

# School health

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## **Objectives :**

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- **To define school health and school health services.**
- **To enumerate the major components of a comprehensive school health program.**
- **To explain why school health is a key part of preventive and social medicine.**
- **To describe how school health services contribute to child development, learning outcomes, and community health.**
- **To summarize the roles of the health team, teachers, parents, and community in school health.**



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## Why SCHOOL HEALTH?

**Schools are a major platform for child and adolescent health because they reach large numbers of children at a predictable place and time.**

**Health and learning are tightly linked: good health supports attendance, attention, and performance; education supports long-term health.**



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# Definition :

**A coordinated set of policies, services, education and environments that protect and improve students' health, safety and well-being—so they can learn and thrive.**



# goals of school health programs:

Promote	Promote the physical, mental, and social well-being of students.
Prevent	Prevent disease and disability through early detection, immunization, and risk reduction.
Support	Support healthy development and behaviors (nutrition, physical activity, hygiene, safety, mental health).
Create	Create an environment that is safe, inclusive, and supportive for learning.
Strengthen	Strengthen linkages between schools, families, and health services.

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Comprehensive school health program :

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(1) health services,

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(2) health education/skills,

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(3) healthy school environment,

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(4) community/parent engagement.

# 1-School health services

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- **Health appraisal and screening (vision, hearing, dental, growth, anemia risk, mental health flags).**
- **Immunization support.**
- **Management of minor injuries and first aid.**
- **Referral and follow-up with primary care/specialists.**
- **Support for chronic conditions (asthma, diabetes, epilepsy) and disability inclusion.**



## What to screen

- Anthropometry: height, weight, BMI-for-age (monitor undernutrition/overweight).
- Vision screening (distance and near), referral for refractive errors.
- Hearing screening (questionnaire plus basic tests where feasible), referral for suspected impairment.
- Oral health: caries, gum disease; dental hygiene counseling.
- Skin: scabies, fungal infections; lice.
- Nutritional deficiencies: pallor (anemia risk), goiter signs; diet assessment.
- Developmental and behavioral concerns: learning difficulties, ADHD flags, anxiety/depression red flags.

Chronic diseases and disability: asthma, epilepsy, diabetes, congenital conditions; need for an individualized care plan at school

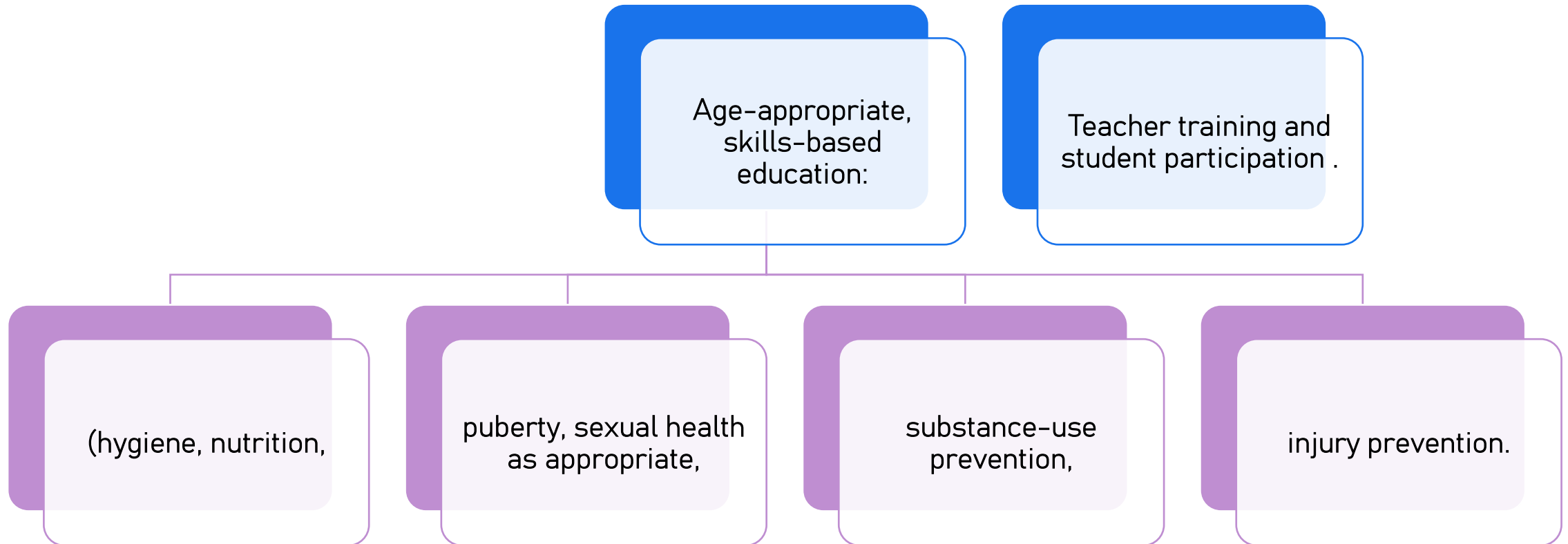


## Infection prevention and outbreak

- Daily routines: hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, and cleaning of high-touch surfaces.
- Early detection: monitoring and symptom checks during outbreaks.
- Isolation and referral: clear protocol for students with fever/rash/vomiting, etc.
- Communication: rapid parent notification; coordination with public health authorities.
- Reinforcement: vaccination catch-up where indicated; health education to reduce misinformation.

# 2-Health education and life skills

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### **3-Healthy school environment**

- **Physical environment: classrooms, ventilation, lighting, water, sanitation, waste management, food safety, playground safety**
  - **Psychosocial environment: respectful relationships, anti-bullying culture, mental well-being supports, child protection**
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## Physical environment

- Safe water: adequate quantity, protected source, regular quality checks where feasible.
- Sanitation: sufficient toilets separated by gender; menstrual hygiene facilities; cleanliness and privacy.
- Handwashing: soap and water near toilets and eating areas; behavior cues (posters) and supervised routines in younger grades.
- Ventilation and lighting: reduce respiratory infection risk and improve learning.
- Food safety: safe storage and preparation, clean canteen, safe drinking water, avoid unsafe street foods inside school.
- Waste management: segregation, safe disposal; vector control.
- Injury prevention: safe playground equipment, traffic safety around school, emergency exits and fire safety.

## **4-Family and community engagement**

- **Parent communication and consent for screening and immunization.**
  - **Coordination with local health system (PHC, school nurse/doctor, community health workers).**
  - **Linkages with community resources (nutrition programs, safe transport, social protection).**
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# The team of the school health program:

- **School leadership.**
- **Teachers.**
- **Physician/community medicine team.**
- **Parents.**
- **Students.**

# Roles of School Health in PHC

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**Preventive Services:** Conducting health screenings (vision, hearing, growth), immunizations, and managing acute illness or injury on-site.

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**Health Education:** Promoting healthy lifestyles to prevent non-communicable diseases (e.g., obesity, diabetes) and providing sexual/reproductive health education.

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**Healthy Environment:** Creating safe, supportive physical and social environments that protect child well-being.

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**Chronic Condition Management:** Supporting students with special needs and chronic illnesses through specialized care and medication management.

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**Community Outreach:** Linking families with PHC services and promoting healthy behaviors at home

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# Recent and Upcoming Campaigns

- **National School Health Campaign (Feb 2026):** Launched by the Ministry of Health, this campaign deployed approximately 4,800 medical teams to visit primary and intermediate schools across all provinces. While focused on comprehensive screenings (dental, hearing, vision, and spinal), these teams also provide vaccination services as part of the broader school health program.
- **Nationwide Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (MMR) Campaign (June 2024):** A major government-led drive, supported by UNICEF Iraq and the WHO, targeted over 7.5 million children aged 6 to 12 in primary schools and kindergartens.

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# Role of Partnerships

These campaigns are heavily supported by international partners:

- **UNICEF Iraq:** Provides technical support, manages the vaccine cold chain, and funds outreach through donors like USAID.
- **WHO Iraq:** Assists the Ministry of Health in monitoring campaign effectiveness and ensuring vaccines meet international safety standards.

## Summary (key takeaways)

- School health is a comprehensive program, not a one-time screening camp.
  - Integrate services, environment, education, and community engagement for sustained impact.
  - Screening is only valuable when there is referral and follow-up work.
  - Psychosocial safety and mental health supports are essential parts of school health.
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Any questions ?



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## Suggested further reading :

- WHO resources on health-promoting schools and school health programs.
- CDC resources on coordinated school health / whole school, whole community, whole child (WSCC).
- National or local school health policy documents and immunization schedules used in your country.
- Park's textbook of preventive and social medicine.

Thank you

