



HEALTHY | **BC**
SCHOOLS

Action Guide

www.healthyschoolsbc.ca

School Connectedness Action Guide



HealthyFamiliesBC 



School Connectedness Action Guide

The Healthy Schools BC Action Guides share evidence-based practices and promising innovations that are showing results in creating healthy schools in BC. The guides are organized into four topic areas:

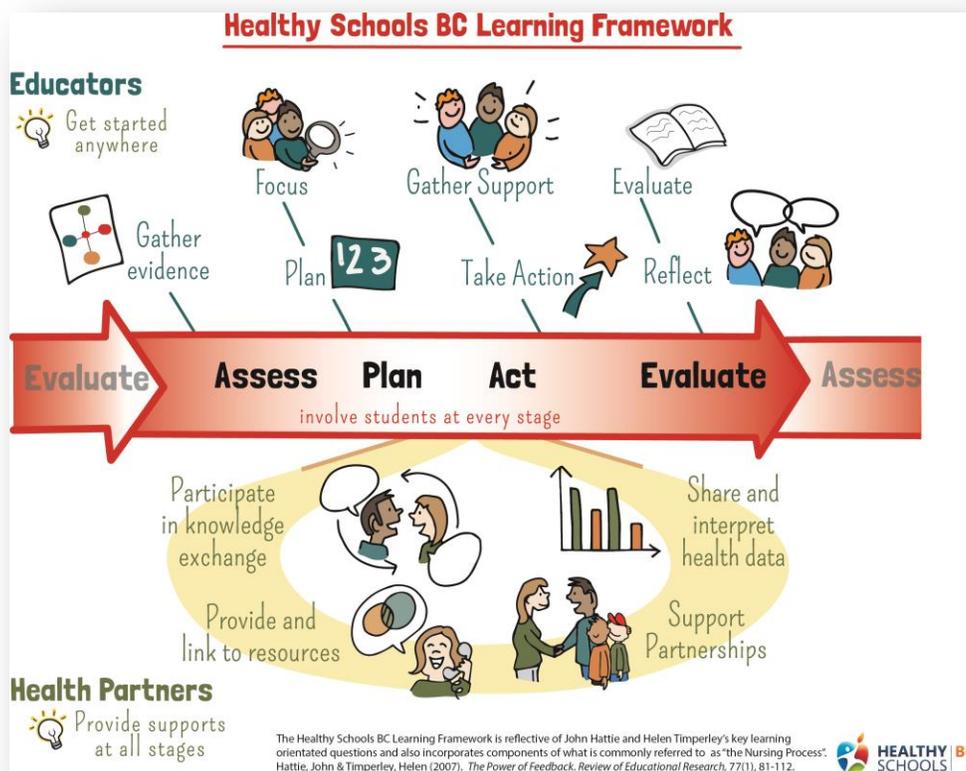
1. School connectedness
2. Healthy eating
3. Physical activity
4. Injury prevention

Some of the actions in these guides take little effort, while others may take a bit more. Select actions that meet the needs of your students and the capacity of your school or district.

The greatest impact on student health and learning is achieved when action is taken across the entire school, broken down into four key areas: teaching and learning, relationships and environments, our school policies, and community partnerships. Consider planning activities your school or district can initiate or build upon in these four key areas. (JCSH, 2013)

In addition to the actions suggested here, you can find other programs and supports that are available by visiting the Healthy Schools BC [website](#). You can also learn about healthy schools activities taking place around the province by visiting the [healthy schools stories map](#).

The healthy schools process supports school communities and partners to work together through four main steps: Assess → Plan → Act → Evaluate. This guide can support you in the planning step of this process. If you have not yet completed a healthy school assessment, the [Healthy Schools BC assessment tools](#) can help you get started.



School Connectedness Action Guide

School connectedness is about creating a school community where everyone feels safe, seen, heard, supported, significant and cared for¹. BC students who are highly connected to their school engage in less risky behaviour, are more likely to report good or excellent health, do well in school, and want to continue with their education past grade twelve².

Actions



Teaching and Learning

- Support student led-inquiry initiatives to promote school connectedness by encouraging students to join the [BC Student Healthy Living Network](#), participating in the [Healthy Schools Network](#), and/or using the [Resource Guide for Teaching and Learning](#).
- Encourage teachers to utilize [teaching and learning practices that foster school connectedness](#).
- Promote students' connection to nature and community by offering outdoor educational opportunities.
- Dedicate a resource section in the library on positive mental health and healthy relationships.
- Support curriculum delivery by integrating resources such as: [Roots of Empathy](#), [Seeds of Empathy](#), [Being Me: Promoting Positive Body Image](#), [WITS](#), [BC Friends for Life](#), and [others](#).

Relationships and Environments



- Encourage staff to meet and greet students by name every morning as they arrive.
- Assign staff members to make regular and purposeful connections with those students who are not connected to at least one adult in the school.
- Meet students who are chronically late “half way” (i.e. down the road from the school) and walk with them to class.
- Create teams of students of different ages and provide opportunities (i.e. team lunches, team field trips) to build connections between peers.
- Build strong relationships with feeder schools to support student transitions.
- For students showing a lack of connection to school, develop a trusting relationship that enables understanding of the root causes (e.g. lack of sleep from overcrowded home, food insecurity etc.) and provide support where possible.

¹ BC School Centred Mental Health Coalition, 2014.

² McCreary Centre Society. (2003). [Making the right connections: Promoting positive mental health among BC youth](#).

School Connectedness Action Guide

Actions	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Map areas of the school where students feel unsafe and allocate increased supervision. • Establish a committee to promote safety, inclusivity and respect of diverse student groups. • Promote positive mental health among teachers by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Implementing the mental health and well-being module of WellnessFits. ○ Offering the 6 week Living with Balance group program.
 <p>Our School Policies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and update policies to promote safety, inclusivity, and respect for diverse student groups. • Consider policies and practices that utilize restorative justice, healing circles, peer mediation programs, and/or alternatives to suspension. • Use available policy resources to create positive and safe school cultures. • Create school practices that promote timely assessment and early response services to students with learning and/or social-emotional concerns. • Work with teachers, administrators and students to create a shared chart of school or classroom expectations, procedures and responsibilities.
 <p>Community Partnerships</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote parent engagement within the school. • Provide opportunities for families, Elders and other community members to be involved in the school, volunteer, go on field trips, or participate in school events. • Support students and staff to attend cultural events to build connection to the community. • Invite community partners, such as the police, health authorities, and/or local NGOs, to participate in ERASE training sessions. • Foster opportunities for mentorship by linking students with community members (i.e. seniors, local business leaders), Big Brothers Big Sisters, neighbouring schools (i.e. the local high school), or teacher mentors. • Access mental health resources or services by connecting with the Kelty

School Connectedness Action Guide

Actions

[Mental Health Resource Centre.](#)

- Maximize the use of school facilities by becoming a [Neighbourhood Learning Centre.](#)
- Support student-driven health promotion initiatives by hosting an interactive [Next Steps Workshop.](#)