

The World Health Organization's

INFORMATION SERIES ON SCHOOL HEALTH DOCUMENT 10

Creating an Environment for Emotional and Social Well-Being

An important responsibility of a Health-Promoting and Child Friendly School

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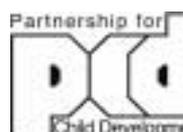
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The principles and policies of each of the above agencies are governed by the relevant decisions of its governing body and each agency implements the interventions described in this document in accordance with these principles and policies and within the scope of its mandate.

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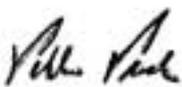
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"The children of today are the adults of tomorrow. They deserve to inherit a safer, fairer and healthier world. There is no task more important than safeguarding their environment." This message is emphasized by the theme of World Health Day 2003, "Shape the Future of Life: Healthy Environments for Children". The organizations publishing this document wish to call attention to and support this message. We offer this publication as a useful tool to help shape a healthy, safe and friendly environment for all who live, learn and work in schools.

"Creating an Environment for Emotional and Social Well-being: An Important Responsibility of a Health-Promoting and Child-Friendly School" focuses on the psycho-social environment of the school. It is complemented by the document "The Physical Environment: An Essential Component of a Health-Promoting School". Together, these documents can help schools provide an environment that is consistent with the World Health Organization's definition of health, "... a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity."

This document and its Psycho-social Environment Profile are designed to help school personnel assess qualities of the school environment that support social and emotional well-being. It is intended to be a starting point, leading to awareness, discussion, and action by school personnel, students and parents. It will help them recognize and sustain those aspects of the school environment that support social and emotional well-being and improve those aspects that do not. It also will help school personnel consider ways to support positive changes in the school environment with school health policies, skills-based health education and school health services – core components of an effective school health programme as called for in the joint international initiative to Focus Resources for Effective School Health (FRESH).

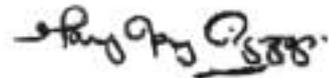
The extent to which each nation's schools provide a safe and supportive environment for all will play a significant role in determining whether the next generation is educated and healthy in body, mind and spirit. The implementation of an effective school health programme, including an environment that supports social and emotional well-being, is a viable means to simultaneously address the inseparable goals of Health for All and Education for All.



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WHY DID WHO PREPARE THIS DOCUMENT?

There is increasing recognition that health and educational outcomes are inextricably linked, and that the school can be an ideal setting through which to strive for both. A number of international efforts have been developed in the past decade to improve both learning and health through schools. Four important examples include WHO's Global School Health Initiative and its concept of a Health-Promoting School; UNICEF's framework of rights-based, child-friendly educational systems and schools; Education for All (EFA); and the recent inter-agency initiative by WHO, UNICEF, UNESCO, Education International, Education Development Center, Partnership for Child Development and the World Bank, Focusing Resources for Effective School Health (FRESH). The characteristics of each of these efforts are summarized in Box 1 below.

One characteristic shared by each of the above initiatives is the importance of a healthy psycho-social environment in schools. For example, the *Dakar Framework for Action (Education for All: Meeting our Collective Commitments)* promotes a school environment that not only encourages learning but is welcoming, gender-sensitive, healthy and safe. It recommends that schools implement "policies and codes of conduct that enhance the psycho-social and emotional health of teachers and learners." FRESH promotes a positive psycho-social environment that discourages all types of school violence such as the abuse of students, sexual harassment and bullying.

WHO developed this document and its accompanying Psycho-social Environment (PSE) Profile to help teachers, students and parents create a positive psycho-social climate in their school as a means to improve school quality and the mental and physical well-being of young people. While this document may be useful to district- and national-level staff who make decisions on behalf of local schools, it is primarily intended for school administrators, teachers, community leaders and members of school health teams.

Since the school environment is one of many determinants of school quality, the PSE Profile will be most effective if used as part of a broader school effort to create a Health-Promoting and Child Friendly School, meet the goals of Education for All, or implement the four components of FRESH. For example, WHO recommends that the PSE Profile be used in conjunction with the tools in *Local Action: Creating Health-Promoting Schools (WHO/School/00.3)* as part of a comprehensive effort to promote health throughout the school (See Annex for more details).

WHAT IS A HEALTHY PSYCHO-SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT?

A school's environment can enhance social and emotional well-being, and learning when it:

- is warm, friendly and rewards learning
- promotes cooperation rather than competition
- facilitates supportive, open communications
- views the provision of creative opportunities as important
- prevents physical punishment, bullying, harassment and violence, by encouraging the development of procedures and policies that do not support physical punishment and that promote non-violent interaction on the playground, in class and among staff and students.
- promotes the rights of boys and girls through equal opportunities and democratic procedures.

A healthy psycho-social environment simultaneously provides support to teachers, students and their families.

BOX 1:

INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENTS TO PROMOTE HEALTH AND EDUCATION THROUGH SCHOOLS

The World Health Organization (WHO), through its Global School Health Initiative, promotes the concept of a **Health-Promoting School**. A Health-Promoting School can be characterized as a school that is constantly strengthening its capacity as a healthy setting for living, learning and working. It does this by:

- Fostering health and learning with all the measures at its disposal;
- Engaging health and education officials, teachers, teachers' unions, students, parents, health providers and community leaders in efforts to make the school a healthy place;
- Striving to provide a healthy environment, school health education and school health services along with school/community projects and outreach, health promotion programmes for staff, nutrition and food safety programmes, opportunities for physical education and recreation, and programmes for counselling, social support and mental health promotion;
- Implementing policies and practices that respect an individual's well-being and dignity, provide multiple opportunities for success, and acknowledge good efforts and intentions as well as personal achievements;
- Striving to improve the health of school personnel, families and community members as well as students.

UNICEF has developed a framework of **rights-based, child-friendly educational systems and schools** that are characterized as "healthy for children, effective with children, protective of children, and involved with families and communities – and children" (Shaeffer, S, 1999). Within this framework:

- The school is a significant personal and social environment in the lives of its students. A child-friendly school ensures every child an environment that is physically safe, emotionally secure and psychologically enabling;
- Teachers are the single most important factor in creating an effective and inclusive classroom.
- Children are natural learners, but this capacity to learn can be undermined and sometimes destroyed. A child-friendly school recognizes, encourages and supports children's growing capacities as learners by providing a school culture, teaching behaviours and curriculum content that are focused on learning and the learner.
- The ability of a school to be and to call itself child-friendly is directly linked to the support, participation and collaboration it receives from families.
- Child-friendly schools aim to develop a learning environment in which boys and girls are motivated and able to learn, and staff members are friendly and welcoming to children and attend to all their health and safety needs.

The 1990s was the decade of Education for All (EFA). The World Declaration on Education for All (Jomtien 1990) envisioned that "Every person – child, youth and adult – shall be able to benefit from educational opportunities designed to meet their basic learning needs." The global community reunited in Dakar, April 2000, to assess progress of the EFA decade and to renew its commitment to Education for All by 2015. Strategies for meeting this goal are outlined in the Dakar Framework for Action, Education for All: Meeting our Collective Commitments, and include the creation of safe, healthy, inclusive and equitably resourced educational environments conducive to excellence in learning. Specifically, the Dakar Framework calls for policies and codes of conduct that enhance the physical, social and emotional health of teachers and learners.

WHO, UNICEF, UNESCO and the World Bank have agreed upon a core group of cost-effective components of a school health, hygiene and nutrition programme, which can form the basis for joint action. Working together to Focus Resources for Effective School Health (**FRESH**), the agencies call for the following four components to be made available in all schools:

- Health-related policies in schools that help to ensure a safe and secure physical environment and a positive psycho-social environment, and address all types of school violence, such as the abuse of students, sexual harassment and bullying.
- Safe water and sanitation facilities, as first steps in creating a healthy school environment.
- Skills-based health education that focuses on the development of knowledge, attitudes, values and life skills needed to make, and act on, the most appropriate and positive decisions concerning health.
- School-based health and nutrition services which are simple, safe and familiar, and address problems that are prevalent and recognized as important in the community.

WHY IS THE PSYCHO-SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT OF YOUR SCHOOL IMPORTANT?

Research on work and home environments has shown that there can be a strong relationship between social settings and short and long-term emotional well-being. Considering how much time most children spend at school, psycho-social dimensions of schools have sparked the interest of a growing number of researchers concerned with school effectiveness and the emotional well-being of young people. Below are some conclusions from this research, with specific studies cited as supporting examples. Additional explanations about the importance of each quality area of the school's psycho-social environment are presented in Annex 3, "Worksheets for leading discussions of quality areas." These findings can help you convince others that using the PSE Profile as a way to assess and improve your school is a worthwhile effort.

- **A positive social environment at school can influence the behaviour of students.**

A study of health behaviour among school-age children coordinated by WHO showed a strong and progressive relationship between indicators of "alienation" from school and health compromising behaviours among students from Australia and Wales (Nutbeam, et al, 1993). The relationship was most clear with smoking and alcohol misuse. The authors recommend not only school health education, but also changes to the school environment and ethos.

Similarly, a study of 12-18 year old students in public schools in Ohio, USA, found that "school connectedness," or the feeling of closeness to school personnel and the school environment, decreased the likelihood of health risk behaviours during adolescence, including cigarette use (Bonny and colleagues, 2000).

- **A positive psycho-social environment at school can affect the mental health and well-being of young people.**

A sense of connectedness, good communication, and perceptions of adult caring have been shown to be related to a wide range of mental health outcomes (Patton, 2000). For example, a study of the impact of school "climate" on the well-being and mental health of children in the Czech Republic found that schools with a climate of confidence and respect among principals, staff, pupils and parents had the least number of negative characteristics, including general anxiety, school anxiety, emotional and psychosomatic balance, attitudes toward school, etc. (Havlinova and Schneidrova, 1995).

Gadin and Hammarstrom (2000) analysed the relationship between psycho-social factors in the school environment and pupils' health and sense of self-worth in a sample of Swedish pupils. They found that problems in relations with classmates were the most recurrent psycho-social factor associated with ill-health. Lack of self-control at school affected self-worth among girls, but not among boys.

- **A supportive school environment can improve student learning outcomes.**

In Australia and the United Kingdom, factors like relationships between teachers and students in classrooms, opportunities for student participation and responsibility, and support structures for teachers, have consistently shown to be associated with student progress (Patton et al, 2000). MacIntosh theorizes that "positive reactions to school may increase the likelihood that students will stay in school longer, develop a commitment to learning, and use the institution to their advantage". Thus, a positive, supportive climate at school can make a critical contribution to the academic achievement.

WHAT IS THE PSYCHO-SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT (PSE) PROFILE ?

The PSE Profile in Part 3 of this document is a series of questions related to the psycho-social environment of your school. The questions are intended to: (1) create awareness among teachers, managers and students about the importance of a healthy psycho-social environment at school; and (2) help you identify the positive characteristics of your school's environment, and which characteristics you can improve. The PSE Profile assesses conditions within the school, on the school grounds, at after-school activities and during travel between school and home. You are encouraged to use what you learn from the PSE Profile to engage the school and community (education and health officials, teachers, students, parents and community members) in determining priorities, developing strategies and taking action.

The ultimate aim of using the PSE Profile is to identify and change conditions that can increase the school's capacity to be supportive and caring toward all those who work there, and to promote learning and development. Pupils and teachers are likely to be the principle beneficiaries. The advantages of a positive school environment can be greater

well-being and happiness, an improved sense of belonging and better quality of life for those engaged with the organization. Indirectly, it may result in better levels of academic achievement. It can also alter some of the more negative aspects of school life by reducing bullying and harassment, injury, truancy and absenteeism. It has the potential to diminish stereotyping and prejudice, fear, anxiety, depression and loss of motivation. Furthermore, feelings of well-being during childhood provide sound foundations for positive health in later adolescence and adulthood; and students working in a supportive school environment where they feel a sense of attachment are more likely to respect their surroundings.

WHO WILL FILL OUT THE THE PSE PROFILE?

The psycho-social environment of a school depends to a large extent on the policies and attitudes of the school staff and the way schools are organized. The PSE Profile is a good opportunity to raise the awareness of teachers and staff about how they do or do not contribute to a positive school environment.

At a minimum, the PSE Profile is designed to help teachers assess the situation in their own school and to make any organizational changes that would assist in promoting an atmosphere friendly to girls and boys. However, the PSE Profile can have broad and long-term benefits if it is completed by a diverse range of school personnel, including administrators, cleaners, secretarial staff, volunteers, and, where applicable: playground monitors, cafeteria staff, the school nurse, and traffic safety patrol. The selection of relevant participants will differ from school to school. Involving students can yield valuable insight about the school's psycho-social environment, since the perceptions of adults and young people are likely to differ. Although the PSE Profile is not designed for use by schoolchildren, it is important for teachers and others to include students (girls and boys) in discussions of items in the Profile that relate to the experience and perceptions of students. It is also important to involve students in discussions about the findings, and to include students in the implementation of any changes that may arise from the result (a complementary PSE Profile for students will be developed in the next phase of this project).

The number of persons who are asked to fill out the PSE Profile will vary from school to school. Small schools can invite all school personnel to respond. Large schools may wish to select a sample of school personnel, at random, to save time and effort. The table below shows the number of school personnel to include in a sample that would allow you to be 95 per cent sure that the responses are representative of all school personnel.¹

Number of employees in your school	Suggested sample size
50	38
100	73
150	96
200	115
250	129
300	141

WHO WILL ADMINISTER THE PSE PROFILE?

The PSE Profile can be administered by any group that has been formed at the school to improve the quality of the school. For example, the administration of the PSE Profile could be coordinated by the School Health Team. If you do not already have such a team or similar group, Tool 1.1 in *Local Action: Creating Health-Promoting Schools* can help you form a diverse team of staff, students and community members with expertise and interest to work on issues relating to the health of the school community. The School

¹Based on a confidence level of 95% and a confidence interval (margin of error) of +/- 6 per cent.

Health Team can ensure that the PSE Profile and resulting actions are integrated with other health-related initiatives.

Involving a wide range of stakeholders, particularly teachers, school personnel and school and community leaders, in the administration of the PSE Profile can help you garner support when you are ready to implement the changes that the school agrees are necessary. For example, school and community leaders could be responsible for drafting new school policies through discussions with teachers, students and parents. At a later stage, all the people who were involved in developing new school policies are likely to play a key role in supporting and promoting approved policies. They may wish to share the outcomes of any successful policy changes and actions so that other schools in the area can share and possibly benefit from their experience.

Those responsible for administering the PSE Profile may wish to follow these suggested steps:

- Review the PSE Profile to become acquainted with the questions and determine if it needs to be adapted.
- Decide who should fill out the PSE Profile.
- Hold a meeting with all PSE Profile users to discuss the purpose of using it, clarify how the results will be used, and give the instructions for completing it.
- Tabulate the score of each completed PSE Profile and summarize the scores for all the PSE Profiles completed in your school.
- Circulate the results to all members of the school.
- Hold an open school conference (or series of meetings with different groups in the school) to review the findings and plan actions for change.

A schedule for implementing these steps should be developed with consideration of other important efforts going on at the school, and within a time period short enough to maintain coherence, continuity and interest throughout the effort.

WHAT WILL IT COST TO CREATE A HEALTHY PSYCHO-SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT IN YOUR SCHOOL?

The PSE Profile requires the time of administrators, teachers and other school personnel. It also draws on other resources that are already available in the school. For this reason, this project is unlikely to require significant additional costs. It relies on the goodwill of the staff in the school — and others who assist them — to use the PSE Profile, discuss the results and plan and carry out changes that can be made at little or modest cost. This assessment is likely to highlight the need to reorganize or modify some practices or activities, rather than create new ones.

HOW CAN YOU ADAPT THE PSE PROFILE TO YOUR OWN NEEDS?

The issues addressed in the PSE Profile are common to many schools worldwide. Users are advised not to change or delete any parts of the Profile. However, there may be important factors or problems that are particularly relevant to schools in your system that

are not necessarily shared by all education systems. We therefore invite users to consider whether they need to add questions to the PSE Profile before distributing it within their school. Those who decide to add new items should take care to justify their importance and relevance to the assessment. Extra items should be phrased in the same style as the original PSE Profile items, using short unambiguous questions. All questions should be phrased so that they can be answered on the 4-point response scale used in the PSE Profile. Adopting this procedure will enable additional items to be scored in exactly the same way as the attached PSE Profile. We recommend that you minimize additional items so that the task does not become too burdensome and complex for users and administrators. Furthermore, it is important that the order of the questions in the PSE Profile itself is not changed in any way. Extra items should be added only at the end of the Profile.

Administrators of the PSE Profile are encouraged to write a brief introductory letter to accompany the Profile, explaining how the information that will be collected will be used. Administrators should also consider whether the Profile should be administered in a way that allows the respondent to remain anonymous, such as having completed Profiles returned to the administrator without names or other information that would identify the respondent; to do this may improve the accuracy of the results.

HOW DO YOU SCORE YOUR SCHOOL?

The questions in the PSE Profile are easy to score and the scoring procedure does not require the use of complicated statistics. Each question is scored on a scale from 1 to 4, with 1 representing the lowest and 4 the highest rating of social and emotional support. The total number of questions you answer will depend on whether your school is single sex or mixed boys and girls. Scores for single-sex schools can range from a minimum of 98 to a maximum of 392. Scores for mixed-sex schools can range from a minimum of 114 to a maximum of 456. To obtain an overall mean or average, simply add together all the scores for all the questions you answered and divide by the total number of questions answered.

The questions are grouped into seven “quality areas”. In addition to calculating an overall score, it is recommended that you tabulate the average score for each of the seven areas so that each area can be examined separately. Such information will assist in focusing subsequent discussions and in planning actions resulting from it. The number of questions in each area is listed in Table 1 .

Table 1. The number of questions in each area of the PSE Profile

Quality Areas	<i>Single sex school</i> Number of Items	<i>Mixed sex schools</i> Number of Items
Providing a friendly, rewarding and supportive atmosphere	18	24
Supporting cooperation and active learning	8	10
Forbidding physical punishment and violence	20	21

Table 1. The number of questions in each area of the PSE Profile (continued)

Quality Areas	<i>Single sex school</i> Number of Items	<i>Mixed sex schools</i> Number of Items
Not tolerating bullying and harassment	18	18
Valuing the development of creative activities	10	12
Connecting school and home life	13	13
Promoting equal opportunities and participation	11	16
TOTAL	98	114

You can use Table 2 below to tabulate each respondent's overall score and their average for each of the seven quality areas.

Table 2. Scoring the Profile (A full size replication of this table is in Annex 2)

Quality Areas	Single sex schools			Mixed sex schools		
	Respondent's score (A)	Total# items (B)	Respondent's average (A/B)	Respondent's score (A)	Total# items (B)	Respondent's average (A/B)
Providing a friendly, rewarding and supportive atmosphere		18			24	
Supporting cooperation and active learning		8			10	
Forbidding physical punishment and violence		20			21	
Not tolerating bullying and harassment		18			18	
Valuing the development of creative activities		10			12	
Connecting school and home life		13			13	
Promoting equal opportunities and participation		10 or 11			15 or 16	
TOTAL						

When you have calculated the overall and quality area scores for all respondents, you may wish to go further in your analysis by calculating how responses vary among different types of school personnel, and by the sex of the staff members. For example, if your school is mixed sex, you can use Table 3 to disaggregate the responses. This will help you identify if there are issues affecting some groups, but not others. The information you obtain is there to help you make decisions about your school; there is no information about how the 'average' school scores on this Profile. Note: If you added any extra questions, you will need to make some adjustments to Tables 1 and 2. You should consider whether these new questions can be scored as one of the seven 'quality areas' mentioned below (if so, adjust the numbers for Total Items in column B). If they constitute a new category, then add an extra line at the bottom of Table 2 for scoring 'Other'.

Table 3. Looking at the results for different groups (A full size replication of this table is in Annex 2)

Quality Area	Average scores by sex of respondents		Average score by role			
	Male	Female	Managers	Teachers	Support Staff	Parents
Providing a friendly, rewarding and supportive atmosphere						
Supporting cooperation and active learning						
Forbidding physical punishment and violence						
Not tolerating bullying and harassment						
Valuing the development of creative activities						
Connecting school and home life						
Promoting equal opportunities and participation						
TOTAL						

HOW IS THE PSE PROFILE MEANT TO BE USED?

After the completed PSE Profiles have been collected and scored, the results should be summarized and circulated to all members of the school, governors/community leaders and parents. The next step can be to hold an open school conference (or series of meetings with different groups in the school) to review and discuss the findings. This discussion phase should include students, all types of staff and parents.

The results of the PSE Profile should reveal which characteristics of a positive psycho-social environment your school has in place and which characteristics need strengthening. The discussions then should go further to examine the reasons for any shortcomings identified

by the PSE Profile and to propose suitable solutions that are appropriate to the school and its community. Thus, the results will form the basis for policy-making and other actions. For example, you may discover that your school could benefit by creating more opportunities for student participation and responsibility; or that student achievements can be recognized publicly more often; or that the school needs a policy to address harassment. The involvement of parents and students as partners is of great importance in finding the best solutions to problems that impede improvements to the environment of a school.

When piloted in Finland, one participant noted:

"We had a long discussion (with the parents) about teaching methods, about the school environment, about the values in the school and so on...the document is a good tool for discussion."

Another educator in South Africa remarked:

"It has opened my eyes. We are now drafting a policy on dealing with sexual harassment and abuse"

This document does not recommend specific changes to correct the deficiencies identified. Changes that are both culturally appropriate and locally feasible are best proposed by the community itself, in the light of its particular situation. The types of action that are undertaken will vary considerably, depending on a multiplicity of factors that affect the delivery of education in that culture. However, once you have agreed on priorities for change in each area, it is also important to consider when the best time for implementation would be and to plan for these changes by setting a timetable. Part of the action plan might also involve deciding to repeat the Profile exercise at a future date. The tools in ***Local Action: Creating Health-Promoting Schools*** can guide you through the process of finding opportunities for action, setting goals, defining objectives and developing a plan and timetable for action (See Box).

Actions to improve the school environment may be one part of a broader action plan that aims to improve health and learning through various components of the school, e.g., through the four components of FRESH. In creating an action plan, you can gauge the commitment and engage the energy of all stakeholders in the project: staff, pupils, parents and management. As part of the timetable, your plans could include a suitable future date for repeating the PSE Profile.

Although the primary purpose of the PSE Profile is to raise awareness among people connected with the school about the environment in the school, and to prompt them to make appropriate changes, the Profile can also be used for other purposes. It could be used to periodically look at the social and emotional support perceived among particular groups or in different types of schools. It can be used to periodically monitor characteristics of the psycho-social environment in multiple schools and to make structural changes to the way education is organized or practiced at district or even national levels. It can be used to provide feedback to those concerned about schools and involved in their activities such as officials, leaders, parents, etc. It might be used to monitor the effects of changes made in a school, or group of schools, by giving it to staff before and after the changes to practice are implemented.

Local Action: Creating Health-Promoting Schools was produced by WHO, UNESCO and Education Development Center, Inc., as a "how-to" guide for local level efforts to create schools that are health promoting. It offers school leaders the organizing ideas and activities to identify health issues in their school and community and take steps, through the school, to improve health and learning. Local Action also provides guidance and tools for generating ideas and developing action plans.

School teams can use the tools to:

- Assess their resources, local health problems and opportunities
- Involve members of the school - students and staff - and community in generating ideas and developing a vision for action
- Define goals and objectives and develop action plans to carry them out
- Document progress and plan for the future.

Local Action is available from the WHO Department of Health Promotion, Geneva, and on the web at <http://www.who.int/school-youth-health>

PSE PROFILE QUESTIONNAIRE

A positive school environment can promote healthy social and emotional development during the early years of life. The items and information contained in this PSE Profile Questionnaire were derived in large part from a systematic review of evidence from more than 650 research articles in the international literature (Skevington & Puitandy, 2000) and the original Profile that was reviewed by schools in 20 countries worldwide (Skevington and Puitandy, 2002). The PSE Profile questionnaire is used to assess the following seven "quality areas," each representing an important element of a healthy psycho-social environment at school:

1. Providing a friendly, rewarding and supportive atmosphere
2. Supporting cooperation and active learning
3. Forbidding physical punishment and violence
4. Not tolerating bullying, harassment and discrimination
5. Valuing the development of creative activities
6. Connecting school and home life through involving parents
7. Promoting equal opportunities and participation in decision-making.

Annex1. The PSE profile questionnaire can be copied from Annex 1

Annex2. PSE profile scoring sheets. The pse profile scoring sheets can be copied from Annex2.

WORKSHEETS FOR LEADING DISCUSSIONS OF QUALITY AREAS

The PSE Profile Worksheets for Leading Discussions of Quality Areas are used after collecting and tabulating the results from the PSE Profile Questionnaire. The PSE Profile Worksheets can be copied from Annex 3.

Annex 1

THE PSYCHO-SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT (PSE) PROFILE QUESTIONNAIRE

Creating an environment for emotional and social well-being: An important responsibility of a Health-Promoting and Child Friendly School

**THE PSYCHO-SOCIAL (PSE) PROFILE
QUESTIONNAIRE**

A positive school environment can promote healthy social and emotional development during the early years of life. The items and information contained in this PSE Profile were derived in large part from a systematic review of evidence from more than 650 research articles in the international literature and the original Profile that was reviewed by schools in 20 countries worldwide. You are invited to fill out the PSE Profile by answering questions about this school that are grouped into seven “quality areas”:

1. Providing a friendly, rewarding and supportive atmosphere
2. Supporting cooperation and active learning
3. Forbidding physical punishment and violence
4. Not tolerating bullying, harassment and discrimination
5. Valuing the development of creative activities
6. Connecting school and home life through involving parents
7. Promoting equal opportunities and participation in decision-making.

Please begin by providing the following information about yourself:

What is your role at the school?

- manager teacher support staff parent other

What is your sex?

- male female

Instructions

Please answer each question by circling ONE of the four possible answers. Choose the answer that you feel best describes your school.

Do not spend a lot of time thinking about the answer — usually your first reaction is the best. There are no right or wrong answers; we just want to know what you think about your school.

Please make sure that you have answered all the questions.

Quality Area 1. Providing a friendly, rewarding and supportive atmosphere.

- 1.1 The school is friendly and welcoming to visitors.
How much is this like your school?
Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)
- 1.2 Students are encouraged to welcome and assist newcomers to the school.
How much is this like your school?
Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)
- 1.3 The school has a policy on how to integrate new students into the school.
How much is this like your school?
Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)
- 1.4 The school is seen as an appealing place to work by those who work there.
How much is this like your school?
Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)
- 1.5 Staff encourage the students to care for each other.
How much is this like your school?
Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)
- 1.6 Teachers support students who are in distress.
How much is this like your school?
For male students:
Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)
For female students:
Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)
- 1.7 There is a trusted person who the students know they can approach if they have a problem or need confidential advice.
How much is this like your school?
For male students:
Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)
For female students:
Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)
- 1.8 The school holds regular events where the achievements of students are publicly recognized and applauded.
How much is this like your school?
For male students:
Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)
For female students:
Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)
- 1.9 Feedback about a student's work is accompanied by positive comments about achievements and suggestions for improvement.
How much is this like your school?
For male students:
Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)
For female students:
Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)

Quality Area 1. Providing a friendly, rewarding and supportive atmosphere (continued).

1.10	Teachers are confident that they will receive help and support from other staff when they need it. How much is this like your school?	Not at all (1)	A little (2)	Quite a lot (3)	Very much (4)
1.11	Teachers are treated in ways that help them to develop and maintain their self-confidence as educators. How much is this like your school?	Not at all (1)	A little (2)	Quite a lot (3)	Very much (4)
1.12	Staff behave in a purposeful and orderly manner. How much is this like your school?	Not at all (1)	A little (2)	Quite a lot (3)	Very much (4)
1.13	Students are confident that they will get help and support when they need it. How much is this like your school? <i>For male students:</i>	Not at all (1)	A little (2)	Quite a lot (3)	Very much (4)
	<i>For female students:</i>	Not at all (1)	A little (2)	Quite a lot (3)	Very much (4)
1.14	Staff have a strong sense of belonging to the school. How much is this like your school?	Not at all (1)	A little (2)	Quite a lot (3)	Very much (4)
1.15	Students have a strong sense of belonging to the school. How much is this like your school? <i>For male students:</i>	Not at all (1)	A little (2)	Quite a lot (3)	Very much (4)
	<i>For female students:</i>	Not at all (1)	A little (2)	Quite a lot (3)	Very much (4)
1.16	Parents are interested in and supportive of the school and its governance. How much is this like your school?	Not at all (1)	A little (2)	Quite a lot (3)	Very much (4)
1.17	Staff are concerned about what happens to each other. How much is this like your school?	Not at all (1)	A little (2)	Quite a lot (3)	Very much (4)
1.18	Students are concerned about what happens to each other. How much is this like your school?	Not at all (1)	A little (2)	Quite a lot (3)	Very much (4)

Total score for Quality Area 1:

Number of items answered: 18 if single sex school; 24 if mixed school

Average score for Quality Area 1:

Quality Area 2. Supporting cooperation and active learning.

- 2.1 There is a school policy (or documentation) on how to promote co-operative learning (e.g., using teaching methods that encourage the students to participate in class).
How much is this like your school?
Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)
- 2.2 Students spend time working together to solve problems.
How much is this like your school?
For male students:
Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)
For female students:
Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)
- 2.3 Students are encouraged to ask questions in the classroom.
How much is this like your school?
For male students:
Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)
For female students:
Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)
- 2.4 Teachers organize students for group activities so that they can work together.
How much is this like your school?
Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)
- 2.5 Teachers are seen to be co-operating with each other.
How much is this like your school?
Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)
- 2.6 The school discourages announcing the order of students in each class, based on their academic performance.
How much is this like your school?
Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)
- 2.7 Students work on projects for and with their local community.
How much is this like your school?
Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)
- 2.8 The students' work is regularly put on display.
How much is this like your school?
Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)

Total score for Quality Area 2:

Number of items answered: 8 if single sex school; 10 if mixed school

Average score for Quality Area 2:

Quality Area 3. Forbidding physical punishment and violence.

- 3.1 The school has a policy prohibiting physical punishment as an acceptable disciplinary procedure.
How much is this like your school?
Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)
- 3.2 The school has a policy promoting non-physical punishment as an acceptable disciplinary procedure.
How much is this like your school?
Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)
- 3.3 Teachers avoid using physical punishment to discipline children.
How much is this like your school?
Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)
- 3.4 Teachers are supported in the use of non-aggressive styles of discipline.
How much is this like your school?
Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)
- 3.5 The school keeps records of disruptive incidents that occur during the day.
How much is this like your school?
Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)
- 3.6 The school has policies and procedures to help teachers deal fairly and consistently with aggression and violence.
How much is this like your school?
Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)
- 3.7 The school has policies (short and long term) about how to deal with the consequences of violent incidents.
How much is this like your school?
Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)
- 3.8 School policies for dealing with violence and aggression are enforced.
How much is this like your school?
Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)
- 3.9 Teachers have the opportunity to gain new knowledge and skills that help them to maintain a safe and secure school.
How much is this like your school?
Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)
- 3.10 Support is available for teachers who have been involved in violent or stressful incidents.
How much is this like your school?
Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)
- 3.11 The school has procedures to deal with students/school staff who have witnessed violence.
How much is this like your school?
Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)

Quality Area 3. Forbidding physical punishment and violence (continued).

3.12	The school discipline rules are clear to everyone. How much is this like your school?	Not at all (1)	A little (2)	Quite a lot (3)	Very much (4)
3.13	The school discipline rules are practical. How much is this like your school?	Not at all (1)	A little (2)	Quite a lot (3)	Very much (4)
3.14	Discipline is maintained well at the school. How much is this like your school?	Not at all (1)	A little (2)	Quite a lot (3)	Very much (4)
3.15	Students feel safe in school. How much is this like your school?				
	<i>For male students:</i>	Not at all (1)	A little (2)	Quite a lot (3)	Very much (4)
	<i>For female students:</i>	Not at all (1)	A little (2)	Quite a lot (3)	Very much (4)
3.16	Teachers feel safe in school. How much is this like your school?	Not at all (1)	A little (2)	Quite a lot (3)	Very much (4)
3.17	Those in charge are seen as firm, fair and consistent. How much is this like your school?	Not at all (1)	A little (2)	Quite a lot (3)	Very much (4)
3.18	There is a procedure that allows all students to voice concerns about inappropriate or abusive behaviour. How much is this like your school?	Not at all (1)	A little (2)	Quite a lot (3)	Very much (4)
3.19	There is a procedure that allows parents to voice concerns about inappropriate or abusive behaviour. How much is this like your school?	Not at all (1)	A little (2)	Quite a lot (3)	Very much (4)
3.20	The school recognizes good behaviour practiced by students. How much is this like your school?	Not at all (1)	A little (2)	Quite a lot (3)	Very much (4)

Total score for Quality Area 3:

Number of questions answered: 20 if single sex school; 21 if mixed school

Average score for Quality Area 3:

Quality Area 4. Not tolerating bullying, harassment and discrimination.

- 4.1 The school has a publicised policy that bullying will not be tolerated.
How much is this like your school?
Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)
- 4.2 The school has a publicised policy that harassment will not be tolerated.
How much is this like your school?
Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)
- 4.3 The school has publicised procedures on how staff should intervene if bullying arises.
How much is this like your school?
Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)
- 4.4 The school policies for dealing with bullying are enforced.
How much is this like your school?
Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)
- 4.5 The students know that the school disapproves of bullying in school, outside school and while travelling to and from school.
How much is this like your school?
Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)
- 4.6 The students know that they can seek help from named staff members if they are bullied.
How much is this like your school?
Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)
- 4.7 The school has a policy on how to deal with the victims of bullying.
How much is this like your school?
Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)
- 4.8 Female students are not subjected to sexual harassment at school.
How much is this like your school?
Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)
- 4.9 Female teachers are not subjected to sexual harassment at school.
How much is this like your school?
Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)
- 4.10 The school has a policy on how to deal with the victims of sexual harassment.
How much is this like your school?
Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)
- 4.11 There is a code of conduct about how the school expects students to behave.
How much is this like your school?
Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)
- 4.12 There a code of conduct about acceptable behaviour between staff and students.
How much is this like your school?
Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)

Quality Area 4. Not tolerating bullying, harassment and discrimination (continued).

- 4.13 The code of conduct is regularly updated.
How much is this like your school?
Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)
- 4.14 All policies and codes of conduct are displayed in the school for everyone to read.
How much is this like your school?
Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)
- 4.15 Staff have a policy about the best way to include 'loners' and those who are recognized as 'different' in school activities.
How much is this like your school?
Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)
- 4.16 The staff take active steps to prevent the exclusion of students by their peers.
How much is this like your school?
Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)
- 4.17 The school records and monitors injuries reported by students and staff.
How much is this like your school?
Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)
- 4.18 The school has student advisors who have been trained to mediate when conflict occurs.
How much is this like your school?
Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)

Total score for Quality Area 4:

Number of questions answered: 18

Average score for Quality Area 4:

Quality Area 5. Valuing the development of creative activities.

- 5.1 There are regular times available for recreation and play throughout the school day.
How much is this like your school?
Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)
- 5.2 The play and recreation periods are supervised by responsible adults.
How much is this like your school?
Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)
- 5.3 There are sufficient supervisors to monitor activities in every part of the play area.
How much is this like your school?
Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)
- 5.4 There is a quiet place available during recreation times that can be used by students who do not wish to join in communal play.
How much is this like your school?
Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)
- 5.5 There is the opportunity for students to create their own imaginative games without involving adults.
How much is this like your school?
Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)
- 5.6 All students have opportunities to experience creative learning experiences that are free from the stress of competition and examinations, e.g. music, art, drama
How much is this like your school?
Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)
- 5.7 All students have opportunities to experience creative learning experiences that involve reasonable, constructive competition.
How much is this like your school?
Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)
- 5.8 All students have opportunities to experience creative learning experiences that provide rewards for effort as well as achievement.
How much is this like your school?
Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)
- 5.9 All students are provided with opportunities to engage in physical activity as a recreational choice.
How much is this like your school?
For male students:
Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)
For female students:
Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)

Quality Area 5. Valuing the development of creative activities (continued).

5.10 There is a programme of activities outside the school hours that students can join.

How much is this like your school?

For male students:

Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)

For female students:

Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)

Total score for Quality Area 5:

Number of questions answered: 10 if single sex school; 12 if mixed school

Average score for Quality Area 5:

Quality Area 6. Connecting school and home life through involving parents

6.1	Parents are informed about policies and codes of conduct in the school. How much is this like your school? Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)
6.2	Parents are encouraged and assisted by the school to help their children consolidate their learning at home. How much is this like your school? Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)
6.3	Parents know that the school should be told about any major changes in the child's home life so that help can be provided, if needed. How much is this like your school? Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)
6.4	The school invites parents to discuss the child's work with the teachers. How much is this like your school? Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)
6.5	Parents feel welcome at the school. How much is this like your school? Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)
6.6	Parents have the opportunity to discuss the school's policies and codes of conduct and to contribute to decision-making by the school. How much is this like your school? Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)
6.7	Parents know that the school actively promotes cooperation, inside and outside the classroom. How much is this like your school? Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)
6.8	Parents feel able to go to the school to ask questions or discuss worries they have about their child. How much is this like your school? Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)
6.9	There are regular opportunities for parents to inform the teacher and other appropriate authorities about what is happening at home and in the community. How much is this like your school? Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)
6.10	There are opportunities for parents to be involved in activities linked to the school life and work, e.g., outings, fund-raising. How much is this like your school? Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)
6.11	Parents are involved in discussion and decisions about what students are taught at school. How much is this like your school? Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)

Quality Area 6. Connecting school and home life through involving parents (continued).

- | | | | | | |
|------|--|----------------|--------------|-----------------|---------------|
| 6.12 | Parents are involved in discussion and decisions about how students are taught (i.e., teaching methods).
How much is this like your school? | Not at all (1) | A little (2) | Quite a lot (3) | Very much (4) |
| 6.13 | The school regularly communicates news to parents about the school and its activities.
How much is this like your school? | Not at all (1) | A little (2) | Quite a lot (3) | Very much (4) |

Total score for Quality Area 6:

Number of questions answered: 13

Average score for Quality Area 6:

Quality Area 7. Promoting equal opportunities and participation in decision-making.

- 7.1 Students have the opportunity to speak, and be listened to, in class.
How much is this like your school?
For male students:
Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)
For female students:
Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)
- 7.2 There is a procedure that enables all students to openly express their feelings and thoughts about school work and school life.
How much is this like your school?
Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)
- 7.3 The school actively involves students in decisions about how the school is organized.
How much is this like your school?
For male students:
Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)
For female students:
Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)
- 7.4 The materials and resources used by students are free from pejorative ethnic stereotypes.
How much is this like your school?
Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)
- 7.5 The materials and resources used by students are free from religious stereotypes.
How much is this like your school?
Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)
- 7.6 The materials and resources used by students are free from gender stereotypes.
How much is this like your school?
Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)
- 7.7 Students take part in activities that help them to recognize, understand and value differences between them (e.g., cultural, religious and social).
How much is this like your school?
Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)
- 7.8 Students who are 'different' in any way are treated with respect and equality.
How much is this like your school?
Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)
- 7.9 No students in the school are excluded from the possibility of being successful.
How much is this like your school?
Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)

Quality Area 7. Promoting equal opportunities and participation in decision-making (continued).

- 7.10 Students take part in deciding the rules of the school.
How much is this like your school?
For male students:
Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)
For female students:
Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)

WHERE APPROPRIATE:

- 7.11 Students who are working in their second language have opportunities during the school day to speak in their first language.
How much is this like your school?
Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)
- 7.12 Girls and boys are treated as equals.
How much is this like your school?
Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)
- 7.13 Girls and boys have the same opportunities to reach their potential.
How much is this like your school?
Not at all (1) A little (2) Quite a lot (3) Very much (4)

Total score for Quality Area 7:

Number of questions answered: 10 or 11 if single sex school; 15 or 16 if mixed school

Average score for Quality Area 7:

Annex 2

THE PSYCHO-SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT (PSE) PROFILE SCORING SHEETS

Table 2. Scoring the Profile

For each quality area, calculate the sum of all respondent's scores and place the sum in the Respondants' score column. Divide the Respondents' score by the Total # items to determine the Respondents' average score.

Quality Areas	Single sex schools			Mixed sex schools		
	Respondent's score (A)	Total# items (B)	Respondent's average (A/B)	Respondent's score (A)	Total# items (B)	Respondent's average (A/B)
Providing a friendly, rewarding and supportive atmosphere		18			24	
Supporting cooperation and active learning		8			10	
Forbidding physical punishment and violence		20			21	
Not tolerating bullying and harassment		18			18	
Valuing the development of creative activities		10			12	
Connecting school and home life		13			13	
Promoting equal opportunities and participation		10 or 11			15 or 16	
TOTAL						

Table 3. Looking at the results for different groups

To calculate the average scores for a specific group, such as persons serving in certain roles, assemble the responses of all persons in the groups and calculate an average score for that group using the same procedure used to calculate an average score for all respondents.

Quality Area	Average scores by sex of respondents		Average score by role			
	Male	Female	Managers	Teachers	Support Staff	Parents
Providing a friendly, rewarding and supportive atmosphere						
Supporting cooperation and active learning						
Forbidding physical punishment and violence						
Not tolerating bullying and harassment						
Valuing the development of creative activities						
Connecting school and home life						
Promoting equal opportunities and participation						
TOTAL						

Annex 3

THE PSYCHO-SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT (PSE) PROFILE

WORKSHEETS FOR LEADING DISCUSSIONS OF QUALITY AREAS

Creating an environment for emotional and social well-being: An important responsibility of a Health-Promoting and Child Friendly School

THE PSYCHO-SOCIAL (PSE) PROFILE WORKSHEETS

These worksheets are designed to help you lead a discussion with students, parents, staff, etc. about each Quality Area after you have collected and tabulated all the results from the completed PSE Profiles.

Quality Area 1. Providing a friendly, rewarding and supportive atmosphere

• **Description:**

The 'climate' of a school has been identified as one of the most important features of a good school. At its best, the school should be a caring, happy and safe environment in which to work and play. Where the atmosphere in a school is uncaring, unsupportive and unrewarding, the mental health, as well as the work of pupils and teachers, can be adversely affected. The impact of this unfriendly atmosphere is particularly damaging if it persists for many years. The role of the teacher includes taking care of his/her students' psychological welfare. In a school that scores high in this quality area, teachers and pupils feel valued. Both feel confident that they are doing a good job. Parents are interested and supportive. They believe they have a role in the school and see reasons to give their support. "Friendliness" covers a very wide range of activities. At one level, it is about welcoming new people to the school, especially at the start of the new school year so that they feel confident and safe from the beginning. At another level, it is about effective and sensitive communication: not only teachers providing appropriate, constructive feedback about the child's work and giving encouragement but also pupils giving positive feedback to other pupils and to the teachers themselves. Through a greater attachment and sense of belonging, the school becomes a place where boys and girls want to be.

- Summary of your school's results in this area:

- Strengths and weaknesses of your school in this area:

- Main points discussed by group:

- Priorities for action to improve this quality area and timing of action

Priority	Timing
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

Quality Area 2. Supporting cooperation and active learning

- Description:

Cooperation is an important characteristic of schools that are health-promoting and child-friendly. Promoting small group work in class and ongoing co-operative contact between pupils is central to creating a more child-friendly atmosphere. It can reduce stereotyping and improve relations between children from different social and ethnic groups. When students co-operate, the winners and losers are less obvious and subsequent humiliation for the losers is avoided. Boys and girls with learning difficulties and those who are from disadvantaged communities can also benefit greatly from this method. When students constantly receive the message that they are failures, their desire to succeed erodes.

When students co-operate in learning, there is greater task involvement, fewer diversions from the task and a greater proportion of time spent on instruction rather than procedure. Children are able to help each other much more; those with low levels of attainment benefit and those with high attainment do better still. The students' work can be more thoughtful, thorough and well presented.

When students can participate in projects and solve problems together, they enjoy co-operative learning and find it stimulating and fun. The material is more interesting and the children are more involved. It is also an important way of empowering boys and girls and enabling them to take more responsibility for their own learning. A cooperative learning experience enables students to articulate their thoughts as part of the dialogue between thinking and learning. It is important that students feel able to seek clarification and further information from their teachers about the topics that engage them.

Students who participate in class are less likely to feel alienated from school. Alienation brings increased risks to mental and physical health. Active learning can help students to develop problem solving skills. In research where children have been left alone to play their own games, it has been found that children naturally develop agreements about egalitarian rules. They themselves see the intrinsic importance of sharing and co-operation, so it is possible to harness some of this potential. Showing boys and girls the value of cooperation encourages co-operative behaviour in situations and places outside the school setting, so that the family and community also benefit. Active learning techniques, such as role playing, school/community projects, team-based research projects, etc., may be new to some teachers, and training may be necessary to help them acquire skills and confidence to use such techniques. There are some pitfalls; children assembled together in small groups may not necessarily work co-operatively. Without careful implementation of cooperative learning procedures, they may continue to work individually.

- Summary of your school's results in this area:

- Strengths and weaknesses of your school in this area:

- Main points discussed by group:

- Priorities for action to improve this quality area and timing of action

Priority

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Timing

Quality Area 3. Forbidding physical punishment and violence

- Description:

Physical punishment of children in schools is unnecessary and unacceptable for good mental health and sound education. This is a contentious issue because in some cultures violence against students, in the form of corporal punishment, may be legally sanctioned, while in other cultures it may be viewed as a form of child abuse. Corporal punishment is unnecessary because it does not work; it suppresses undesirable behaviour for only a short period of time, and creates an atmosphere of fear that is counterproductive to learning. Aggression and deviant behaviour among children in school can, in turn, lead teachers to be fearful about their own personal safety. Harsh treatment of students is associated with high rates of mental health problems including substance abuse later in adulthood. There is growing evidence that discipline is not only derived from rules, punishment and external control, it is also learned from rewards and encouragement, and from consequences that are fair, firm and clearly communicated. Ideas and examples of supportive policies and practices are available in the WHO School Health Information Series document titled "Violence Prevention: An Important Element of a Health-Promoting School/WHO/SCHOOL/98.3"

Schools should strive for a school environment with a balance of warmth, positive interest and involvement from adults on the one hand, and the enforcement of firm limits to unacceptable behaviour, on the other. Where limitations and rules are violated, non-hostile, non-physical sanctions should be consistently applied. Implicit to the success of this strategy is the monitoring of student activities in and out of school. Adults at school and home must also act as authority figures in some respects. Having clear, fair rules and applying them consistently, is vital to good order. Students themselves often agree that a good reason for having discipline is to make the school a safe place and can be encouraged to share the responsibility of preventing violence from occurring. Staff need the opportunity to acquire knowledge and skills so that they know how to deal with loss of discipline and violence at all levels, ranging from verbal aggression like name-calling and rumours, to intervening in fights.

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Timing

- 1.
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Quality Area 4. Not tolerating bullying, harassment and discrimination

- Description:

Bullying and harassment are important reasons why girls and boys do not want to attend school. Those who are not accepted by the group may be victimized; they may be seen as weak, having low self-esteem, depression or a handicap. Stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination occur not only in relation to gender, ethnic group and disability but also for many other reasons related to appearance, which may often seem trivial to adults. Bullying and harassment can make going to school an intensely unpleasant experience, and, if persistent, can have a pernicious influence on mental health, especially in relation to depression and suicide.

If unchecked, harassment can escalate to abuse and violence. Girls are sexually harassed, sometimes raped, by their fellow students, their teachers or strangers as they go to school. Surveys of young adults also reveal an increasing number of boys who have been sexually harassed or abused by other boys.

Children have a fundamental right to feel safe in school and to be spared the oppression and repeated, intentional humiliation and potential danger caused by bullying and harassment. Although much of the research in this area has tended to focus on the personalities of bullies, victims and mobs, much can be done to change the way the school is organized and to adjust its collective attitude and atmosphere with the aim of preventing bullying. For instance, teachers' attitudes have an important effect on whether bullying is identified and discouraged, rather than tolerated or ignored. By not treating the complaint seriously, teachers can contribute to, and even increase, the distress of those who are targets.

Bullying is an issue that involves the whole community, as it occurs not only in toilets and quiet parts of the playground during school hours but also before and after school and while girls and boys are travelling to and from school. Schools need to discuss the problem openly and produce a clear plan of action for dealing with bullying and harassment and its humiliating consequences. Vigilant parents should be encouraged to work in partnership with teachers; together they can prevent the escalation of a range of undesirable behaviours. They may notice a change from playful teasing to ritual insults, be able to report theft and counteract physical aggression as soon as it becomes evident. Student mentors can take responsibility for integrating newcomers and loners. Increasing the capacity and motivation of children to co-operate can lead to a reduction in school bullying. Successful interventions claim a marked improvement in school climate especially in terms of order and discipline, more positive attitudes towards school and its work, fewer victims and fewer new victims, as well as reductions in injuries, emotional trauma, and anti-social behaviours, like vandalism.

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Priority

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- 4.
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Timing

Quality Area 5. Valuing the development of creative activity

- Description:

One of the key features of a health-promoting and child-friendly school is the availability of places and opportunities for pupils to play, socialize and participate in creative and recreational activities. Rest and relaxation are important if learning is to be consolidated. The recess provides opportunities for students to practice the skills learned in the classroom and to exchange new skills with peers. Facilities and equipment, e.g. for climbing and swinging, provide opportunities for physical activity. Time free from the curriculum is vital to the development of a child's imagination. Thus, the school should give careful consideration to ensuring that students have opportunities, facilities, and time to learn crafts, play in drama, music, and so on. It is also important that they are able to do this in situations where they are relatively free from undue pressures to perform under assessed conditions.

Imagination and creativity are often expressed on the playground. When children play with their peers, play is less concerned with the ends and more with the means. It can be intrinsically interesting in its ritual and variety. It is also connected with a higher level of creativity than more structured situations because thinking about ways of doing things leads children to attempt more novel solutions to their problems. By playing games, children discover more about who they are and how they behave in different situations. Some games promote traditional sex roles but where games are free from adult supervision, they are found to bring the benefits of flexible behaviour and the use of few rules and specialized roles. Through play, children can learn life skills necessary for independence, organization, negotiation and arbitration. Activities outside school time have the additional benefit of enabling staff and students to get to know each other better. High cost equipment is not essential for stimulating play. Simple, low-cost and easy ideas, such as using stones, logs, or paint to mark out popular games on the playground, can be just as much fun and equally effective for this purpose

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Quality Area 6. Connecting school and home life through involving parents

- Description:

The engagement of parents in school activities and decisions is an essential element of a health-promoting and a child-friendly school. The family and school are two of the most important institutions that influence children. However, in many cases, they take little notice of each other and pay limited attention to how much they depend on each other to secure children's well-being and provide opportunities for learning and development. Most families cannot educate their children without the assistance of schools, while education in schools requires the collaboration of families. An important function of schooling is to assist families to help their young become emotionally and socially secure and productive members of the community. Although teaching is primarily about helping children to learn, it is not possible to ignore the family from which the child comes without risks to effective learning.

Contact between home and school promotes good teaching. Teachers are better able to understand the child and tailor their teaching to the child's needs if they are aware of their background. With this knowledge they are less likely to undermine traditions and values that the child learns at home, in a way that might unwittingly lead to contradictions, conflict and unhappiness. But teachers must be approachable if parents are to feel welcome at school. Parents, who feel positive about school and involved in its life, are likely to be the best advocates for the school's values, policies and practices at home, whether encouraging homework, promoting anti-harassment policy or supporting co-operation with others. Where there is no contact between home and school, problems and major changes in the child's life may go unrecognized and unaddressed by the school. In less privileged families, strong parental support and a positive school climate can foster the development of high levels of self-confidence and self-esteem.

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Quality Area 7. Promoting equal opportunities and participation in decision-making

- Description:

A health-promoting and child-friendly school gives children emotional and social support and helps them acquire the confidence they need to speak freely about the school and their life within it. Like adults, children seek self-determination. Children need the opportunity to be informed about the issues that affect them and to actively participate in the decision-making process together with staff and parents. The school also needs to provide the opportunity for students to say if they believe that something is wrong or unfair and to influence the timing where change is necessary, without fear of reprisals. They should be provided with the opportunity and facilities to choose their leaders. Helping students to believe in themselves is empowering and encourages them to stand up for their rights. While children need to be encouraged to take responsibility for themselves and their community, at the same time they have a right to a period of their lives when they can be physically and environmentally dependent on others and protected from physical, social and emotional harm. Developing an awareness of justice and rights can be taught through pointing out injustice and then encouraging children to use reasoning and decision-making to make sense of it. As they mature, it is possible to give children an increasing voice in the decision-making about rules, rights and discipline in the school. By making a valued contribution to organising the way the school works, children find their school more supportive, attractive and friendly. Participation fosters physical, mental and social well-being within the learning environment.

An important component of emotional and social well-being is feeling accepted for who you are. Feeling excluded or less than equal (especially for reasons that are beyond your control) is damaging to self-esteem and dignity. Students who are treated as equals and believe that the chance of success is as accessible to them as to the next person, are not only more likely to reach their intellectual potential but will value their school for its friendly and supportive environment and be more tolerant of others who are 'different'. Schools need to find their own ways to acknowledge and welcome ethnic, religious and cultural diversity, as well as those who have special needs due to disability, poverty or being orphaned.

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More information about this project is available from:

- Mr Charles Gollmar, School Health/Youth Health Promotion Group Leader, Department of Noncommunicable Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, World Health Organization, Geneva.
- Dr Shekhar Saxena, Coordinator, Mental Health and Substance Dependence, Evidence and Research, World Health Organization, CH-1211, Geneva, Switzerland
- A more detailed literature review and inquiries about the construction of the original Checklist can be addressed to Professor Suzanne Skevington, WHO Centre for the Study of Quality of Life, University of Bath, Bath, BA2 9AY, UK (s.m.skevington@bath.ac.uk).

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