

School Health Champions

Every APPLE school has one. The school health champion (SHC) is a school staff member who volunteers as the liaison between APPLE Schools and the school community. This person leads school staff in building and maintaining a healthy culture by initiating discussions and facilitating action plan implementation. APPLE Schools supports SHCs with resources, knowledge exchange events, in-person meetings, and mentorship.

Champion: SHCs are just that! They are role models who guide the school in applying a health lens to regular-day activities and strive to create a healthy school community for all.

Helper: SHCs are always on a mission to help others become health leaders in the school community, and are the go-to persons when someone wants to contribute.

Adaptable: SHCs know that change can be a processes of trial and error until the school community finds what works. SHCs adapt well to change and try new ideas, while encouraging others to do the same.

Motivator: SHCs have a can-do attitude with a positive and inclusive approach that makes health fun and engaging.

Partner: SHCs partner closely with their principals to create change in the school community. SHCs are also masters at creating partnerships both inside and outside the school to involve the whole community.

Integrator: SHCs apply a health lens to existing school activities and integrate wellness to all that the school does without adding a lot of extra work on others.

Observer: SHCs identify areas of improvement and areas of success that are worthy of celebration in the school. They are great listeners who gather diverse voices to ensure the community reflects its members' needs.

Not the broccoli police: SHCs promote a welcoming and inclusive approach that respects all choices and does not create shame. The education they provide on food is based on provincial, district, and school guidelines for nutrition.

School Health Champions in Action

A SHC role is designed to easily integrate into regular school staff activities. The day-to-day work depends on each SHC's facilitation style and the school's goals and activities in the action plan. Throughout the year, the SHC oversees action plan implementation and tracks funding and spending. The person in the role needs scheduled time at staff meetings and other school events to share resources and ideas with the rest of the staff. Ultimately, the role of the SHC is unique, continuously looking at the school environment through a health lens to find ways to enhance the health of its members. The APPLE school health mentor provides support each step of the way.

Annual Responsibilities

- 1. Update and submit the action plan:** SHCs gather feedback from students, staff, families, and other stakeholders on changes or updates they would like to see in the school action plan for the year. Gathering feedback on the action plan and activities within it is important to evaluate outcomes, effectiveness, barriers, and gaps in implementation. SHCs send the action plan to school health mentors to review and approve allocation of APPLE Schools' funds.
- 2. Attend biannual support meetings:** SHCs attend an in-school meeting with their school health mentor and principal twice per year. The first is in the fall to review the school health goals for the year, and the second in the spring to review successes and challenges of achieving those goals.
- 3. Attend biannual professional development events:** SHCs attend a full-day knowledge exchange event twice per year. The school health mentor ensures topics covered at the event increase SHCs' knowledge and skills to fulfill the role. The event is funded by APPLE Schools.

Annual APPLE School Timeline

