

Comprehensive Health Education

Definition

Comprehensive School Health Education (CSHE) includes curriculum, instruction and assessment that is sequential from kindergarten through high school and meets the health education standards outlined in the *Tennessee Curriculum Standards*. CSHE addresses physical, mental, emotional, and social aspects of health, and provides knowledge and skills that promote and enhance lifelong healthy behaviors. CSHE includes ten mandated content areas:

- community health
- consumer health
- environmental health
- family life education
- growth and development
- personal health, including mental and emotional health
- nutritional health
- prevention and control of disease and disorders
- safety and accident prevention
- substance use and abuse prevention

The framework for the CSHE Guidelines is as follows:

Comprehensive School Health Education:

- Health education as a core academic subject
- Coordination of curriculum, instruction and assessment
- Support system for health education
- Health education as part of a coordinated school health program

Health Education Curriculum:

- Comprehensive and sequential
- Aligned to State Health Education Standards
- Criteria for effectiveness
- Essential knowledge and skills
- Curriculum development process

Health Education Instruction:

- Adequate time, opportunity and resources
- Culturally and developmentally appropriate instruction and classroom materials
- Effective and varied instructional practices
- Taught as a distinct course of study
- Individual health topics are part of a comprehensive school health education program

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Health Education Student Assessment and Program Evaluation:

- Assessment of student achievement utilizing a variety of strategies
- Reporting student achievement
- Evaluation of health education program
- State assessment

Teacher Preparation, Certification and Continuing Education for Teachers:

- Elementary school
- Middle school
- High school
- Continuing professional development

Rationale

CSHE motivates and enables students to maintain and improve their health, prevent disease, and reduce health-related risk behaviors. Health education gives students the knowledge and skills to thrive physically, mentally, emotionally, and socially. This knowledge helps students meet the challenges of growing up by giving them the life tools to become physically and intellectually healthy individuals. CSHE helps students to recognize the causes of ill health and to understand the benefits of prevention.

Through health education, students become aware of the dimensions of good health: physical soundness and vigor; mental alertness and ability to concentrate; expressing emotions in a healthy way; resiliency; critical thinking skills and positive relations with others.

Health education also includes a set of skills to help students be better consumers of information, to manage stress and conflict, and to make better decisions in the face of conflicting messages, thus assisting them to live healthier lives. Health education is a core academic subject requiring appropriate resources and support.

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Guidelines

1. Require health education as a core academic subject.
2. Require health education be taught by a trained/certified individual.
3. Align local health education curriculum with Tennessee health education standards. Tennessee Curriculum Standards Website:
<http://tennessee.gov/education/ci/standards/>
4. Ensure that health education instruction delivered to students transmits essential health knowledge and skills as specified in the health education curriculum, and that assessment of student performance is designed to determine whether students are mastering those essential skills and knowledge.
5. Adopt appropriate policies and provide essential resources and supports to effectively implement a high-quality health education curriculum for all students.
6. Deliver comprehensive health education within the context of a coordinated school health program.
7. Adopt a sequential, comprehensive pre-K through high school health education curriculum.
8. Develop health education curriculum based on recognized research-based and theory driven criteria for effectiveness, which is designed to meet students' identified needs.
9. Ensure that the health education curriculum includes essential health concepts and skills.
10. Follow a sequential process for curriculum development, review, and adoption.
11. Provide adequate instructional time, opportunity, and resources to assure student achievement of the health education standards outlined in the *Tennessee Curriculum Standards*.
12. Provide health education instruction and classroom materials that are culturally and developmentally appropriate for diverse populations.

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13. Utilize varied and effective instructional strategies that allow students to learn essential health concepts, as well as to observe, practice, and apply health skills.
14. Teach health education as a separate, unique subject, with additional reinforcement across the other academic areas.
15. Provide instruction on individual health topics within comprehensive school health education.
16. Assess student achievement in health education by utilizing a variety of strategies.
17. Include health education in the local assessment system.
18. Evaluate health education programs by systematically conducting a process evaluation to determine the extent to which teachers are delivering health education, and utilize state and local assessment scores to determine program effectiveness.
19. Participate in statewide assessments of student health knowledge and skills.
20. Employ elementary-level teachers who have completed one or more academic courses addressing the content and methods unique to health education at the elementary level as a part of their pre-service training.
21. Employ middle-school teachers with primary responsibility for health education who have academic preparation addressing the content and methods unique to health education at the middle-school level, and who meet state certification requirements for health education.
22. Employ high-school teachers who have completed a formal major in health education from an accredited program and hold the appropriate state certification to teach health education.
23. Offer opportunities for continuing professional development activities that address content, methods, and contemporary issues unique to health education.
24. Use the School Health Index Module and Health Education tools available at <http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/SchoolHealth/tools.htm>