

Why Parents Should Be Engaged in Healthy Schools Secondary Schools

During the secondary school years parent remain important to the success and well-being of teenagers. Although the type of parent involvement changes during the secondary school years, parents continue to be influential in supporting the health choices made by teens. By working together with schools, parents hold a key role in the promotion of a healthy school culture that supports: positive relationships, school connectedness, student leadership and empowerment. Healthy schools can be defined as a whole school culture that promotes student well-being.

Parent engagement in school supports good health by connecting the home, the school and the community.

Here are some ways parents are involved in healthy schools:

Volunteering- This involves volunteering at the school and in the community, parental activities could include supporting the school council, assisting with extracurricular activities such as; school teams or clubs. Parents also support the graduation requirements for students to complete 40 volunteer hours.

Communication – This involves having regular conversations with school staff, attending parent teacher interviews and supporting school events. Often schools offer a variety of communication methods including online parent portal and telephone messaging.

Parent Leadership – This involves parents as leaders promoting school health and wellness polices, safe schools, and serving on school committees such as:

- Healthy Schools Committee
- School Council, Home and School Association
- Safe Schools - Bullying Prevention

Collaborating with Community – This includes partnerships with community agencies and groups. The school health nurse offers a great resource for collaboration and links to the community.

Parenting Supports – This includes organizing and hosting healthy school events that promote positive parenting skills and being physically active.

Topics could include:

- Healthy Eating and Nutrition for Teenagers
- Substance Misuse – Drugs and Alcohol
- Positive Parenting
- Bullying and Cyberbullying
- Mental Health – Suicide Awareness

Local Links for Parents;

Please contact the school health nurse for additional information and resources.

Web Resources for Parents

Healthy Schools – Ontario Ministry of Education

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/abc123/eng/howhelp/healthySchools.html>

Ontario Healthy Schools Coalition

<http://ontariohealthyschools.com/>

Healthy Schools Canada

<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/child-enfant/school-ecole/index-eng.php>

Web Links for Parents

Healthy Schools

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/healthyschools/qandaHSRP.html>

OPHEA – Healthy Schools, Healthy Communities

<http://www.ophea.net/schoolandhome>

Source:

Epstein, Joyce and others, (2008). School, Family and Community Partnerships; Your Handbook for Action. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Parent Engagement: Strategies for Involving Parents in School Health. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; 2012.