

Overview: Health education in the New Zealand Curriculum

Health education is best known by the topics covered. The topics are grouped into key areas of learning and health education at secondary school focuses mostly on three of these.

1. In mental health education students learn about:

- Friendships, relationships, and interpersonal communication skills, and ways of supporting self and others that enhance these
- Personal identity and self-worth
- How to manage situations of change, loss and disappointment, and gain knowledge and skills for building resilience and managing stressful situations
- Minimising risk by making health-enhancing decisions in situations involving alcohol and other drugs
- Preventing harm from and responding to behaviours like bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, discrimination, abuse and violence

2. In sexuality education students learn about:

- Pubertal development and sexual health (prevention of unplanned pregnancy and STIs), sexual readiness
- What makes a respectful romantic or sexual relationship, roles and responsibilities in relationships, and consent
- Inclusiveness of diverse sex, sexuality and gender identities
- Gender roles and stereotypes

3. In food and nutrition education students learn about:

- Nutritionally balanced diets and what helps people to achieve and maintain such a diet
- Factors that influence what people eat, and how to overcome barriers to achieving nutritional balance

Underlying concepts

To shape all of this into a 'health education' programme, the learning is based around 4 underlying ideas. These ideas are applied to topics in increasingly complex ways as students move from junior to senior secondary school

1. Hauora

A holistic understanding of wellbeing where students learn how aspects of wellbeing are interconnected, and that achieving and maintaining a balance within and between the dimensions is required.

The main dimensions of wellbeing students learn about are:

- Taha tinana – Physical wellbeing
- Taha hinengaro – Mental and emotional wellbeing (thoughts and feelings),
- Taha whānau – Social wellbeing
- Taha wairua – Spiritual wellbeing

Spiritual wellbeing in this sense refers to our:

- *Beliefs and values (this may or may not include religious beliefs)*
- *A sense of belonging and connectedness*
- *Having faith that life has meaning and purpose*
- *Having a sense of ourselves and what is important to us (who we are, our identity.)*

Students may also learn about models of wellbeing from other cultures and traditions.

2. The socio-ecological perspective

Students learn about the interconnected ways wellbeing is affected through:

- What we personally know and do as individuals,
- The way we support, communicate, and interact with other people in our interpersonal relationships, and
- How we engage with, and are supported by, members of our community and the society in which we live.

3. Health promotion

Students learn the skills and processes for taking individual and collective action to promote wellbeing.

4. Attitudes and Values

Students learn that when we take action to promote wellbeing, we need to show the attitudes and values of respect, a sense of care and concern for ourselves, other people, and our community, and that our actions are fair and inclusive.

An overview of the school's health education programme is provided for this consultation.

If you are interested in learning more about the way health education in The New Zealand Curriculum is structured visit <https://nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/The-New-Zealand-Curriculum/Health-and-physical-education>

The Ministry of Education also provides a range of guideline documents for schools, especially for areas like sexuality education, alcohol and other drug education. If you are interested in finding out more about these aspects of health education as a matter of education policy, visit <http://health.tki.org.nz/Teaching-in-HPE/Policy-guidelines>