





The principle of **Health**

Nature is, for the most part, healthy. When we are in Nature, we feel well. Nature rejuvenates and heals us. It restores our spirit. It captures our imagination. It is a constant source of inspiration. When we tune in to Nature in all its elements, we come alive.

Health and the elements

We know that our human health is inextricably linked to that of the natural world. When Nature is not well, it is usually due to our damaging ways. The future well-being of our world requires us to put the health of our soil, our water, our air and our ecosystem services at the heart of all we do. When we consider how polluted our air is, particularly in urban environments, when we look at how depleted our soil is due to industrialised farming systems, when we realise how much our water systems suffer from pesticide run-off, plastic waste and over-exploitation, and when we understand the pressure our ecosystem services are under, we can see there is much we need to change.

Health and school food

In educational terms, health should be fundamental to our learning. Health and happiness should drive the way our schools run and students should have a lead role in evaluating how well this focus on health and happiness is working. Central to health is the food we eat. Ideally, schools would be in a position to procure as much local, seasonal and organic food as possible because this is the healthiest food we can eat, offsetting any additional costs by buying straight from source. It is possible for school kitchens to move towards being close to 100% organic for minimal additional cost. Eating less meat, reducing food waste and simplifying menu choices will help with this.

Health and mental well-being

Health should relate to the mental well-being of students and staff alike. Increasingly, schools are realising that mindfulness and similar meditative or contemplative practices can have a hugely positive impact on the well-being of all members of a school community. Short mindfulness sessions after break and after lunch every day can quickly become a valued part of the school day and can have a very positive impact on the health of students and staff.

Health in learning

Health should influence learning, too. If we want to inspire a love of learning in our schools, we need to plan stimulating, engaging projects of learning and give our students a sense of ownership in what they do. We need to find the right balance between hard work and purposeful outcomes, and we need to listen to what our students tell us about what works and what could be improved. This student-led evaluation of learning could be even more prevalent in education.

Much meaning in learning comes from a deep understanding of how Nature works. The more we can provide experiences that take our young people beyond the classroom and connect them to Nature, the more their well-being is likely to improve.



Enquiries of learning linked to the principle of **Health**

Enquiries of learning linked to health teach us how to live healthy lives. They remind us of the need for balance and the link between our individual health and the health of the world around us.

Themes could include:

Healthy me

The health of our soil, air and water

Healthy food

Health and exercise

Healthy play, today and in the past

The health of our world

We know that health in its various forms is essential if we are to feel well. The more we understand what it means to be healthy, the better our choices will be in learning to live and work that way.



“The principle of health means
living your life to the fullest.”

“Health is about looking after
ourselves and the world.”