

# Healthy Kids *are* Better Learners

*Yukon Departments of Education  
and Health and Social Services  
Will Help Schools Develop  
Healthy Learners*

Health and learning go hand in hand. When schools, families and the broader community work together to make healthy choices the easy choices, student health and academic achievement improve.

The Department of Education and the Department of Health and Social Services are working together to support principals, teachers, students and parents in promoting the healthy development of children and youth in the school setting. The Health Promotion Unit of the Department of Health and Social Services is part of a network of educators and health professionals across the country who are finding common ground and taking advantage of opportunities for joint action in promoting *school health*.

## *What is School Health?*

All great schools make efforts to provide a healthy environment for their students, and the Yukon is full of great schools. These efforts often include comprehensive phys ed programs, health fairs, guest speakers, healthy breakfast programs and many other possibilities. The goal of school health is to connect people – principals, teachers, students, parents and health professionals – who have the interest, skills and opportunity to promote health in the school setting.

## *What Does This Mean for Yukon Educators?*

The greatest strength of the school health initiative is that it is now easier for teachers to access health information, programs and resources. By mutual agreement, Health Promotion will take on the role of school health coordination in the Yukon. Health Promotion will be the first point of contact for principals, teachers, students and parents who want to play an active role in promoting health within and beyond the school walls.

## *What Can the Health Promotion Unit Do for Yukon Schools?*

Health Promotion's role is to provide leadership in the following areas. Recent examples of activities that fit into each area are included.

**PROMOTING SCHOOL CULTURES AND ENVIRONMENTS THAT ENCOURAGE HEALTHY LIFESTYLE CHOICES AND DECREASE RISK BEHAVIOURS.**

**Helping** schools develop non-smoking policies and reclaim former smoking areas

**Helping** to implement youth-specific smoking cessation programs

**Working** collaboratively with the Recreation and Parks Association of the Yukon (RPAY) to deliver the Active Yukon Schools program



# Healthy Kids *are* Better Learners...

## SUPPORTING THE DELIVERY OF CURRENT CLASSROOM-BASED TOOLS AND RESOURCES THAT COVER IMPORTANT AREAS OF HEALTHY LIVING.

**Providing** professional development opportunities for teachers to learn about evidence-based classroom resources such as “Choices and Changes”

**Developing** interactive tools such as “Smoke Screening”

**Maintaining** a lending library of support materials including videos, models and displays

## PROVIDING PROGRAMMING ON CURRENT ISSUES THAT HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED AS PRIORITIES FOR YUKON YOUTH.

**Offering** classroom presentations and workshops upon request on topics such as healthier eating, tobacco use, sexual health, the role of the media in influencing health choices and others

**Updating** and distributing “Questions and Answers on Sexual Health” booklet to all schools

**Establishing** and promoting “YK Style” confidential sexual health information and referral phone line

*“ Health and learning go hand in hand ”*

## FOSTERING AN ONGOING CONNECTION BETWEEN SCHOOLS AND THE COMMUNITY-AT-LARGE WITH REGARD TO CURRENT AND EMERGING HEALTH ISSUES THAT ARE IMPORTANT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.

**Acting** as a link between school staff and health resources that are available in the community for use within and/or outside of the classroom

**Sharing** updated information on health and wellness for students, staff and parents

**Networking** with health and community organizations to ensure broad knowledge of available resources

**Facilitating** opportunities for schools to bring students and staff together with parents and other members of the community as active partners in school health

## *What Next?*

*Here are 2 things we would like you to do...*

### *Use us!*

Keep the school health initiative in mind and use the Health Promotion Unit for the purposes above. This is the arrangement that has been agreed upon by the Department of Education and the Department of Health and Social Services.

### *Tell us your ideas!*

School health holds a lot of promise for improving the health of students and school communities, but it is still quite a new concept. Your input is critical to achieving our shared goals.

## **PRIMARY CONTACT FOR SCHOOL HEALTH**

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