

Inaugural School Sharing cum Recognition Ceremony of Whole School Health Programme helps promote school-based health promotion initiatives (with photos)

The Department of Health (DH) today (January 13) held the first School Sharing cum Recognition Ceremony of "Whole School Health Programme" (WSHP) to give recognition to eight participating schools with outstanding performance, and invited school representatives to share their experiences in promoting school-based health promotion for the reference of other participating schools.

Making reference to the Health Promoting School (HPS) framework advocated by the World Health Organization (WHO), the WSHP assists schools in systematically reviewing and formulating health promotion measures related to four major health themes (namely physical activity, healthy eating, mental health and social well-being) and six key factors (namely healthy school policies, school's physical environment, school's social environment, community links, action competencies for healthy living, and school health care and promotion services). These health promotion measures facilitate schools in gradually becoming a healthy setting for living, learning and working.

"According to the WHO, we spend about 15 000 hours in primary and secondary schools during our lifetime, which shows that schools play a crucial role in promoting the healthy development of students, teachers, families and communities. It is imperative that we actively work to create a healthy school environment and atmosphere that supports the healthy development of students," the Secretary for Health, Professor Lo Chung-mau, said at the recognition ceremony.

"I encourage schools to take the initiative to formulate more health promotion measures, such as a flexible school uniform policy on school days without Physical Education lessons, and encourage schools, parents and students to actively develop the habit of regular physical activity to achieve the WHO recommendation of at least 60 minutes of moderate- to vigorous-intensity physical activity per day on average.

"It is announced in 'The Chief Executive's 2024 Policy Address' that the WSHP will be strengthened. Health reports will be compiled for each participating school to recommend targeted school-based health promotion measures for physical activities, meals and other matters, to improve students' physical and psychological well-being. I am delighted to know that more than 700 schools have joined the WSHP, covering over 60 per cent of

all primary and secondary schools in Hong Kong. The participation rate is encouraging. However, we must continue to work towards realising the vision of 'Making every school a health-promoting school', for which both the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government and schools share a great responsibility."

The Director of Health, Dr Ronald Lam, said at the ceremony that evidence from international research shows that the implementation of the HPS framework can bring about a positive impact on the health of students, such as reducing the risk of smoking among students, reducing bullying cases, helping to improve the weight index of students, and increasing their physical activity and consumption of fruits and vegetables.

Since the 2019/20 school year, the DH has launched the HPS Programme as a pilot project in 30 primary and secondary schools to provide them with professional guidance in carrying out school-based health promotion work according to the HPS framework, and to explore the feasibility of extending the HPS model in Hong Kong.

The DH has regularised the HPS Programme since the 2023/24 school year and renamed it WSHP with the slogan "Whole School, Whole Health". Participating schools have been provided with guidelines and a checklist to help them systematically review and formulate their health promotion measures.

The eight schools recognised at today's ceremony have been participating in and supporting the project since the launch of the pilot scheme. They have developed comprehensive health promotion measures around the four major health themes and six key factors. They have also shared their experiences and strategies in implementing the WSHP with other schools through various channels.

Furthermore, the four participating schools also shared their experiences in implementing school-based health promotion, as well as the innovative methods and utilisation of resources adopted in the process of promoting the WSHP, which allowed other schools to have a better understanding of the implementation of the WSHP. It also offered practical reference for schools to effectively promote the WSHP concept.

The Director of the Division of Healthy Environments and Populations of the WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific, Dr Hiromasa Okayasu, also graced the event with a video speech. More than 200 representatives from secondary and primary schools attended the ceremony. Highlights of the events will be uploaded to the [WSHP website](#). The public will also be able to view them later on the Centre for Health Protection [Facebook page](#).

Schools interested in participating in the WSHP can contact the DH's [Health Promoting School Division](#).

