

# Healthy best practice - schools

## Healthy Queensland AWARDS

Physical activity and healthy eating are essential for maintaining good health and wellbeing, and enhance educational outcomes for children and young people. The Queensland Government is committed to combating obesity in children and to supporting and promoting the health of Queensland's young people. Schools can make a difference to the future lifestyles of today's children by providing healthy food choices, quality physical activities and teaching children and young people to make healthy and safe lifestyle choices.

### What can I do to help make my school healthier?

The following checklist provides some overarching ideas to keep in mind when planning your school activities. Make sure your initiatives, programs and activities are:

- based on evidence of what works in schools:** base your plans on evidence about what school activities or initiatives work in improving the health of children or young people
- based on the needs of students and staff:** involve students, staff and parents in the identification of needs and planning, implementation and evaluation of school health promotion activities
- sustainable:** ensure an ongoing commitment from the school and implement strategies to ensure that the activity will continue e.g. even if a key staff member leaves
- positive and fun:** focus on building self esteem and resilience and encouraging participation
- inclusive:** implement strategies to ensure that activities and programs are available and accessible to all e.g. to families from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, people with transport or access issues and people with disabilities

### Healthy schools examples

The Queensland's Healthiest School Award is about rewarding schools for healthy living initiatives. These could be aimed at increasing physical activity, eating healthier food, achieving and maintaining a healthy weight, learning about responsible drinking and discouraging smoking, learning about alternatives to drug and alcohol use and building resilience and self-esteem and being sun smart. Below are some *examples* of activities that may be suitable to use or adapt for your school:

### Programs and promotion

- promote the importance of parents, teachers, ancillary staff and voluntary helpers as role models for students in relation to sun protection strategies
- work with the local community, including food retailers, to promote healthy foods and drinks in the school setting e.g. classroom rewards, fundraising activities
- take part in community activities which promote health e.g. Walk Safely to School Day
- develop a Peer Support Skills program or a social and emotional wellness program
- offer activities that have a health and environmental focus for example; rubbish management, composting scraps, or growing vegetables
- provide culturally diverse physical activity options e.g. traditional dance or traditional Indigenous games
- link with local community groups, e.g. sporting clubs, to encourage students to be active outside of school hours

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- promote within the school and to the broader school community the Australian Government recommendations e.g. that children and youth should not spend more than two hours each day using electronic media for entertainment (e.g. computer games, Internet, TV), particularly during daylight hours
- implement strategies to promote smoke free and responsible drinking messages to students or to reduce smoking under-age drinking
- develop innovative and creative ways of incorporating physical activity opportunities into the classroom
- encourage student managed physical activity initiatives and programs e.g. hip hop dance programs

## Curriculum

- integrate food and healthy eating education into the curriculum for all grades
- integrate tobacco and alcohol education in the school curriculum
- include sun safety as part of the school curriculum across all year levels
- for all Queensland primary schools: allocate 30 minutes per day of physical activity of at least moderate intensity as part of the school curriculum
- for all Queensland secondary schools: provide at least two hours of physical activity at moderate intensity in curriculum time for lower secondary school students each school week
- for all Queensland special schools: allocate curriculum time for physical activity that is the same or as close as possible to the required time allocation for primary and secondary schools

## Policies and planning

- implement school based alcohol and tobacco policies, including those aimed at staff, teachers and parents (as role models for students) and for events and activities (ie. school fetes, cultural and sporting events and carnivals)
- for all Queensland schools, supply and promote healthy food and drinks at all school venues and functions eg. tuckshop, sports days, school dances, school camps, P&C food fundraising drives and have healthy food options available at events (eg. fetes)
- for all Queensland schools, restrict unhealthy food and drink supply in all school venues and functions
- implement an Active School Travel Plan
- develop innovative and creative ways to promote healthy food and drinks to students at all opportunities in the class room – curriculum activities, classroom rewards and class parties
- for all Queensland schools, develop a school sun protection strategy including involvement of school staff, students, parents and citizens associations, and other interested members of the community
- for all Queensland schools, require the wearing of protective clothing including hats when in the sun during the school day; require the wearing of swim shirts during all water-based activities for students from Prep to Year 7, with the exception of competitions and carnivals

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## Facilities

- investigate the feasibility of student managed food gardens or other fresh food initiatives and programs
- provide a safe, shady, accessible and stimulating playground
- encourage active travel to school through well-maintained footpaths, safe crossing methods, secure bike racks and bike skills training

## Monitoring

- monitor the implementation of health programs and initiatives for their level of participation, reach and effectiveness
- monitor policies and their implementation and modify them as the needs of the school change

## What sort of things will be considered for funding from the Awards prize money for schools?

Documented plans drawn from a wide consultation process\*, will need to be provided demonstrating the school's future activities and infrastructure planning. These plans need to include details on how any infrastructure will be maintained. The following types of 'healthy infrastructure' may be funded:

- sporting or recreational facilities such as a swimming pool, basketball court, sporting, exercise or outdoor recreation equipment (with inclusion of plans for how these facilities will be manned and maintained)
- upgrade of school based food preparation facilities ie tuckshop, catering facilities, home economics classrooms.
- infrastructure which encourages walking, cycling or other active transport to travel to and from school
- policies and plans which support health
- promotional and motivational activities to encourage good health (you will need to demonstrate how these contribute to long-term strategies)
- inclusive initiatives providing opportunities for all pupils to participate in a broad range of curricular and extra-curricular activities that encourage health and wellbeing

\*Government schools will also need to consult with their Regional Facilities Manager

## Want to know more?

There are a large number of resources and tools which can help you. Find out more from the 'helpful links and resources' on the Awards website at [www.keeppaustraliabeautiful.org.au/qld](http://www.keeppaustraliabeautiful.org.au/qld)