

SHE monitoring report 2020:

# Country-specific results of Poland

Schools for Health in Europe Network Foundation

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Schools for Health in Europe



This report has received funding under an operating grant from the European Union's Health Programme.

## Background and methodology

The Schools for Health in Europe network foundation (SHE) monitors the implementation of school health promotion in SHE member countries. This country-specific report summarizes the results of the SHE monitoring survey in Poland. The survey was conducted in September 2020 and the findings represent the perceptions of the SHE national coordinator on school health promotion and the Health Promoting School (HPS) approach in schools in this country. The survey is based on existing questionnaires and information sources including the SHE Mapping Survey 2019<sup>1</sup>, the SHE Rapid Assessment Tool<sup>2</sup> and the fifth SHE Factsheet<sup>3</sup>. The complete survey is available at [www.schoolsforhealth.org](http://www.schoolsforhealth.org).

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## School health promotion and the HPS approach in Poland

In this report, a distinction is made between **school health promotion** and the **formal HPS approach** in schools. SHE aims to strengthen the formal HPS approach among all schools in the European Region. However, not all schools are formally working according to the HPS approach or are working under the specific HPS label. Despite this, many schools do take efforts to promote the health of their staff and pupils with concrete school health promotion activities.

### School health promotion

This relates to various health promotion activities in schools. These activities can focus on multiple health-related themes such as physical activity and mental health, for example in the curriculum or in the policy of the school. This can, but does not necessarily, imply that the school has a structured and systematic plan according to the principles of a formal health promoting school.

### Formal HPS approach

According to SHE, the formal HPS approach relates to schools that implement a structured and systematic plan for the health, well-being and the development of social capital of all pupils and of teaching and non-teaching staff. This is characterized as a 'whole school approach' and these schools actively involve pupils, staff and parents in the decision-making and implementation of health promoting interventions in the whole school system.<sup>4</sup>

*All schools in Poland implement health-related activities. However, the number of schools formally working in accordance to the Health Promoting Schools approach is much lower.*

Table 1 reports the estimated percentages of different types of schools involved in school health promotion and working according to the HPS approach in Poland. All schools implement health promotion activities. The minority of schools (<25%) formally work in accordance to the 'whole school approach' defining schools as Health Promoting Schools.

**Table 1.** The estimated percentage of schools involved in school health promotion and working according to the HPS approach in Poland

Health promotion in schools	% of schools	Health Promoting Schools (HPS)	% of schools
Preschools	100%	Preschools	<25%
Primary schools	100%	Primary schools	<25%
Secondary schools	100%	Secondary schools	<25%
Vocational schools	100%	Vocational schools	<25%

In Poland, there is a HPS manual for schools to support them in becoming a HPS. The national and local government makes funding available from their budget to stimulate HPS in the schools. There is currently no national monitoring program of health education in schools, but HPS is monitored and evaluated every year.

The rest of this report summarizes the results of aspects of the HPS approach that are already part of schools in Poland. These schools are not necessarily formal Health Promoting Schools.

## Creating a healthy and supportive environment in schools in Poland

The HPS approach as defined by SHE, targets the following six components: 1) healthy school policies, 2) the school’s physical environment, 3) the school’s social environment, 4) individual health skills and action competencies, 5) community links, and 6) health services.

Table 2 shows the implementation of the HPS components in schools in Poland. It shows that components 1 to 4 are all required and/or recommended by national policies. Further, a combination of measures enhances the link between schools and community stakeholders (component 5) and with local and regional health services (component 6) in some of the schools in the country.

**Table 2.** The implementation of the Health Promoting School components in Poland

<p><b>1. Healthy School Policies</b> </p> <p><b>Required by national policies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Health promotion is part of the schools' educational goals and of the curriculum</li> </ul> <p><b>Recommended by national policies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Dissemination of the HPS approach</li> </ul> <p><b>Not mentioned in national policies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Schools apply a whole school approach to promote health and wellbeing</li> </ul>	<p><b>2. Physical environment</b> </p> <p><b>Required by national policies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- School canteens, food shops and vending machines offer food and drinks that follow national food standards</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Social environment</b> </p> <p><b>Required by national policies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Support services and accommodations are in place at schools for students with special learning, developmental and physical needs</li> <li>- Schools have systems for identifying and referring students with special needs to outside professionals if those needs exceed the scope of expertise within the schools</li> </ul>	<p><b>4. Individual skills and action competences</b> </p> <p><b>Required by national policies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Healthy eating is part of daily life in schools</li> <li>- Physical education and other forms of physical activity, e.g. activity breaks, are part of daily life in schools</li> <li>- Teaching/learning methods that enhance mental health and wellbeing are part of daily life in schools</li> <li>- Health literacy and action competence are integral parts of the schools' policies</li> <li>- Schools have clear rules that promote healthy behaviors</li> </ul>
<p><b>5. Community Links</b> </p> <p><b>Applies to less than half of the schools</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Schools arrange for parents of students to become active participants in the school community</li> <li>- Schools establish connections with local partners such as sport and youth clubs, community or regional health agencies, counselling services, health insurances, local shops, etc.</li> <li>- Schools arrange regular student visits to local partners/stakeholders to encourage healthy eating, physical activity, the development of emotional/ social health, etc.</li> <li>- Schools involve all key people in the community in co-creating health promotion action plans at schools</li> </ul>	<p><b>6. Health services</b> </p> <p><b>Applies to most schools</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There is a pedagogist available to support students</li> </ul> <p><b>Applies to about half of the schools</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There is a school nurse available to support students</li> </ul> <p><b>Applies to less than half of the schools</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Health professionals are involved in health promoting activities at a school</li> <li>- There is a psychologist available to support students</li> </ul>

## SHE core values

The HPS approach is based on the core values equity, sustainability, inclusion, empowerment and democracy. Figure 1 shows the SHE national coordinator's estimation of how much the SHE-core values<sup>4</sup> are reflected in schools in Poland on a scale from 1 (not reflected at all) to 10 (reflection to the highest degree). The values are scored between 4 and 6.

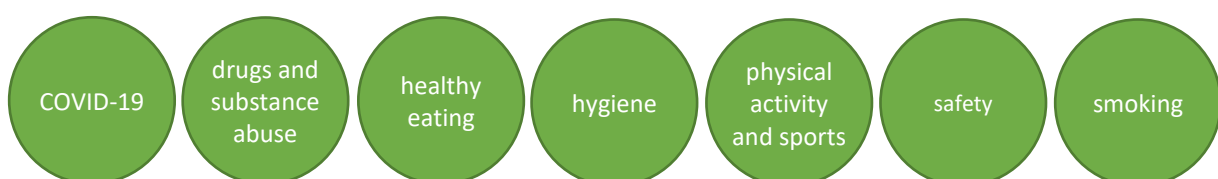
**Figure 1.** Generalization of the representation of the SHE-core values in schools in Poland



## Implementation of health promotion in schools

Schools in Poland include health promotion as a multi-disciplinary curriculum organization, in which subjects are interlinked and health issues are addressed in more than one subject at a time. Mainly passive learning strategies are used such as one-way lectures, to involve students while addressing health topics in schools. Figure 2 shows the most commonly addressed health promotion issues in schools in the country. The list is quite diverse ranging from lifestyle-related topics such as healthy eating and smoking to safety and COVID-19.

**Figure 2.** Most common HP Topics in schools in Poland



## Tailored translation of the HPS approach on seven spectra in schools in Poland

The tailored translation of the HPS approach creates a variety of choices regarding the optimal implementation of the HPS approach in a specific context. This variety can be illustrated by seven different spectra. A detailed explanation of each spectrum can be found in the fifth SHE factsheet<sup>3</sup>. Figure 3 shows the SHE national coordinator's estimation of the general placement of schools on the seven different spectra.

**Figure 3.** The Health Promoting School spectra in Poland



*This refers to the level of involvement of stakeholders (e.g. pupils) in the decision-making and implementation of the HPS approach*



*The place on the spectrum refers to the number of HPS core-component that are addressed in the HPS-approach*



*This relates to the development of the new or the adoption of existing interventions resulting from the HPS approach*



*This relates to the level of disruptiveness of interventions as part of the HPS approach. Non-disruptiveness refers to small changes that can smoothly enter, while disruptiveness means large health promoting changes that can create a positive disruption in the school system.*



*This relates to the compatibility of interventions within the school curriculum. An intervention can be added-on to the current core curriculum obligations as an additional task, or added-in the current curriculum becoming part of the curriculum without reducing time from core curriculum obligations.*

Figure 3. continued



*This refers to different types of research designs that can be used to evaluate the HPS approach going from controlled designs with a strong focus on internal validity to action-oriented approaches focusing on external validity and understanding the implementation process in schools.*



*This refers to the dissemination of the HPS approach at a local level characterized by an optimal fit with each school context, or at national level, reaching more pupils.*

## Facilitators and barriers to health promotion in schools

The survey explored significant barriers and facilitators for the implementation of health promotion in schools in Poland. It resulted in main 4 facilitating factors and 5 barriers. The results are reported in table 3.

**Table 3.** Perceived facilitators and barriers for school health promotion according to the national coordinator

Facilitators	Barriers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Collaboration between the health and education sectors, intersectoral collaboration</li> <li>- Interest of schools in health promotion</li> <li>- Active involvement of students</li> <li>- Motivation of teachers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lack of time and energy of school staff</li> <li>- Many simultaneous "competing", not collaborative, projects in schools</li> <li>- Health promotion is considered an additional activity</li> <li>- Schools lack understanding about the benefits of participating in HPS activities</li> <li>- Teachers are or feel overloaded</li> </ul>

## COVID-19 pandemic

Since spring 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic drastically altered school health promotion due to the country-specific measures for combating the pandemic. The government of Poland closed schools during a national lockdown, and students received online education. Even though the government supported teachers with the online education, it was still the major challenge for schools.

## References

1. SHE Mapping survey 2019. Available from: <https://www.schoolsforhealth.org/resources/materials-and-tools/mapping-she>
2. SHE Rapid Assessment Tool. Available from: <https://www.schoolsforhealth.org/resources/materials-and-tools/how-be-health-promoting-school/rapid-assessment-tool>
3. SHE the fifth SHE Factsheet. Available from: <https://www.schoolsforhealth.org/resources/materials-and-tools/fact-sheets>
4. SHE concepts. Available from: <https://www.schoolsforhealth.org/concepts>
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We would like to thank the SHE National Coordinator **Valentina Todorovska-Sokolowska** for participating in the SHE monitoring survey.

## Published by:

Schools for Health in Europe Network Foundation (SHE).

Haderslev, Denmark:

October 2020

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If you need dialogue about the health promotion school and its key concept and activities, please contact the national or regional coordinator in your country. He or she will be happy to help you.

Find the coordinators here:

[www.schoolsforhealth.org/about-us/member-countries](http://www.schoolsforhealth.org/about-us/member-countries)

If your country doesn't have a national coordinator, contact the helpdesk in the SHE secretariat on email: [info@schoolsforhealth.org](mailto:info@schoolsforhealth.org)



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