

# Healthy Schools: Empowering Children

Education and health form a virtuous circle. Healthy, attentive and secure children can fully participate in classroom activities to achieve their full potential. And better education leads to improved health: the educated child will grow to live an informed, healthy lifestyle and, through better earnings, will be able to afford health services.

Implementing this vision constitutes the philosophy of a Health-Promoting School: a school where children are taught to understand their bodies and how to treat them well; a school that provides an environment free of physical hazards such as unsafe food or mosquito-breeding sites, and free of violence and harassment. It is a place where medical services, such as immunization, can be delivered safely, and where teachers and children are encouraged to be ambassadors for health in their families and communities.

The concept of environmental health – a healthy environment for learning, coupled with a curriculum that reinforces the importance of safe environments in general – is one of the pillars of Health-Promoting Schools.

As yet, this concept has not been widely translated into day-to-day practice. However, the global movement Education for All recently called for the provision of clean water and decent sanitation facilities – separate for boys and girls – as a first step in creating a safe school environment. This opens up the potential for improving children’s health and environment overall.



## A safe school

### Features of a healthy school environment

- |                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Provision of basic necessities:     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shelter</li> <li>• Warmth, light and ventilation</li> <li>• Water</li> <li>• Food</li> <li>• Toilets</li> <li>• Emergency medical care</li> </ul>                     |
| Protection from biological threats: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moulds</li> <li>• Dirty water</li> <li>• Unsafe food</li> <li>• Vector-borne diseases</li> <li>• Animal bites and stings</li> </ul>                                   |
| Protection from physical threats:   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traffic accidents</li> <li>• Violence and crime</li> <li>• Injuries</li> <li>• Radiation</li> </ul>   |
| Protection from chemical threats:   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Air pollution and tobacco smoke</li> <li>• Water pollution</li> <li>• Pesticides</li> <li>• Hazardous waste</li> <li>• Asbestos, paint and cleaning agents</li> </ul> |

