifies promising practices to enhance health and well-being. Guidelines, plans and procedures consider the health of the students and staff in addition to education outcomes.

What are the Planning Steps and Considerations to be Successful?

The CSCH supports a long-term vision of well-being and includes implementation steps which are repeated over time. The steps are similar to what would be taken when doing any planning. Anyone in a school community can take the first step. It could be a student group, an administrator, a teacher or the School Community Council.

1. Establish a school team with a common vision.
2. Understand your school community.
3. Decide on a plan that considers the components of CSCH.
4. Implement and monitor the plan.
5. Evaluate, sustain and share.

It is also important to celebrate and communicate successes to your school community. Doing so will create a positive sense of accomplishment and bring others along on the journey towards a whole-school approach.

[Comprehensive School Community Health](#) is a collaborative approach that invites the school, family and community to work together to enhance the health and well-being of all students.

Better Health = Better Learners