

School health services

Reasons for special services for school children:

1. School age is a period during which a child is undergoing rapid physical and mental development, a healthy environment.
2. Children at school are exposed to a variety of hazards – physical injury, infection and emotional problems.
3. In order to derive the maximum benefit from the educational programme
4. The school provides a unique opportunity for health education – provides means for establishing healthy habits of the future adult population.
5. By safe guarding the health of school child today, one is ensuring the health of the adults of tomorrow.

DEFINITION

“The procedures used by physicians, dentists, nurses, teachers , etc, that are designed to appraise, protect, and promote optimum health of students and school personnel through planned programmes.

OBJECTIVES

The overall objective of the school health programme is to ensure that every child is as healthy as possible so that he can obtain the full benefit from his education.

Specific objectives:

1. Health promotion & maintenance.

2. Prevention of diseases.
3. Early diagnosis & treatment.
4. Health education.
5. Provision of safe school environment.

Components of school health services

1) Health promotion & protection:

This can be achieved through

1. Medical assessment

a- Routine periodic medical examination

*designed to detect defects that require medical attention.

*Provides the opportunity of discussing with parents and teachers the health problems and needs of the children.

* will ascertain whether the child is fit to take part in school activities including sports.

b- Screening for defects of hearing and sight.

2) Control of infection

Communicable Disease Control

a- exclusion of sick children from school (obligatory sick leave)

A student who has a contagious disease must be excluded from school until the danger of transmitting the disease to other students has passed.

Exclusion for a period of time corresponding to the duration of the communicability of the disease.

<u>Disease</u>	<u>Sick leave</u>
measles	15 days

mumps	17 days
whooping cough	14 days
diphtheria	until full recovery

b- Immunization

protection of susceptible children against infections such as polio, diphtheria and typhoid by immunization.

c- observation of the health of teachers and other school personnel to ensure that they do not transmit infection to the children.

-An active concern with the hygiene status should be taken.

-A child must be free of fever, vomiting, and/or diarrhea for 24 hours before returning to school.

3) **Immunization**- verification of student's compliance with state immunization laws

In Iraq vaccination is an important component of school health programme. Two main activities are carried out:

a. Administration of the second booster dose of DPT vaccine for school children between the age (4-6) years and checking the BCG scar.

b. Administration of measles vaccine and meningococcal meningitis vaccine during epidemics and in areas when there was epidemics in the last three years .

4) Providing curative services

First aid and emergency care
Management of acute and chronic health condition
Referral of selected cases (mental, traumatic)

5) **Dental services**- preventive and therapeutic

6) Assessment of handicapped children

The school health programme must include some mechanism for finding children who are physically or mentally handicapped, assessing them, supervising them and placing them in the most appropriate institution if special care is indicated.

The main categories of handicapped children are:

- blind and partially sighted
- those with a defect in hearing and/or speech
- epileptic
- educationally subnormal
- maladjusted and psychotic
- physically handicapped

7) Safe school environment

It is necessary to ensure that the school environment is maintained at a high standard in order safeguard the health of the children and to provide them with a practical example of healthy living.

- The school should be sited in a safe place, in an area free from excessive noise.
- The building should be well constructed so as to minimize accidents.
- The classrooms should be of adequate size, well lighted and ventilated
- Sanitary facilities for the disposal of waste should be available
- Adequate supply of safe water

8) Nutrition

The school health programme should include some mechanism for the promotion of adequate diet for school children.

It should be designed to ensure that each child is adequately nourished, and to provide some means of diet supplementation when specific defects are noted.

It may be useful to have a school meal programme, this can provide valuable demonstration of good balanced diets.

9) Health education

The objective of the health education programme at school is to make the children value health as a desirable asset, and to know what the individual and the community can do to maintain and promote health.

10) Health services for teachers and other school personnel

- Advise whether an applicant for teaching, administrative or domestic is medically fit to be employed.
- Providing them with curative services for acute or chronic illnesses.