

Teamwork, inside and outside of the school

Teamwork in the school

The whole school approach is necessarily based on teamwork. An initiative like the Health-promoting school cannot be carried out by one person alone. The support of the school director or head teacher is crucial, as is having someone who is clearly designated as the coordinator of the programme. One of the first steps is identifying who should be in the group to take the initiative forward. You also need to ensure that you have people from both health and education working in partnership. Teamwork is also essential to ensure that you make the best use of everyone's skills and strengths.

Activity: teamwork

It is important to identify what is happening already in your locality that might support the programme. There may be local agencies available, and activities being already carried out that can be continued, extended or adapted.

Brainstorm everyone who could be involved from within the school and from outside.

Then think about what their role would be, what might be in it for them, and what barriers they might have?

Who would it be useful to involve on a central team? Remember in creating a team you do not want too many people or it becomes unmanageable.

Would it be useful to have sub-teams that connect with the central team and focus on a particular issue?

Using experts as part of a whole school approach

When planning the curriculum, it can be very useful to elicit the help of specialists. However, experience across Europe has shown that it is often unwise or unsustainable to use specialists or experts in a particular issue experts to teach pupils directly (for example doctors or police to teach about drug education. Outsiders may 'lecture' the pupils in ways they find boring and off-putting, or sensationalise a problem. This is often the case with drug education, which has the potential to do more harm than good if not developed in a sensitive, targeted and educationally sound manner.

One other way that experts can be used is if they are invited into the classroom as 'visitors' with the pupils setting the agenda. This should be part of an on-going programme. It needs careful preparation and follow-up with the pupils and for the teacher to be present throughout. The Activity below outlines the process

Activity: Involving visitors

One useful way of involving 'experts' is to spend at least one lesson before their visit, asking pupils what they want to ask the visitor, deciding who will brief the visitor, who will ask the questions, who will record the answers and who will thank the visitor. Similarly, the visitor needs to be told the kind of questions that the young people will ask. You may find it useful to invite several people to get different viewpoints.

Following the visit, spend time discussing the learning involved.

The main difference to this approach is that the focus is on the young people's needs and interests, rather than a set talk on what the specialist assumes will be interesting.