

## Middle School: Health Education Clarifications Support

The health clarifications include sample ideas of content and concepts to help teachers better understand the expectations of the standards. The identified clarifications are possible suggestions; however, they are not the only pathways and are not comprehensive to obtain mastery of the standards. *The Middle School: Health Education Clarifications Support* document is a supplemental resource and should not be used in place of the [Kentucky Academic Standards \(KAS\) for Health Education](#). To access the entire KAS for Health Education, visit [www.kystandards.org](http://www.kystandards.org).

### Standard 1: Use functional health information to support health and well-being of self and others.

**Rationale:** The acquisition and application of functional health information provides a foundation for promoting health and wellbeing. This standard includes essential concepts based on established theories and models of health behavior and health promotion. It focuses not only on risk factors, but also on protective factors that can support health and wellness. Concepts reflected in this standard include health literacy, health promotion, health equity, social determinants of health, well-being and health outcomes within individual, interpersonal, community, societal and environmental contexts. Functional information can be applied to health-related skills, such as analyzing influences, accessing resources, interpersonal communication, decision-making, goal setting, engaging in health practices and behaviors and advocacy.

Performance Indicators Grades 6-8	Clarifications
<b>1.8.1</b> Analyze ways to build upon strengths and assets to support individual and collective health and well-being.	In grades 6 through 8, students might analyze how personal and group strengths can be enhanced to improve collective well-being, evaluating interplay between personal, interpersonal and community assets to develop comprehensive solutions. Some examples include, but are not limited to, the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Reflect on personal habits and skills (e.g., time management, empathy) and analyze how these can be improved to support mental or physical health (e.g., using time management to get enough sleep or exercise).</li><li>● Develop a plan to enhance a personal strength (e.g., improving communication skills to build stronger friendships and reduce conflict).</li><li>● Research community assets (e.g., local parks, health programs) and discuss how individuals or groups can use these to promote collective well-being.</li></ul>

Performance Indicators Grades 6-8	Clarifications
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct a self-assessment to identify strengths, set a health goal and create a step-by-step plan to build on those strengths to achieve it (e.g., using persistence to develop a long-term hydration habit).</li> <li>• Collaborate with peers to design a project that uses group strengths to improve school or community health (e.g., organizing a mental health awareness campaign).</li> </ul>
<p><b>1.8.2</b> Analyze how practices and behaviors support a variety of dimensions of wellness.</p>	<p><b>Wellness</b> is the act of practicing healthy habits on a daily basis to attain better physical and mental outcomes. According to SHAPEAmerica, wellness has seven dimensions. Below are common practices associated with each dimension:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>physical:</b> healthy diet, being physical active, avoiding tobacco and other drugs, going to the doctor regularly</li> <li>2. <b>emotional/mental:</b> expressing emotions in a healthy way, managing stress, engaging in creative activities</li> <li>3. <b>environmental:</b> recycling, picking up trash at a local park, buying local produce</li> <li>4. <b>social:</b> spending time with friends and family, connections with classmates, building a strong social network</li> <li>5. <b>occupational:</b> being happy at school/work, working reasonable hours, making contributions to the world</li> <li>6. <b>spiritual:</b> reflecting, spending time in nature, journaling, engaging in a spiritual or religious community</li> <li>7. <b>intellectual:</b> reading for pleasure, engaging in community education, having an open mind,</li> </ol> <p>In grades 6 through 8, students might analyze how specific behaviors support multiple dimensions of wellness and how the dimensions impact one another. Some examples include, but are not limited to, the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students might explain what kinds of activities support both social and emotional wellness (e.g., “Listening to music with friends is good for my emotional and social health.”)</li> <li>• Students might analyze how routines and habits can support physical and intellectual health (e.g., “When I eat plenty of vegetables and drink water, I feel more focused at school.”)</li> <li>• Students might analyze how habits and routines at school and home support two or more dimensions of wellness (e.g., “When I volunteered to help clean up my neighborhood with some friends from school, I felt a sense of pride (emotional wellness) and also felt connected to my classmates (social wellness). I was also able to help make our community a cleaner place (environmental wellness).”)</li> </ul>

<b>Performance Indicators</b> <b>Grades 6-8</b>	<b>Clarifications</b>
<b>1.8.3</b> Analyze behaviors that reduce or prevent illnesses and injuries.	<p>In grade 6 through grade 8, students might engage in critical thinking to understand the “why” behind health-promoting behaviors. They will evaluate evidence, connect actions to outcomes, and reflect on how preventive practices contribute to their overall health and safety, as well as the health of their community. Some examples include, but are not limited to, the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Students might reflect on behaviors that might cause illness or injury (e.g., “Touching surfaces at the public park and then eating without washing my hands, may lead to an illness.”)</li> <li>● Students might evaluate why specific preventive behaviors are important and how they work to protect health (e.g., “The most effective way to stay injury free across my life span might be...”)</li> <li>● Students might analyze how health and safety behaviors and choices can vary depending on the environment or situation.</li> <li>● Students might evaluate how their behaviors and choices affect others’ health and safety.</li> </ul>
<b>1.8.4</b> Analyze practices and behaviors that support health and well-being, including how to manage health conditions.	<p>In grades 6 through 8, students take increasing responsibility for their own health. They might analyze how practices and behaviors might enhance physical and mental health and support the management of chronic or temporary health conditions. Through critical thinking and discussions, students might explore the impact of individual choices on long-term health outcomes. Some examples include, but are not limited to, the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Students might describe a desired health outcome and analyze health choices that contribute to that desired state.</li> <li>● Students might analyze how personal responsibility and support from family, peers and healthcare professionals contribute to successful health management.</li> <li>● Students might investigate various health conditions and analyze the best practices to support individuals with those conditions.</li> </ul>
<b>1.8.5</b> Analyze connections between health literacy and health outcomes.	<p>In grades 6 through 8, students begin to critically analyze how knowledge, behaviors and decision-making are linked to short- and long-term health effects. Some possible examples include, but are not limited to, the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Students might learn to read nutrition labels and discuss the connection between that skill and long-term health outcomes.</li> </ul>

Performance Indicators Grades 6-8	Clarifications
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students might learn how to evaluate credible health information from various social media, news or medical outlets and discuss the connection between that skill and long-term health outcomes.</li> </ul>
<p><b>1.8.6</b> Analyze how individual, interpersonal, community and environmental factors impact health and well-being.</p>	<p>In grades 6 through 8, students begin to think critically about the connections between themselves, their surroundings and their health, making this an opportunity to develop their understanding of these interrelated factors. Some examples to explore these concepts include, but are not limited to, the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students might analyze how positive influences, like support systems and role models, as well as negative influences, like negative peer pressure or bullying, impact health and well-being.</li> <li>Students might analyze how the availability of resources such as schools, parks, clinics, grocery stores and community centers contribute to health and well-being.</li> </ul>
<p><b>1.8.7</b> Explain how health care promotes personal health.</p>	<p>In grades 6 through 8, students begin to take more responsibility for their own well-being and learn about the benefits of regular health care for empowering informed decisions as they grow. <b>Health care</b> is defined as services provided by doctors, nurses, dentists, therapists and other professionals to prevent, diagnose and treat health problems. Some examples to explore these concepts include, but are not limited to, the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students might explain the differences between preventative care (e.g., check-ups), acute care (e.g., treating injuries or illnesses) and specialized care (e.g., eye exams or orthodontics).</li> <li>Students might explain how and when to seek health care.</li> </ul>
<p><b>1.8.8</b> Describe basic male and female reproductive body parts and their functions as well as the physical, social and emotional changes that occur during puberty.</p>	<p>In grades 6 through 8, students are provided with accurate, age-appropriate information about human anatomy, reproduction and the changes they experience during puberty. Providing accurate, scientific names for male and female reproductive body parts with diagrams support students in understanding the structure and function of these body parts in a straightforward and respectful way. Given the sensitivity of this subject matter, promoting an environment of respect and inclusivity emphasizes that all bodies are different and develop at their own pace. Some examples to explore these concepts include, but are not limited to, the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students might describe the physical, social and emotional changes that occur during puberty.</li> <li>Students might describe essential hygiene and self-care for menstruation or other changes.</li> </ul>

<b>Performance Indicators</b> <b>Grades 6-8</b>	<b>Clarifications</b>
<p><b>1.8.9</b> Describe conception and its relationship to the menstrual cycle and describe why sexual abstinence is the most effective risk avoidance method of protection from HIV, other STDs and pregnancy.</p>	<p>In grades 6 through 8, students learn about reproductive health and require factual, clear and age-appropriate content in a safe and respectful environment. Below are terms and concepts related to conception and the menstrual cycle:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Conception</b>, or pregnancy, occurs when sperm fertilizes an egg. This typically occurs during the ovulation phase of the menstrual cycle.</li> <li>● <b>Menstruation</b> is the shedding of the lining of the uterus when pregnancy does not occur.</li> <li>● <b>Ovulation</b> is the release of an egg from the ovary, usually in the middle of the menstrual cycle, when fertilization (or pregnancy) is most likely. 6</li> <li>● <b>Fertilization</b> occurs if the sperm meets the egg during ovulation, which can lead to conception, or pregnancy.</li> </ul> <p><b>Sexual abstinence</b> means choosing not to engage in any sexual activity. Because no other method of protection (e.g., condoms or birth control) is 100% effective, abstinence is the most effective method to prevent HIV, other STDs and pregnancy.</p>
<p><b>1.8.10</b> Determine the benefits of being sexually abstinent and summarize ways to prevent pregnancy.</p>	<p><b>Sexual abstinence</b> means choosing not to engage in any sexual activity. Because no other method of protection (e.g., condoms or birth control) is 100% effective, abstinence is the most effective method to prevent HIV, other STDs and pregnancy.</p> <p>To learn about the benefits of abstinence, students might discuss health, emotional, social and personal empowerment benefits.</p> <p>To learn about pregnancy prevention, students might learn about different forms of contraceptive such as condoms, birth control pills or intrauterine devices (IUDs), emphasizing that no method other than abstinence is 100% effective. Students might also learn the importance of seeking guidance from trusted adults or health professionals.</p>
	<p>In grades 6 through 8, students develop their sense of identity and relationships, making it essential to provide clear, age-appropriate education about personal boundaries, consent and empowerment. This performance indicator aims to teach students that everyone has the inherent right to control their own body and that respecting these boundaries is vital for healthy, safe interactions.</p>

Performance Indicators Grades 6-8	Clarifications
<p><b>1.8.11</b> Explain why individuals have the right to refuse sexual contact.</p>	<p><b>Consent</b> is a clear and ongoing agreement to participate in any activity and in the absence of consent, no contact should occur. Consent must be freely given and cannot be coerced, pressured or assumed based on past interactions or relationships. Consent may change over the course of an interaction and should be monitored and communicated over the course of a relationship.</p> <p>Some examples to explore the concept of consent include, but are not limited to, the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Students might explain why everyone has the right to say no to physical contact and why respecting others' boundaries is essential for healthy relationships.</li> <li>● Students might explain why it is wrong to trick, threaten or coerce another person into any kind of activity, including electronic communication.</li> <li>● Students might explain ways to communicate boundaries, such as saying “no,” setting clear limits, walking away from a situation or seeking the help of a trusted adult.</li> <li>● Students might explain how peer pressure, media influences or societal norms might make some people uncomfortable about asserting their rights.</li> <li>● Students might describe how power and control differences in relationships can contribute to aggression and violence and describe how prejudice, discrimination and bias can lead to violence.</li> </ul>
<p><b>1.8.12</b> Explain signs, symptoms, transmission and prevention of the most common STDs.</p>	<p><b>Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs)</b> are infections that spread primarily through sexual contact and can impact any person who is sexually active. Students might learn about these common STDs including, but not limited to, the following: chlamydia, gonorrhea, human papillomavirus (HPV), herpes, syphilis, human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) / acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS). Some examples for teaching this performance include, but are not limited to, the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Students might explain how some STDs may not show symptoms and require testing to diagnose.</li> <li>● Students might explain how STDs are spread through sexual contact (vaginal, oral or anal) or sharing needles from drug use, tattoos or piercings.</li> <li>● Students might explain ways to prevent or treat STDs, including sexual abstinence, regular testing and seeking medical attention.</li> </ul>

Performance Indicators Grades 6-8	Clarifications
<p><b>1.8.13</b> Describe short- and long-term physical effects of using tobacco or nicotine products, including the benefits of being nicotine free.</p>	<p>In grades 6 through 8, students explore more methods to avoid tobacco and nicotine products. When planning, remain aware that names and products may change as tobacco and nicotine companies produce or market new products. Some tobacco and nicotine products students might learn about include, but are not limited to, the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Traditional tobacco products</b> such as cigarettes, cigars, snuff, chewing tobacco or pipe tobacco</li> <li>● <b>Electronic nicotine products</b> such as vaping devices or pod systems</li> <li>● <b>Smokeless tobacco/nicotine alternatives</b> such as nicotine pouches, lozenges, gums or strips</li> <li>● <b>Flavored nicotine products</b> such as candies or gums in flavors that are attractive to younger users</li> </ul> <p>In addition to the types of tobacco or nicotine, students might also explore the risks of using such products:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Students might describe “nicotine” as an unhealthy substance that people can become addicted. A middle school appropriate definition of <b>addiction</b> is when a person starts using a substance, like drugs or alcohol, or doing an activity, like gaming or gambling, so much that it becomes very hard to stop. Addiction happens because their brain starts to depend on it to feel good or normal, even if it causes problems in their life.</li> <li>● Students might describe the social, economic and cosmetic consequences of tobacco or nicotine use.</li> <li>● Students might describe situations that could lead to the use of tobacco or nicotine and explain reasons most individuals do not use tobacco or nicotine products.</li> </ul>
<p><b>1.8.14</b> Analyze the consequences of using alcohol and other drugs.</p>	<p>In grades 6 through 8, students are encouraged to think critically about the risks of using alcohol and other drugs. Some examples to explore these concepts include, but are not limited to, the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Students might analyze the prescription drug epidemic and the connection between prescription opioid abuse and addiction to other drugs, such as heroin and synthetic drugs.</li> <li>● Students might determine reasons why people choose to use or not to use alcohol and other drugs and describe situations that could lead to the use of alcohol and other drugs.</li> <li>● Students might explain the risks associated with using alcohol or other drugs and the risk of injury, including injuries while operating or riding in a motor vehicle.</li> <li>● Students might explain why using alcohol or other drugs is an unhealthy way to manage stress and describe the relationship between using alcohol and other drugs with other health risks.</li> </ul>

<b>Performance Indicators</b> <b>Grades 6-8</b>	<b>Clarifications</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students might analyze the mental and emotional health outcomes related to addiction alongside challenges such as a loss of opportunities, legal repercussions or health complications.</li> </ul>
<p><b>1.8.15</b> Summarize actions to take to protect oneself against potential damage from exposure to the sun and other climate-related physical conditions.</p>	<p>In grades 6 through 8, students are encouraged to be increasingly proactive and responsible for their own health and safety. Some examples for exploring this concept include, but are not limited to, the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students might summarize risks related to exposure to the sun, including the facts and statistics about skin cancer, the causes and impact of skin cancer and strategies and behaviors to reduce individual risks for skin cancer.</li> <li>Students might summarize other climate-related safety precautions, such as those to take during extreme heat, extreme cold, thunderstorms, tornados, earthquakes or flooding.</li> </ul>

**Standard 2: Analyze influences that affect health and well-being, including but not limited to family, peers, culture, media and technology.**

**Rationale:** Health and well-being are affected by many, diverse influences within individual, interpersonal, community, societal and environmental contexts. This standard focuses on identifying and evaluating internal and external factors influencing health practices and behaviors. Influences on health and well-being may include but are not limited to: personal values and beliefs, perceived and social norms, family, peers, schools, communities, culture, media and technology, policies and the environment. This standard recognizes that the factors affecting health behaviors and outcomes, such as social determinants of health, are complex and impact people and communities differently. It also supports the individual’s ability to identify and use skills to recognize the types of influences, analyze the role of influences across a variety of wellness dimensions and manage influences on health and wellbeing in digital and in-person settings. This skill contributes to a better understanding of the connections between individual health, community health and health equity, which can strengthen use of other health skills, such as accessing information and advocacy.

Performance Indicators Grades 6-8	Clarifications
<p><b>2.8.1</b> Analyze the interrelationships between various influences on health and well-being.</p>	<p>In grades 6 through 8, students become increasingly responsible for their own health and well-being and begin to think analytically about what influences their choices. Students might analyze influences such as personal values and beliefs, perceived and social norms, family, peers, schools, communities, culture, media and technology, policies and the environment.</p>
<p><b>2.8.2</b> Analyze individual, interpersonal, community, societal and environmental factors that influence health behaviors, health outcomes and health equity.</p>	<p>In grades 6 through 8, students become increasingly aware of the complex systems they exist within and how those systems may impact health outcomes and access for themselves and for others. As students engage in critical thinking, they focus on analyzing how they can navigate their own health influences to improve their own health and the health of others. Some examples include, but are not limited to, the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Students might reflect on their own behaviors and examine what values, beliefs or ideas they have that influence those behaviors. They also might reflect on how peers, family, community or society impact their behaviors and outcomes.</li> <li>● Students might analyze how access to healthcare services can be impacted by cost, location, awareness or other barriers that may prevent individuals from receiving adequate health care.</li> </ul>

<p><b>2.8.3</b> Analyze how various influences affect the health and well-being of people and communities in different ways.</p>	<p>In grades 6 through 8, students continue to analyze how health and well-being are shaped by multiple factors within a community and that communities may be impacted differently by various factors. Some examples to explore this concept include, but are not limited to, the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students might provide examples of resources in the community (such as parks, grocery stores with fruits and vegetables or doctors) and explain how those resources support and influence the health of others.</li> <li>• Students might explain how positive family, peer, community or school relationships can support emotional and social well-being for different people in the community.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2.8.4</b> Apply strategies and resources to manage influences that impact health and well-being.</p>	<p>In grades 6 through 8, students take more responsibility and ownership for their own health and well-being. Students may identify internal influences such as feelings, thoughts or personal goals and external influences such as family, friends, advertisements, online content, community or the environment. Students might explore a specific health challenge (e.g., resolving a conflict between peers or overcoming an injury) and discuss what resources or strategies they might use to address the issue.</p>
<p><b>2.8.5</b> Analyze how sharing or posting personal information electronically on social media sites can negatively impact the health of self and others.</p>	<p>Because of the influence of social media sites, online games and smart phones on students’ mental and emotional health, this standard encourages conversations and guidance for middle school students to practice safe behaviors online that protect themselves as well as the well-being of others. This discussion might include considerations for online bullying or harassment, including exploration of how online activity may make people feel anxious or impact their view of others and themselves.</p>

**Standard 3: Access valid and reliable resources to support health and well-being of self and others.**

**Rationale:** Access to valid and reliable health information, products, services and other resources is essential to promoting health and well-being and preventing, detecting, managing and treating health issues and conditions. Access to valid and reliable information, products, services and other resources promotes health and well-being in individual, interpersonal, community, societal and environmental contexts. This standard focuses on identifying, accessing and evaluating valid and reliable resources, including managing misinformation and disinformation, within digital and in-person settings. Media and technology play a significant and increasing role in the way individuals learn about and connect with ourselves, others and the world. This standard engages students in critical thinking around media messages and resources, including how they are accessed, evaluated and used to support health and well-being.

<p><b>Performance Indicators</b></p> <p><b>Grades 6-8</b></p>	<p><b>Clarifications</b></p>
<p><b>3.8.1</b> Describe situations that may require support from trusted adults, other individuals and health professionals.</p>	<p>In grades 6 through 8, students are increasingly aware of the resources available to them through trusted adults in their families, schools and communities. Students might be assigned a situation such as a minor scrape during sports, feeling tired at school repeatedly, or needing to report an emergency and discuss how they might seek support from various trusted adults in their families, school or community.</p>
<p><b>3.8.2</b> Identify supports and barriers to accessing valid and reliable health information, products, services and other resources.</p>	<p>In grades 6 through 8, students begin to think critically about access to health resources in their families and communities. <b>Supports</b> can be defined in a student-friendly way in this context as “things that make it easier to access reliable health information, products, services, and resources. Examples of supports students might explore include, but are not limited to, access to a school nurse, the internet, trusted websites or local libraries. <b>Barriers</b> can be defined in a student-friendly way in this context as “things that make it harder to get the right health information or resources.” Examples of barriers include, but are not limited to, lack of internet access, limited availability of health services in the community or difficulty knowing what is true or false online.</p>
<p><b>3.8.3</b> Access valid and reliable sources of health information, products, services and other resources.</p>	<p>In grades 6 through 8, students become increasingly independent in their ability to access health information online or through other resources. As students learn how to identify credible sources and avoid misleading or false information, student-friendly definitions may be helpful. <b>Valid sources</b> are information that is accurate, based on facts and supported by evidence or expert opinion. <b>Reliable sources</b> are trustworthy, consistent and come from reputable organizations or professionals. Students might learn how and where to access valid and reliable sources online or from community experts.</p>

<p><b>3.8.4</b> Analyze the validity and reliability of health information, products, services and other resources.</p>	<p>In grades 6 through 8, students become increasingly independent in their ability to access health information online or through other resources. As students learn how to identify credible sources and avoid misleading or false information, student-friendly definitions may be helpful. <b>Valid sources</b> are information that is accurate, based on facts and supported by evidence or expert opinion. <b>Reliable sources</b> are trustworthy, consistent and come from reputable organizations or professionals. Students might explore verified, reputable websites and compare them with unverified online sources to discuss what makes each source valid or reliable.</p>
<p><b>3.8.5</b> Use strategies to manage misinformation and disinformation.</p>	<p>In grades 6 through 8, students begin to access health information independently online. <b>Misinformation</b> is incorrect but is shared without harmful intent. A student-friendly example might be, “A friend shares a social media post that claims that drinking lemon juice can cure a cold, but they don’t know it’s not true.” <b>Disinformation</b> is deliberate, purposeful false information shared to deceive or manipulate others. A student-friendly example might be, “A YouTube advertisement for a supplement for ‘an overnight six-pack’ makes exaggerated or false health claims to get people to buy it.” Strategies to manage misinformation and disinformation include, but are not limited to, questioning the source, looking for evidence in multiple sources or asking trusted adults or experts for their opinion.</p>

**Standard 4: Use interpersonal communication skills to support health and well-being of self and others.**

**Rationale:** Effective communication promotes health and well-being in individual, interpersonal, community, societal and environmental contexts. This standard focuses on expressive and receptive communication in digital and in-person settings. Combined with perspective-taking, communication skills help to recognize and strengthen interpersonal interactions, create and maintain relationships, express and interpret messages and manage conflict. Developing communication skills helps individuals to see how they communicate and the ways in which their communication affects those around them.

Performance Indicators Grades 6-8	Clarifications
<p><b>4.8.1</b> Use effective verbal and non-verbal communication skills across various modes of communication to support health and well-being of self and others.</p>	<p>As students continue developing relationships and identity in grades 6 through 8, they practice adapting communication methods to serve different contexts such as face-to-face interactions, digital platforms or written communication. They also become increasingly aware of communication differences based on the audience (communication with family, peers, teachers, strangers, etc.). Some examples to explore these concepts include, but are not limited to, the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Students might practice using different tones, volumes and word choices in verbal communication.</li> <li>● Students might practice noticing and interpreting non-verbal cues to better understand their own and others' feelings.</li> <li>● Students might practice self-advocacy with trusted adults when needed.</li> </ul>
<p><b>4.8.2</b> Apply active listening skills and strategies in a variety of interpersonal contexts.</p>	<p>In grades 6 through 8, students become increasingly aware of the importance of listening for strong relationships as well as academic or vocational success. <b>Active listening</b> is fully focusing on the speaker, understanding their message and responding thoughtfully. Some examples to practice active listening include, but are not limited to, the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Students might discuss what the signs of active listening are (not distracted by a device, making eye contact, etc.)</li> <li>● Students might discuss what it feels like when someone does not actively listen to them.</li> <li>● Students might practice listening without judgment and paraphrasing in a conversation with a peer.</li> </ul>
<p><b>4.8.3</b> Use various communication strategies to</p>	<p>In grades 6 through 8, students explore more ways to seek and offer support in respectful, appropriate ways. Some examples for practicing this skill include, but are not limited to, the following:</p>

<p>seek and offer support and assistance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Students might identify trusted sources of support in different areas of their life (school, home, sports, etc.)</li> <li>● Students might practice respectful ways to ask for help such as, “I need help with…” or “Can you explain…?”</li> <li>● Students might practice respectful ways to offer support such as, “How can I help?” or “I’m here if you need me.”</li> </ul>
<p><b>4.8.4</b> Demonstrate ways to communicate boundaries and consent for a variety of situations.</p>	<p>In grades 6 through 8, students continue developing healthy relationships with family and peers through understanding of boundaries and consent. <b>Boundaries</b> are the limits people set for themselves regarding physical, emotional and social interactions and can vary between individuals and situations. <b>Consent</b> is a clear and voluntary agreement to participate in an activity or interaction. Middle school students might practice the following skills related to boundaries and consent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Communicating boundaries</b> with “I” statements such as “I’m not comfortable with that.”</li> <li>● <b>Seeking consent</b> with phrases such as “Is it okay if I…?” or “Do you feel comfortable with this?”</li> </ul>
<p><b>4.8.5</b> Use refusal skills and strategies in a variety of situations.</p>	<p>In grades 6 through 8, students use refusal skills more proficiently and independently. <b>Refusal skills</b> are not simply saying “no,” but about expressing oneself calmly, using body language that shows confidence and maintaining personal boundaries when feeling pressured or uncomfortable. Some examples of refusal skills include, but are not limited to, the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Direct refusal:</b> Firmly and clearly saying, “No, I don’t want to do that.”</li> <li>● <b>Alternate behavior:</b> Suggesting an alternative such as “I don’t want to do that, but I would play a game instead.”</li> <li>● <b>Broken record technique:</b> Calmly responding with, “I said no thank you.”</li> <li>● <b>Walking away:</b> Physically moving away from a situation if necessary.</li> </ul>
<p><b>4.8.6</b> Use skills and strategies to prevent, manage or resolve conflict.</p>	<p>In grades 6 through 8, students may already understand that conflict is a natural part of relationships and is not always a bad thing, especially if handled with healthy skills and strategies. <b>Conflict</b> is a disagreement of interests, ideas or feelings between feelings or groups that may happen as a result of misunderstandings, competition, peer pressure or different opinions. Some examples for exploring this concept include, but are not limited to, the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Students might use conflict prevention skills such as active listening, clear language and showing empathy and respect for others’ differences.</li> <li>● Students might use conflict management skills such as using “I” statements to describe their feelings or needs.</li> <li>● Students might use a conflict resolution routine that involves identifying the problem, listening to one another, agreeing on a solution and apologizing (if needed).</li> </ul>

<p><b>4.8.7</b> Use collaboration skills in a variety of situations.</p>	<p>In grades 6 through 8, students may practice collaboration skills on group projects, team activities or in social or family interactions. <b>Collaboration</b> is working together towards a common goal while valuing the contributions of all team members. Some examples of collaboration skills include, but are not limited to, the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Active Listening:</b> Paying attention to others' ideas and showing understanding.</li> <li>● <b>Clear Communication:</b> Expressing ideas and feelings in a respectful and constructive way.</li> <li>● <b>Flexibility:</b> Being open to different opinions and willing to adapt to changes.</li> <li>● <b>Conflict Resolution:</b> Addressing disagreements calmly and finding solutions.</li> <li>● <b>Accountability:</b> Taking responsibility for one's role and contributions.</li> </ul>
<p><b>4.8.8</b> Use negotiation skills in a variety of situations.</p>	<p>In grades 6 through 8, students learn more complex communication skills helpful for building strong relationships and achieving positive outcomes in personal, academic and social settings. <b>Negotiation</b> is a discussion aimed at reaching an agreement when people have different ideas, needs or preferences. Some examples of negotiation skills include, but are not limited to, the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Active Listening:</b> Understanding the other person's perspective and feelings.</li> <li>● <b>Clear Communication:</b> Expressing thoughts, needs, and concerns respectfully.</li> <li>● <b>Problem-Solving:</b> Identifying shared goals and brainstorming creative solutions.</li> <li>● <b>Flexibility:</b> Being willing to compromise and adapt when needed.</li> <li>● <b>Emotional Regulation:</b> Staying calm and respectful even during disagreements.</li> </ul>
<p><b>4.8.9</b> Demonstrate strategies to communicate with others with different perspectives and values.</p>	<p>In grades 6 through 8, students become increasingly aware of diverse perspectives and backgrounds in the world and in their social and academic environments. This is a rich opportunity to build positive relationships, foster mutual understanding and resolve disagreements respectfully. Some examples of strategies to communicate with others with different perspectives and values include, but are not limited to, the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Students might ask respectful questions to clarify and learn more about others' perspectives.</li> <li>● Students might actively listen to focus on truly hearing what the other person is saying without interrupting.</li> <li>● Students might practice managing emotions and staying calm to maintain respect in the conversation.</li> <li>● Students might practice using "I" statements to express opinions without blaming or attacking others.</li> </ul>
<p><b>4.8.10</b> Demonstrate ways to communicate empathy and compassion.</p>	<p><b>Empathy</b> is the ability to understand and share the feelings of another person or seeing things from their perspective. <b>Compassion</b> is the action that follows empathy, which involves showing kindness and a desire to help others who are experiencing difficulty or pain. Some examples to practice empathy and compassion include, but are not limited to, the following:</p>

- Students might discuss why empathy and compassion are essential for healthy relationships and a healthy world.
- Students might discuss what it feels like when empathy or compassion are not extended.
- Students might practice ways of showing support or validating others without judgment.

**Standard 5: Use a decision-making process to support health and well-being of self and others.**

**Rationale:** Effective decision-making is needed to identify, adopt and maintain health-promoting behaviors. This standard includes skills and steps integral to the process of effective decision-making to support health and wellbeing. The decision-making process enables collaboration to improve quality of life within individual, interpersonal, community, societal, cultural and environmental contexts.

<b>Performance Indicators</b> <b>Grades 6-8</b>	<b>Clarifications</b>
<b>5.8.1</b> Explain how the use of a decision-making process affects health and well-being.	<p>In grades 6 through 8, students become increasingly independent in making some daily decisions related to their health and well-being. Students may need to be explicitly taught a decision-making process. An example of a decision-making process for health and well-being might include these steps:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Identify the decision to be made.</li><li>2. Gather information and consider options.</li><li>3. Predict potential outcomes for each option.</li><li>4. Choose the best option based on considerations.</li><li>5. Act on the decision.</li><li>6. Reflect on the results.</li></ol> <p>Students might practice these steps with a health decision they need to make (e.g., adhering to a treatment plan after illness or injury, developing better habits for sleep and rest, or choosing how to handle a conflict between friends).</p>
<b>5.8.2</b> Determine when health-related situations require the application of a thoughtful decision-making process.	<p>In grades 6 through 8, students become increasingly aware of the need for thoughtful decision-making for complex health decisions that may have multiple outcomes. The steps listed in 5.8.1 might serve students in thoughtful decision-making. Students might compare simple decisions like choosing to brush their teeth to more complex decisions like choosing how to handle bullying.</p>

<p><b>5.8.3</b> Use an individual, supported, or collaborative decision-making process to maintain or improve health and well-being.</p>	<p>As students become more aware of complex, thoughtful decision-making needs in grades 6 through 8, they become increasingly aware of the need for supported or collaborative decision-making. Students might identify how different situations require different types of collaboration (i.e., an infected cut requires medical attention while a friend who is experiencing harm requires support from a parent or school staff member).</p>
<p><b>5.8.4</b> Evaluate how various options may affect health-related outcomes at individual, interpersonal, community, societal, cultural and environmental levels.</p>	<p>In grades 6 through 8, students become more aware of the broader impact of their decisions, not just on themselves but on others and their communities. Students are encouraged to evaluate their options through multiple lenses including, but not limited to, the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Individual level:</b> Students might evaluate how options affect one person’s health.</li> <li>● <b>Interpersonal level:</b> Students might evaluate how options can affect relationships with family, friends or peers.</li> <li>● <b>Community level:</b> Students might evaluate how options affect a larger group of people.</li> <li>● <b>Societal level:</b> Students might evaluate how options affect widespread trends or issues.</li> <li>● <b>Cultural level:</b> Students might evaluate how options affect practices, beliefs or values of different groups.</li> <li>● <b>Environmental level:</b> Students might evaluate how options impact the natural environment.</li> </ul>
<p><b>5.8.5</b> Identify supports and barriers that affect decision-making at individual, interpersonal, community, societal, cultural and environmental levels.</p>	<p>In grades 6 through 8, students become increasingly aware of the complex systems they exist within and how various supports and barriers may impact decision-making for themselves as well as others. <b>Supports</b> are factors that help positive decision-making while <b>barriers</b> are factors that make decision-making more difficult. Students may use the levels described in 5.8.4 to consider how different individuals within a community or society may have supports (e.g., personal values, knowledge, self-efficacy, access to resources, public health initiatives) or barriers (e.g., lack of emotional support, negative relationships or family dynamics, lack of access to healthcare, cultural or social stigma related to mental health).</p>
<p><b>5.8.6</b> Evaluate the results of a health-related decision on self and others.</p>	<p>In grades 6 through 8, students move beyond reflecting on how a health-related decision impacted them as an individual and begin evaluating how health-related decisions impact themselves and others. Students might discuss how their decision contributed to one of the dimensions of wellness (e.g., choosing to join a new extracurricular activity may lead to initial anxiety but ultimately may help with a sense of belonging at school, impacting the emotional/mental and social dimensions).</p>

**Standard 6: Use a goal-setting process to support health and well-being of self and others.**

**Rationale:** Goal-setting is a process to support short- and long-term health and well-being goals. In addition to achieving a goal, a goal-setting process includes using practices, habits and routines in daily life. This standard includes the processes needed to plan, reach and reflect on health goals. Setting goals is a flexible process and considers personal and social factors affecting health and well-being. Goal-setting supports aspirations and future planning for health and well-being within individual, interpersonal, community, societal, cultural and environmental contexts.

Performance Indicators Grades 6-8	Clarifications
<p><b>6.8.1</b> Assess personal health and well-being to identify focus areas for goal setting.</p>	<p>In grades 6 through 8, as students become increasingly independent and responsible for their own health and well-being, they learn to evaluate different dimensions of wellness (see <b>1.8.2</b>). Students might use an assessment to help them set realistic, personalized health goals and develop plans to achieve those goals. This assessment might give students an opportunity to reflect on their health strengths as well as areas for growth. When selecting or developing a self-assessment for personal health and well-being, teachers should be mindful of cultural practices related to health behaviors as well as sensitive to student medical needs and privacy.</p>
<p><b>6.8.2</b> Analyze when individual, supported, or collaborative goal setting is appropriate.</p>	<p>As students set health-related goals in grades 6 through 8, they become increasingly aware of the need for supported or collaborative goal-setting. Students might identify how different goals require different types of collaboration (i.e., a goal for getting more rest may require asking for family support while a goal for monitoring time spent online may require support from friends).</p>
<p><b>6.8.3</b> Develop a goal and explain how it supports health and well-being.</p>	<p>In grades 6 through 8, students set more individualized, specific health-related goals and understand how those goals support overall health and well-being. Students might identify a dimension of wellness they want to improve from their self-assessment (see <b>1.8.2</b>) and use that reflection to set an individual goal. Goals might include spending more time moving, getting more sleep, spending less time on screens or taking deep breaths when feeling upset. When supporting students with setting health goals, teachers should be mindful of cultural practices related to health behaviors as well as sensitive to student medical needs. Goals focusing on healthy daily habits are ideal.</p> <p>Students might engage in the SMART Goal Framework that supports setting <b>Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound</b> goals for health.</p>

<p><b>6.8.4</b> Develop a plan that addresses supports and barriers to attaining a health-related goal.</p>	<p>In grades 6 through 8, students might need to be explicitly taught how to develop a plan to meet a health-related goal that addresses supports and barriers to meeting the goal. Teachers might consider using a goal-setting template that may include elements such as, but not limited to: the goal, action steps, resources or people needed, supports to meet the goal, possible barriers to meeting the goal or a progress tracker. Students might find a model from a teacher helpful for developing their own plan.</p>
<p><b>6.8.5</b> Monitor progress to determine whether a health-related goal or plan should be maintained or adjusted.</p>	<p>In grades 6 through 8, students continue tracking progress by regularly checking how close they are to reaching their goal, identifying successes and recognizing areas where they may need to adjust their plan. Students might use a checklist, journal or chart to track progress towards their health-related goal. If students have difficulty meeting a goal, they might adjust the goal to make components of it more attainable.</p>
<p><b>6.8.6</b> Examine the goal-setting process and outcomes on health and well-being.</p>	<p>In grades 6 through 8, students learn to look back at their goal-setting process to understand what worked, what didn't and how they can improve their process or health and well-being in the future. This is a critical thinking task that may require support from teachers using questions including, but not limited to, "What worked well? What helped you stay on track? What helped you stay motivated? What made it hard to reach your goal? How might you change your plan for your next goal?"</p>

**Standard 7: Demonstrate practices and behaviors to support health and well-being of self and others.**

**Rationale:** Developing health practices and behaviors can promote health and well-being over the lifespan and reduce risk to self and others. Practicing health behaviors is critical to incorporating health-promoting habits and routines into all dimensions of wellness. Due to the increasing influence of technology, it is crucial to develop and apply practices and behaviors that support media balance and digital wellness. This standard promotes individual and collective responsibility by encouraging the exploration and practice of skills and processes that support health and well-being in individual, interpersonal, community, societal and environmental contexts.

Performance Indicators Grades 6-8	Clarifications
<p><b>7.8.1</b> Examine supports and barriers to health-related practices and behaviors.</p>	<p>In grades 6 through 8, students become increasingly aware of the complex systems they exist within and how various supports and barriers may impact health-related practices and behaviors for themselves as well as others. <b>Supports</b> are factors that help positive practices and behaviors while <b>barriers</b> are factors that make practices and behaviors more difficult. Students may examine supports (e.g., personal values, knowledge, self-efficacy, access to resources, public health initiatives) or barriers (e.g., lack of emotional support, negative relationships or family dynamics, lack of access to healthcare, cultural or social stigma related to mental health).</p>
<p><b>7.8.2</b> Analyze practices and behaviors that support personal and community health and well-being.</p>	<p>In grades 6 through 8, students become more aware of the broader impact of their practices and behaviors, not just on themselves but on others and their communities. Students might reflect on their practices and consider how their choices impact others (e.g., how getting plenty of rest impacts their family or classmates or how choosing not to use a substance impacts family members).</p>
<p><b>7.8.3</b> Demonstrate practices and behaviors that support personal and community health and well-being.</p>	<p>In grades 6 through 8, students not only identify these practices and behaviors but also demonstrate the practices in action. Students might practice health-promoting behaviors such as drinking plenty of water or expressing their feelings respectfully and then reflect on how those behaviors impact others.</p>

**Standard 8: Advocate to promote health and well-being of self and others.**

**Rationale:** Advocacy skills are critical for promoting health and well-being within individual, interpersonal, community, societal and environmental contexts. This standard helps learners develop and apply skills and strategies to increase agency and advocacy for self and others. Practicing advocacy helps students be informed, civic-minded members of their community, who are inclusive of individual, cultural, historical and other differences.

Performance Indicators Grades 6-8	Clarifications
<b>8.8.1</b> Analyze opportunities to advocate for the health and well-being of individuals, families and communities.	In grades 6 through 8, students think critically about real-life situations where advocacy can improve health and well-being for others in their family, school and community. Advocacy is taking action to promote health and well-being. Students might analyze opportunities to advocate for others' health and well-being such as stress management, encouraging more physical activity or addressing bullying at school.
<b>8.8.2</b> Determine when individual or collaborative advocacy is appropriate to promote health and well-being.	In grades 6 through 8, students continue connecting the concepts of collaboration and communication to the concept of advocacy. Students might explain how kind and compassionate communication (see Standard 4) and collaboration (see Standards 4, 5 and 6) can improve advocacy efforts.
<b>8.8.3</b> Adapt advocacy skills and strategies for a variety of audiences and contexts.	For a list of advocacy skills and strategies learned in grades 3 through 5, see <b>8.5.3</b> .  In grades 6 through 8, students expand on advocacy skills and strategies learned previously by learning to tailor communication and approach to fit the needs, preferences and circumstances of different audiences. This skill requires analyzing the audience and context they might be trying to reach with their advocacy. For example, if advocating to younger children, students might use simple and clear language. If advocating to school staff or community members, students might use formal language or help adults understand how young people view health issues.
<b>8.8.4</b> Demonstrate advocacy skills and strategies to promote the health and well-being of self and others.	In grades 6 through 8, students refine their advocacy skills to become increasingly strategic. Students might identify issues that need attention in their school or community, access valid and reliable information related to the issue, develop a clear advocacy message and then communicate the message clearly with an intended audience. Students might consider public speaking, creating posters, videos or social media campaigns or organizing events like health fairs or awareness days to advocate for their identified issue.
<b>8.8.5</b> Evaluate the effectiveness of advocacy efforts for promoting health and well-being.	Just as students learn to reflect on their decision-making and goal setting, students in grades 6 through 8 likewise evaluate the effectiveness of their advocacy efforts. Some questions students might use to evaluate their efforts include, but are not limited to, the following, "Was the message clear and persuasive? Did the effort inspire action or change? What could be improved for further efforts?"