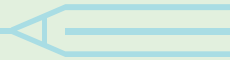




NATIONAL HEALTHY SCHOOLS WEEK



PLANNING TOOLKIT

AUGUST 2023

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About the Canadian Healthy Schools Alliance

The Canadian Healthy Schools Alliance is a Canada-wide network of organizations promoting health and well-being in school communities to improve learning and set students up for lifelong success.

Combining evidence-based and community-oriented approaches, the Alliance aims to help school leadership improve a wide variety of outcomes in their school and help them set students up for lifelong success.

Our vision is a school system where every student in Canada is set up to thrive and achieve lifelong well-being and success.



NATIONAL HEALTHY SCHOOLS WEEK 2023

October 2-6, 2023

#NHSW2023



Visit: healthyschoolsalliance.ca/nhsw

WHAT IS NATIONAL HEALTHY SCHOOLS WEEK?

National Healthy Schools Week (NHSW) is an opportunity to prioritize, plan, and engage your school community in Healthy School conversations at the start of the year. This week-long initiative is meant to be tailored to your unique school community, focusing on the priority areas most relevant in your context.



When is it? **October 2-6, 2023**

National Healthy Schools Week takes place the first week in October. The #NHSW2023 will take place from October 2 to 6, 2023.



Who should participate?

All school communities in Canada are encouraged to participate in National Healthy Schools Week!

Visit healthyschoolsalliance.ca/nhsw for more information!

Engage students, staff, and community members in conversation, experiential learning, and action planning to support the well-being of your school community throughout the entire year. The goal of National Healthy Schools Week is to support, empower, and engage school communities as they work towards becoming a Healthy School.

What Is a Healthy School?



A healthy School centres (w)holistic health and well-being in its policies, its curriculum, its people, its relationships and its environment.

A Healthy School¹:

- honours each person, the interconnection between them and the land upon which they live;
- values broader ways of knowing;
- focuses on what the school community can do together; and
- identifies where there is energy, interest and capacity to strengthen the health and well-being of the school community and supports action in that direction.

This initiative is designed to extend beyond the first week of October and become a whole school, whole year approach. Your school's priorities may emerge in conversations with students, staff, and community members. These priority areas can be further defined by working through the [Healthy Schools Certification](https://www.healthyschoolsalliance.ca/en/resources), a 4-Step Process to promote and enhance the health and well-being of students, school staff, and the broader school community.

1

Canadian Healthy Schools Alliance (2021). Canadian Healthy School Standards. Ottawa, Ontario. Available at: <https://www.healthyschoolsalliance.ca/en/resources>



WHY PARTICIPATE IN NATIONAL HEALTHY SCHOOLS WEEK?


- ⇒ Engage your school community in healthy conversations at the beginning of the year
- ⇒ Gain feedback through community engagement opportunities
- ⇒ Use NHSW as a jumping off point to complete [Healthy Schools Certification](#)
- ⇒ Get connected with community partners early in the school year
- ⇒ Work toward your goals and celebrate [National Health and Fitness Day](#) in June as a year-long wrap up of your progress!

HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT

National Healthy Schools Week includes three stages: kickoff, priority area exploration, and celebration.



Schools can approach and plan these stages however they would like, utilizing their unique set of resources, capacity, and community engagement. The outline below can be used as a roadmap of how your school might plan a NHSW and customize activities to your context.

-  **1. Create a Wellness Committee**
-  **2. Determine Priority Areas**
-  **3. Engage Community Partners**
-  **4. Finalize Your Action Plan**
-  **5. Celebrate!**



1. Create a Wellness Committee

A Wellness Committee is an important component of National Healthy Schools Week. Establishing one will help to sustain the momentum of being a Healthy School beyond the first week of October and through until the end of the school year. Your school may already have a Student Wellness Action Team or a similar group of a different name. If so, introduce NHSW to them at the beginning of the year as a starting priority. The information learned throughout NHSW can be used as focused areas of your Wellness Committee throughout the rest of the year.

If you already have a Committee in place...

- ⇒ Share National Healthy Schools Week with your Committee early in the year
- ⇒ Decide how you will like to survey your school to understand what priority areas to explore during NHSW

If you don't have a Committee in place...

- ⇒ Create posters and announcements describing your Wellness Committee, the commitment, the impact, and how to sign up
- ⇒ Hold your first meeting to introduce the purpose of the Committee and possible activities the Committee will be involved in throughout the school year
- ⇒ Introduce National Healthy Schools Week as a first event for the Committee to be involved in and create measurable and achievable goals of what NHSW can do
- ⇒ Looking for more guidance on starting a Wellness Committee at your school? See additional resources such as this [Healthy Schools Toolkit](#) from Toronto Public Health

Remember...

- The beginning of the year is an opportune time to recruit/introduce students to joining a wellness committee at your school
- Recruit like-minded students and staff and engage any existing community partners that may be a helpful resource
- Promote the committee and NHSW through posters, newsletters and school events
- Introduce NHSW as early as possible to your school community to create excitement and share in idea generation. Share NHSW with staff early and frame this week as an enhancement to healthy initiatives rather than an add-on
- Leverage existing opportunities and activities being held at the beginning of the year, such as assemblies or the Terry Fox Run, to add a Healthy Schools lens
- Leverage existing Healthy School priority areas to use NHSW as an opportunity amplify messages you're already sharing with your students
- Discuss a vision for the school year and how the committee can support NHSW





2. Determine Priority Areas

Priority areas are topics such as mental health, physical activity, injury prevention, that support the physical, emotional, social, and cognitive development of children and youth. While all of these health topics are important, your school context and student population will determine which priority area(s) you choose to focus on during NHSW and throughout the year.

Your school may already have priority areas that have been determined from past surveys, stakeholder engagement, or district meetings. If you're unsure of what your school's priority areas may be, this would be an opportunity to engage with your school community to listen and learn.

Gathering Community Feedback

If you're unsure of your school's priority areas or time has passed since these were last identified, this is an opportune time to gather feedback from your school community for this upcoming NHSW. Feedback can be gathered in a few ways, remember, choose the option that is most realistic for your time frame and community.

SURVEY

- ⇒ Share a survey with your school community, either to be completed individually or submitted by a class. Pose both open ended and closed questions to gather areas of well-being your students are interested in exploring.
- ⇒ Have the committee review the results and identify your vision and priority areas; keep in mind, these should continue on beyond NHSW.

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

- ⇒ An environmental scan offers a 'big picture' view of a school community, identifying and monitoring the resources and gaps that are internal and external to the school community.
- ⇒ Complete a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities, and Threats) to identify the resources and gaps within your school context. Check out Appendix A for a SWOT Analysis Template you can use.
- ⇒ Remember, this is an opportunity to recognize and celebrate the good work you're already doing!

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK BOARD

- ⇒ Use a high traffic and central spot in your school to pose your questions. Providing sticky notes and pens may prompt more sharing. This can also prompt conversations in classrooms that can be shared back.
- ⇒ Use questions such as:
 - What does a Healthy School look like?
 - What does a Healthy School feel like?
 - What words do you think of when you hear 'Healthy School'?

Helpful Tips...

- ⇒ **Focusing on specific priorities can support planning activities and learning in a manageable way.**
- ⇒ **Choose priorities that leverage assets in your community**
- ⇒ **Use this step as an opportunity to have conversations and define what a healthy school looks like in your context**



3. Engage Your Community

Community partners are an important way to support your messaging and value around what a Healthy School looks like. Community partners include parents and families, nearby businesses, local government officials, local community centers, non-profits, and more!

Brainstorm a list of community members you'd like to incorporate into your NSW action plan. You may be surprised at how many opportunities exist already, such as:

- ⇒ Is there a parent certified to teach yoga, zumba, DancePlay, etc.?
- ⇒ Is there a local grocery store that can donate fruit for the week?
- ⇒ Is there a local business that would donate gift cards as prizes?

Explore the template letters in our **National Healthy Schools Week Communication Toolkit** to see if there is a letter that you could use to engage with your community. You can also extend the invite to the 'Celebrate' portion of NSW and invite family and community members to attend that event in honour of the priority areas you explored throughout the week.





4. Finalize Your Action Plan

Once you have gathered your community feedback, determined your priority areas, and engaged with members of your community, it is time to finalize your NHSW Action Plan! An action plan lays out how students will interact with your priority areas throughout NHSW.



Remember: National Healthy Schools Week is a kickoff for the rest of the school year. Start small and plan realistic and attainable activities throughout the week to set you up for success all year.

Using language like ‘action plan’ may sound intimidating and set in stone. Remember, NHSW is a unique opportunity to tailor the activities and priority areas to your specific context - there is no one way for this to look like! Refer to Appendix B for an example of what your NHSW Action Plan might look like. Allow for opportunities to collect feedback throughout the week and see what students are drawn to. See Appendix C for a Healthy Schools Action Plan template that could be used for longer term planning throughout the school year.

Determine what a “successful” NHSW will look like for your school early in the planning process, whatever that may be. This will most likely be tied to what priority areas you have chosen. Often, success can look like students trying something new, inviting parents or caregivers to participate, or completing a collective goal of a certain number of steps. Still not sure where to start? The ‘Exploring Priority Areas’ section below has ideas to engage your students in the priority areas provided.



5. Celebrate!

National Healthy Schools Week may be over, this is only the beginning! Your Wellness Committee now has ideas to implement throughout the year and the momentum of students trying different activities. Perhaps each priority area can be a monthly focus or dive into 1-2 areas throughout the entire year. Celebrate the accomplishment of the week and determine the goals for the year ahead! Bring in community partners, parents, siblings, and local businesses to celebrate the work your school has been doing throughout National Healthy Schools Week and the opportunities that are ahead.

EXPLORING PRIORITY AREAS

National Healthy Schools Week is an opportunity for your school to explore one or many different priority areas related to health and well-being. Your priority areas will be determined based on the feedback collected from your school community. Choose priority area(s) that will suit your school's needs during NHSW. Whatever priority area(s) you choose, decide on 1-3 activities or messages within that priority area that you can share with your school community.

We've provided some examples of activities you could do within each of the six priority areas below. Please note: this is not an exhaustive list of activities nor priority areas. If your school has identified a different priority area to focus on, please explore that!

Physical Activity

- Walking Wednesday: encourage active school transportation or additional ways to add active transportation into the day such as planned walks at lunch time.
- Host daily active announcements for classrooms to participate
- Learn about the 24-Hour Movement Guidelines and have students set goals for how they would like to spend their [Sweat and Step time](#).
- Host alternative recess activities led by members of the community that may have experience in yoga, Zumba, or DancePlay.
- Incorporate movement breaks throughout the day that focus on feeling good and reenergizing the mind.



Healthy Eating

- ⇒ Partner with a local grocery store to provide fruit for the week.
- ⇒ Host a taste test with different fruit and veggie options for students to try.
- ⇒ Find a local business that can donate free reusable water bottles to students to encourage drinking water throughout the day.
- ⇒ Test out a [Reverse Lunch](#) at your school.

Mental Health

- ⇒ Participate in a mindfulness exercise, led through video or an educator reading a script; have students reflect on how their body and mind feels before and after practicing mindfulness.
- ⇒ Use [Teach Resiliency](#) website for printable resources and activity ideas.

Substance Use

- ⇒ Explore [PHE Canada's STOMP Toolkit](#) to host a Student Design Workshop around tobacco and vaping.
- ⇒ Have students brainstorm language that can be used to create a [smoke-free policy](#) for your school.
- ⇒ Share self-led modules, resources or activities around vaping, cannabis, opioids, and stigma with [Health Canada Experiences](#).



Injury Prevention

- ⇒ Sun Safety: Engage students in creating a playground map that highlights areas of shade and brainstorm strategies to add shade in necessary areas.
 - Celebrate ‘Hat Day’ as a protective way to stay safe from the sun.
- ⇒ Host a Bike Workshop to learn how to properly fit a helmet and learn road signals. This can be done without bikes... students can practice on a chalk created pathway in the playground. Reach out to a local bike shop to see if they can come in to educate students.
- ⇒ Learn proper handwashing techniques from a Public Health Nurse and learn how important it is to wash thoroughly at certain times throughout the day.

Growth and Development

- ⇒ Learn from other jurisdictions of how they promote school-wide well-being and social emotional learning; learn more at wellbeingbc.ca/school-toolkit.
- ⇒ Explore teacher resources available through [Media Smarts](#) that could support Digital and Media Literacy in youth.

Additional Resources

- ⇒ [Healthy Schools Certification, OPHEA](#)
- ⇒ [Canadian Healthy School Standards, Canadian Healthy Schools Alliance](#)
- ⇒ [Promoting Physical Activity through Schools: A Toolkit by the World Health Organization](#)

SHARE **YOUR** STORY

We want to hear from you! Share your National Healthy Schools Week experience with the Canadian Healthy Schools Alliance for a chance to win funding towards next year's celebrations. We're accepting submissions by email (info@healthyschoolsalliance.ca) or shared through Twitter by tagging @CdnSchoolHealth and using the hashtags #HealthySchoolsWeek #NHSW2023. Submissions will also be considered for a spotlight feature article to be shared on PHE Canada's Journal.

IT DOESN'T END HERE!

National Healthy Schools Week is just the beginning. As #NHSW is a kickoff to the academic year, [National Health and Fitness Day](#) is an opportunity for a year-end celebration of the work that has been done throughout the year.

Throw a community event (#LetsMoveCanada) to celebrate all of the ways you've worked to become a healthy school over the academic year. Highlight past activities with posters, invite community members, businesses, parents and government officials to your event, and celebrate big!



APPENDICES

Appendix A: SWOT Analysis Template

Because this is a national document, it is important to ensure that terminology is clear. The language in your jurisdiction may be different from what is used here. Please use the following chart as a guide.

S Strengths	W Weaknesses
What strengths does your school already have that support a healthy school community? List what your school does well in supporting a healthy school community.	What weaknesses or areas of improvement have you observed? These could be physical spaces, resources limitations, time, knowledge, etc.
O Opportunities	T Threats
What opportunities are available to you? These may be situations, resources, or technologies that could be paired with your strengths listed above.	Threats are barriers or obstacles that your school community may face in becoming a healthy school community. Identifying these can help anticipate future challenges.

Appendix B: National Healthy Schools Week Action Plan Template Example

	Monday 'Kickoff'	Tuesday 'Explore Priority Areas'	Wednesday 'Explore Priority Areas'	Thursday 'Explore Priority Areas'	Friday 'Celebrate'
Messaging	AM announcements for NHSW; description of the week's activities.				Email invite shared with parents last month to join celebration.
Priority Area		Physical Activity	Healthy Eating	Mental Health	
Activity	NHSW poster set up by front office for students to write what a Healthy School looks, feels and sounds like.	Local Zumba instructor is available at lunch recess for students to participate in a 30-minute Zumba class.	Donated fruit was distributed to each class; students learned about different ways to eat and prepare fruit.	Classes participated in a 'Mindful Moment' after lunch to help with transition from recess to class time.	Celebration Event hosted outside; activity stations for students and guests.
Resources Needed	Poster paper, markers, sticky notes.	Speaker setup in gymnasium, lunchtime supervisor.	Wellness Committee members to deliver fruit to each classroom.		Parent and community volunteers, healthy snacks, speaker, equipment for outdoor activities, signage.
Feedback		Students really enjoyed Zumba class! They've requested it for a future indoor recess option.		Good feedback from Mindful Moment activity - teachers interested in more video examples to use in the future.	Parents commented on their child sharing back each day's activity at dinner time.

Appendix C: Healthy School Action Plan Template

Activity	Start Date	End Date	Person(s) Responsible	Resources Required	Volunteers Needed?	Activities/ Resources	Measures of Success
Priority Area #1:							
Priority Area #2:							
Priority Area #3:							



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