

Success Story

IRWIN PARK ELEMENTARY
West Vancouver, BC



Action Schools! BC™

Irwin Park Elementary, a West Vancouver school of more than 350 grades K to 7 students, has been registered with Action Schools! BC since 2006. Action Schools! BC is a framework for action, providing diverse physical activity, physical education and healthy eating opportunities in six Action Zones.

The **School Environment Zone** focuses on making healthy choices the easy choices by creating healthy living policy supporting safe and inclusive school environments. The school's Action Committee, led by grade 3 teacher Maria Yioldassis, continually seeks healthy living professional development opportunities. An example is the Action Schools! BC Classroom Action Workshop, which provided staff with creative, alternative physical activities that can be integrated throughout the school day. The accompanying Classroom Action Bins of teaching resources and equipment are used daily in classrooms. Staff has also attended workshops on yoga and circuit training taught by local health professionals who are also students' parents.



The **Scheduled Physical Education Zone** supports the BC Ministry of Education's prescribed learning outcomes. Students at Irwin Park have PE several times a week and are exposed to many sports. Due to the proximity to many recreational venues, outdoor sports are an important component of the PE curriculum. At least twice a year, students ice skate, snowshoe, cross-country or downhill ski.

The **Classroom Action Zone** provides physical and healthy eating activities that can be integrated throughout the school day. The complimentary bins provided by Action Schools! BC were so popular that the Parent Advisory Council purchased a few more so that each class could have its own. The DVDs in the bins are a favourite and each morning the grade 1s and 2s get moving to the 65 Energy Blasts DVD. Students use the equipment in class and have access to skipping

ropes, balls and Chinese jump ropes at recess and lunch.

The staff at Irwin Park is highly engaged in the **Family and Community Zone** which fosters the development of partnerships. Examples include bringing in community dance and gymnastics instructors to work with students, offering a monthly Family Fun Fitness Night, and involving parents in the organization and delivery of snacks from the BC School

Fruit and Vegetable Nutritional Program. Also, the resource teacher integrates physical activity and healthy eating lessons into special needs students' days. One lesson involves the preparation of nutritious foods that students are encouraged to share with their families.

Physical activity is also supported in the **Extra-Curricular Zone** – before and after school, and during recess and lunch. Students can join in on the Friday morning run club, lunchtime intramurals, after school sports teams, and can track their steps using the rotating class set of pedometers. The school booked an Action Schools! BC Outdoor Student Leadership Workshop to teach a student group how to lead playground games. Not only are students active but teachers are too, and a staff lunch running club has been established.

Irwin Park thrives in the **School Spirit Zone**. The school has done a walk to raise money for UNICEF and takes part annually in the Terry Fox Run, Jump Rope for Heart event and a Sports Day. In the school's springtime "Action Month", students are encouraged to track their daily physical activity on sneaker cut-outs from the Action Schools! BC Classroom Action Resource which they then post on a bulletin board.

The staff at Irwin Park is so successful at promoting healthy living to the students because they know its benefits first hand and serve as role models. By taking advantage of all that Action Schools! BC has to offer, Irwin Park Elementary is excelling at integrating healthy living into the fabric of their school community in unique and creative ways.



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