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School Health Services

Community Health Nursing

Concepts, objectives and components of school health services, school health assessment, health education, nutritional services, immunisation, screening, first aid and prevention of communicable diseases in schools.

For educational purposes only.

CHAPTER 15 / COMMUNITY HEALTH NURSING 15. School Health Services

1. Definition and objectives

School health services are organized promotive, preventive, screening, first aid and referral activities supporting students' physical, mental and social health. Objectives include identifying health problems early, promoting growth, preventing infections and injuries, supporting learning and reducing inequities.

2. Components of school health programme

Component	Activities
Health assessment	Growth, vision, hearing, oral health and indicated screening
Healthful environment	Safe water, toilets, ventilation, lighting and safe play
Nutrition	School meals, nutrition education and growth monitoring
Health education	Hygiene, healthy habits, puberty, mental health and safety
Preventive services	Vaccination linkage, deworming where indicated
First aid and referral	Immediate care, parental notification and follow-up
Inclusive services	Support disability, chronic illness and psychosocial needs

3. School health assessment

Collect age, history, growth, immunisation status, vision, hearing, dental status and symptoms. Use appropriate consent/assent, private settings and standardized age-specific assessment methods. Avoid public weighing, shaming or disclosure. Referral findings should be communicated confidentially to parents/guardians and relevant healthcare providers as appropriate. Ensure follow-up and accommodations.

4. Nutritional and preventive services

PM POSHAN supports school meals for eligible children; nutrition education promotes varied diets, handwashing and food safety. National Deworming Day provides eligible children with programme-based deworming. Link immunisation with UIP schedules, including age-based Td and eligible HPV services under the 2026 campaign. Preserve parental involvement and programme consent requirements.

5. School health initiatives

Ayushman Bharat School Health and Wellness Programme emphasizes health promotion through trained teachers and coordinated health services. RBSK screens children for defects at birth, diseases, deficiencies and developmental delays; RBSK 2.0 materials published in 2026 describe an expanded package. Referral to District

Early Intervention Centres (DEIC) and appropriate specialist services supports follow-up. [10]

6. First aid and communicable disease control

Maintain stocked first aid supplies and emergency contacts; train staff in basic first aid and escalation. Assess airway, breathing, circulation and safety; arrange urgent care for severe breathing difficulty, anaphylaxis, major injury, seizures or altered consciousness. Hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, safe water and environmental cleaning reduce infection. Exclusion from school should follow disease-specific public health guidance, not blanket stigma.

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7. Role of school and community nurse

Plan health days, screen within competence, maintain private records, educate students and teachers, provide first aid, coordinate referrals, support chronic disease action plans and report suspect outbreaks. Recognize bullying, abuse or distress; follow safeguarding procedures and support confidential counselling.

8. Components of a comprehensive school health programme

School health is broader than screening. It includes a safe physical environment, preventive care, mental health, health literacy, nutrition, physical activity, menstrual hygiene and access to first aid and referral. Services should be inclusive of children with disabilities and respect privacy.

Component	Examples
Health appraisal	Growth assessment, vision/hearing checks and referral.
Health education	Hygiene, nutrition, substance-use prevention, age-appropriate sexuality education and safety.
School environment	Safe drinking water, functional toilets, ventilation and accessible facilities.
Nutrition	School meal services and counselling with attention to food safety.
Mental health	Supportive school climate, bullying prevention and access to counselling.
Emergency care	First aid readiness, emergency contacts and referral plan.

9. School screening and follow-up example

A student has difficulty seeing the board. Use approved visual-acuity assessment if trained; record the finding privately, inform the caregiver according to policy and arrange follow-up. Confirm whether assessment and corrective support were received. Do not announce results publicly or label the child as having a disability based on a screening test alone.

Infection prevention in schools

Teach handwashing, respiratory hygiene and safe food practices. Respond to clusters with the public health team. Exclusion from attendance should follow disease-specific guidance, not a blanket rule for every illness.

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10. Important Examination Questions

Long Answer Questions

1. 1. Explain objectives, components and nursing responsibilities in school health services.
2. 2. Explain school health service components and the role of the school health nurse.
3. 3. Prepare a school health screening and referral plan.

Short Answer Questions

1. 1. RBSK four Ds
2. 2. school nutrition
3. 3. first aid
4. 4. healthful school environment
5. 5. School health record.
6. 6. First-aid arrangements.
7. 7. Nutrition and school hygiene.
8. 8. Bullying prevention.

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Very Short Answer Questions (with answers)

1. 1. RBSK? Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram.
2. 2. DEIC? District Early Intervention Centre.
3. 3. PM POSHAN? School nutrition support programme.
4. 4. What is RBSK? - Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram.
5. 5. What follows an abnormal screening finding? - Appropriate confirmation or referral.

11. Quick Revision

- School health combines prevention, education, safe environments and care.
- Screening must be linked to follow-up.
- Protect students' privacy and dignity.
- Include physical, mental and social health.

Conclusion

School health integrates prevention, early identification, education and inclusive support to improve learning and well-being.

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Practice questions

Choose one best answer. The answer key and explanations follow the questions.

1. Which approach protects a student's privacy during school health assessment?

A. Display identified diagnoses on a classroom board

B. Discuss personal findings with all pupils

C. Use a private setting and communicate referral findings confidentially

D. Announce each student's weight to the class

2. Which component of a school health programme covers safe water, toilets and ventilation?

A. Nutrition services

B. Health assessment

C. First aid and referral

D. Healthful environment

3. Which finding at school requires urgent escalation for care?

A. Severe breathing difficulty

B. A routine request for nutrition advice

C. A missing nonurgent screening form

D. A need for future dental screening

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Answer key and explanations

1. C - Use a private setting and communicate referral findings confidentially

School assessment requires privacy and confidential referral communication.

2. D - Healthful environment

The healthful environment component addresses water, sanitation, ventilation and safe play.

3. A - Severe breathing difficulty

Severe breathing difficulty is an emergency requiring urgent care.

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