

VIRGINIA SCHOOL HEALTH GUIDELINES



Virginia Department of Health

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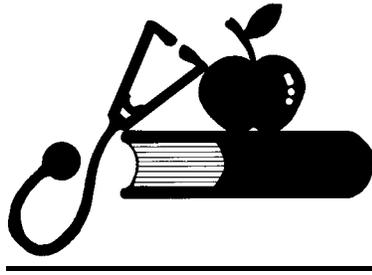
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Virginia School Health Guidelines

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FOREWORD

We are pleased to present the *Virginia School Health Guidelines*, a resource document for school and public health personnel. It was developed and published under the leadership of the Virginia Department of Health in collaboration with the Virginia Department of Education through a joint venture with the Virginia Institute for Developmental Disabilities and Virginia Commonwealth University, School of Nursing, Community Nursing Organization.

This document is intended to enhance the educational process by providing guidance to and resources for school administrators, school nurses, teachers, and other staff members on the development, implementation, and evaluation of a comprehensive or coordinated approach to school health. It presents up-to-date, practical health information and recommendations for developing local programs and policies related to school health programs. Federal and state laws and regulations, local needs, professional personnel from educational and health care fields, and the availability of resources will influence how this publication can be adapted for local use.

The development of the *Virginia School Health Guidelines* exemplifies the commitment of the Virginia Department of Health and Virginia Department of Education to ensure that all schools in the Commonwealth have a safe and healthy learning environment.

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A final word of thanks must be given to the many other participants in this effort who have not received formal acknowledgment but who provided comments and suggestions that were helpful in the preparation of the *Virginia School Health Guidelines*.

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PREFACE

Purpose

Resource Book. This manual is a resource book that contains basic information, guidelines, and recommendations for establishing and enhancing a school health program. It reflects a growing emphasis on the role of school health in prevention of disease and health promotion and wellness for students. The purpose of this manual is to provide guidelines for local school divisions to develop or strengthen their school health program at the individual, school program, or community level.

These guidelines are intended to:

- ◆ Provide direction for school divisions to develop a school health program at the local level.
- ◆ Increase the awareness of school health issues and strategies that can be used to address these issues.
- ◆ Provide guidelines for primary prevention.
- ◆ Serve as a guide for appropriate practices that relate to school health.
- ◆ Provide a guide for development of local school health policies and programs.
- ◆ Serve as a tool for orienting new school personnel.

Who Should Use This Manual

Intended Audience. The intended audience for this manual is the professional who has responsibility for one or more components of a school health program. The professionals may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- ◆ School health services personnel, such as school nurses, nurse practitioners, physicians, school-based health center staff, and health educators.
- ◆ Administrators, such as superintendents, assistant superintendents, and principals.
- ◆ Teachers.

Although this manual is written for professionals, it may also be used by other persons who are involved in a school health program to increase their understanding of the issues involved in school health. These persons might include:

- ◆ School health aides.

- ◆ Classroom aides.
- ◆ Parents and parent advocates.
- ◆ Students, when appropriate.

What This Manual Includes

A school health program includes the following eight components: (1) parent/community involvement; (2) healthful school environment; (3) health services; (4) health education; (5) physical education; (6) nutrition services; (7) counseling, psychological, and social services; and (8) health promotion for school staff.

This manual directly addresses the three traditional components of a school health program (health services, health education, and healthful school environment) and parent and community involvement.

In addition, this manual indirectly addresses counseling, psychological, and social services; nutrition services; and physical education.

The remaining component of a school health program, health promotion for staff, is not addressed in this manual.

Multiple school health program documents and references are cited throughout this manual.

How to Use This Manual

This manual is organized into six sections, as follows:

1. **School Health Programs:** Provides an overview of school health programs including models, historical development, and planning steps.
2. **Parent and Community Involvement:** Describes ways of involving parents and the community in school health programs through local school health advisory boards and partnerships.
3. **School Health Services:** Provides information on school health services models; facilities; appraisal, preventive, and remedial aspects; and evaluation guidelines.
4. **Health Education:** Provides information about school health education assessment, standards, planning steps, and resources.

5. **Environment:** Provides information on school building and environmental standards, indoor air quality and other environmental concerns, school maintenance and sanitation, disposal of medical waste, school food service, water supply, and lighting.
6. **Appendices:** Includes *Code of Virginia* citations, data collection tools, first aid guidelines, special education terminology definitions, required forms, sample letters, and immunization and infectious disease information.

In each of these sections, there are guidelines for assessing the school health component, guidelines for establishing or enhancing the component, requirements associated with the component as defined by the *Code of Virginia* or federal guidelines, and recommended practice guidelines.

Note: Although these guidelines reflect the most up-to-date information at time of publication, users of the *Virginia School Health Guidelines* are advised to confirm federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and policies when using this manual to plan, implement, and evaluate school health programs.

School Health Programs

Parents have the primary responsibility to assure the health and well-being of their children. Private health care providers and government services are resources to help parents deal with the health needs of their children. Since children spend most of their awake hours in school and since healthy kids make better students, schools can play an important role in helping parents successfully assure the health and well-being of their children.

The Need. For young people today to succeed in school, and ultimately in life, they must learn to read, write, and master mathematics. Perhaps less apparent, however, is the fact that problems can adversely affect not only a young person's health but also *their ability to learn*. More children with special health care needs and chronic illnesses are entering our school daily. Furthermore, schools must deal with students who suffer from substance abuse, communicable diseases, physical and sexual abuse, eating disorders, chronic illnesses, grief and depression, teen pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV and AIDS, and violence. Such physical, mental, and emotional health problems cause students to miss school, lack energy, be distracted, or have significant problems that may impair their and other students' ability to learn as well as the school's ability to provide a safe and stable learning environment.

A school health program should include (1) parent and community involvement; (2) healthful school environment; (3) health services; (4) health education; (5) physical education; (6) nutrition services; (7) counseling, psychological, and social services; and (8) health promotion for staff.

Framework. This manual uses as its overarching framework the importance of parental involvement in its examination of the elements of school health and recommendations for implementing different aspects of a school health program. Users of this manual are likewise encouraged to encompass parent and community involvement as a backdrop in all aspects of their school health program.

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[Note. This form was replaced by MCH 213D, Rev. 1/99, effective on date MCH 213D became available.].. 717

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