

Policy Extract

[School Policy Framework: Implementation of the WHO Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health](#)

The purpose of the *DPAS School Policy Framework* is to guide policy-makers at national and sub-national levels in the development and implementation of policies that promote healthy eating and physical activity in the school setting through changes in environment, behaviour and education. This framework is one of the tools that WHO is producing and disseminating to assist Member States and stakeholders to implement DPAS.

Starting a school policy

Starting an effective school policy to promote healthy eating and physical activity requires national strategic leadership. Therefore, governments are encouraged to:

- Set up a coordinating team to guide school policy development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation;
- Conduct a situation analysis;
- Develop a workplan and monitoring system;
- Set the goals and objectives;
- Disseminate the policy

Policy options

The next step in the development of an effective policy to promote healthy eating and physical activity in schools is to select and implement policy options. The general principles presented below provide guidance to policy-makers when developing and implementing a national policy:

- A school policy needs to be coherent with, and complementary to, existing policies and action plans such as health promotion and disease prevention.
- An interdisciplinary, integrated and holistic approach should be followed for policy development and implementation.
- Policy development and implementation should take into consideration cultural background, gender issues, ethnic minorities, and the jurisdictional and legal structure of the country.
- A school policy should be socially inclusive and participatory. All social classes need to be targeted, particularly the most vulnerable and the poor.
- A sustainable school policy should be developed with a specific budget allocated for its implementation.
- Whenever possible, implementation of a school policy may utilize and benefit from existing structures and resources (technical staff, civil society, information, ongoing initiatives, policies, etc).
- Evaluation and monitoring should take place throughout the whole process of policy development and implementation. Resources (technical and financial) for monitoring and evaluation activities must be allocated from the beginning to facilitate this.

Policy-makers are encouraged to incorporate into their policy the most adequate and feasible options according to their needs, characteristics and resources. It is more important to start with small changes that are possible than to wait until resources become available to address all of these policy options simultaneously. Policy options adopted at national level should allow local flexibility for the implementation phase. The suggested policy options are presented in the following categories:

- School recognition
- School curriculum
- Food services environment
- Physical environment
- Health promotion for school staff
- School health services.

Stakeholder involvement

DPAS emphasizes the importance of active involvement of stakeholders in achieving its objectives. Paragraph 34 on the responsibilities for action, states: "Bringing about changes in dietary habits and patterns of physical activity will require the combined efforts of many stakeholders, public and private, over several decades. A combination of sound and effective actions is needed at global, regional, national and local levels, with close monitoring and evaluation of their impact." In addition, paragraph 44 on the responsibilities of Member States, explicitly recommends that: "Governments are encouraged to consult with stakeholders on policy. Broad public discussion and involvement in the framing of a policy can facilitate its acceptance and effectiveness." (2)

Stakeholders are those who have important information about an issue or policy area, who will be affected by a decision, or who may be able to affect a decision. For the development and implementation of a national or sub-national DPAS school policy, where intersectoral and multistakeholder collaboration is key to success, stakeholders may include:

- governments (national, regional and local level)
- teachers and other school staff
- students
- parents and families
- community-at-large (including international organizations, NGOs and the private sector).

Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation are systematic processes to assess the progress of ongoing activities, identify constraints that need corrective action, and to measure effectiveness and efficiency of the outcome of the programme (11). Monitoring and evaluation provide information to policy-makers, and all interested stakeholders, on the implementation, progress, limits and effects of a policy. They can therefore assist in future planning and decision-making processes, contribute to the evidence base, and provide accountability (3).

A framework for evaluation should be developed in tandem with the policy. Policy objectives should be matched with the appropriate type of evaluation and adequate indicators should be used during the monitoring and evaluation process. For conducting monitoring and evaluation

activities related to diet and physical activity policies, countries should use and build upon existing structures and surveys whenever possible and appropriate.