

OCTOBER 2023

Services to Schools

A healthy school contributes to the safety and health of our children and youth, school staff and the school community. For more information on Interior Health resources and supports for healthy schools see [Interior Health Services to Schools](#).



Message from Dr Fatemeh Sabet, Medical Health Officer, School Lead

It is great to see everyone excited for start of the New School Year. Thanks for your continued efforts in keeping our schools safe and the place to thrive for our young people. Vaccination continues to be our best line of protection against communicable diseases. The coming respiratory season vaccination campaign is a great opportunity for all of us to increase our collective protection and keep our schools and communities safe. It helps us keep the very important social connections that are empowering our learning, growth and mental wellness. It is more important than ever to support our children and youth to maintain their mental wellness through strong connections with their families, school communities and to find safe spaces to develop their thriving social environment.

Please know that Interior Health is here to support you in your efforts to mitigate disease transmission in the school setting. If you have questions regarding a case of communicable disease in your school, contact your public health nurse for assistance at the link listed below. For urgent matters, **or those beyond an individual school level**, we invite superintendents as well as independent and First Nations administration to reach out during regular business hours to their geographical MHO through HealthySchools@interiorhealth.ca. If you have questions outside of regular business hours you can contact the On-Call Medical Health Officer at: 1-866-457-5648.

The following may be helpful COVID-19 resources for schools:

BC Centre for Disease Control

[Public Health Communicable Disease Guidance for K-12 Schools](#)
[K-12 Schools and COVID-19 Website](#)

Ministry of Education

[Communicable Disease Prevention in K-12 Schools](#)
[Provincial Communicable Disease Guidelines for K-12 School Settings](#)
[Safe and Healthy Schools Website](#)

School Contacts

As per the School Act, Section 89, these are the Interior Health School Medical Health Officers (MHOs):

Dr. Carol Fenton: Thompson Cariboo, Princeton Dr. Stephane Trepanier: Thompson Cariboo
Dr. Jonathan Malo: North Okanagan, Shuswap Dr. Silvina Mema: Central Okanagan
Dr. Sue Pollock: South Okanagan, Kootenay Boundary
Dr. Fatemeh Sabet: East Kootenay, parts of Kootenay Boundary

For specific school-based questions: please contact your local [Public Health Office](#)

For district-level questions: please contact: HealthySchools@interiorhealth.ca

Healthy Start Healthy Schools Team:

Valerie Pitman (Program Specialist) Valerie.Pitman@interiorhealth.ca
Brenda Marsman (Program Specialist) Brenda.Marsman@interiorhealth.ca
Rebecca Gibbons (Manager) Rebecca.Gibbons@interiorhealth.ca

Immunization

Respiratory Diseases Season & Delivery of School Immunization Services

Public health nurses will continue to adhere to the [COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for K-12 School Settings](#) guidelines and will utilize best practice recommendations when planning the delivery of school immunizations and entering the school setting.

Vaccine Status Reporting Regulation

The [Vaccination Status Reporting Regulation](#) is a law under the Public Health Act. This regulation requires that parents or guardians report the vaccination status of their school-age children to their local health authority. Parents and guardians are responsible for gathering and providing missing immunization records to their local health center. Use the [Vaccination Status Indicator](#) to find out whether Public Health has your child's immunization record. Immunization records can be submitted by parents or guardians to immunizationrecord.gov.bc.ca or the local health unit.

Class Lists

For Independent Classes Not Using STIX

Public Health Nurses covering independent schools NOT using STIX (student transfer information exchange) must continue to collect class lists from their school. The school nurse will request these lists two times per year - September and June. These class lists must now include all grades that attend the school (including any homeschooled students) to assist with the Vaccine Status Reporting Regulation. Please note for all other schools, some nurses may still ask for a basic class list to use as a working document in order to help organize classes for immunization. We would appreciate your assistance in informing schools that sharing class lists is an approved process, especially when requesting updated contact information (authority of s. 79 of the School Act), and by virtue of the [Student Records Disclosure Order](#), and as per [section 9 \(3\) of the Independent School Regulation](#)

School Immunizations

Consents

Personalized consents are used for students in both public and independent schools in all areas of Interior Health. To aid with the transfer of current student information from the school data base to the health data base, please ensure student's most current address and phone number are up to date. Personalized consents provide the opportunity for students to be offered school immunizations and any other vaccines they may be eligible for (COVID-19 vaccine will not be offered in schools this year). Paper copies of school immunization consent forms are sent home and supporting documents are emailed to parents and students via schools. Other information regarding school immunization can be found on the [Interior Health website](#).

Mature Minor Consent (MMC)

Students can provide [MMC for immunization](#) as per the legislation under the Infants Act. MMC stipulates that a student who demonstrates an understanding of the benefits and risks of a health service can consent or refuse that service independent of a parent or representative.

Kids Boost Immunity

A [grade 6 lesson plan](#) is available to assist teachers in preparing their students for school immunization clinics. A grade 6 teacher handout is available to help prepare teachers for immunization day and will be provided to grade 6 teachers by Public Health.



MedicAlert Program

The **MedicAlert® Foundation Canada** is a charitable organization and the leading provider of emergency medical information services linked to customized medical bracelets and necklaces. Anyone who needs MedicAlert but is limited due to income can apply for the IDEA program for full or partial subsidy. Application information is provided on their website [here](#) or by calling: **1-800-668-1507**. Unfortunately the No Child Without program has been discontinued.

Diabetes & Glucagon

School Public Health Nurses (PHNs) are available to provide general diabetes presentations to all school staff upon request.

➤ The presentation may be offered in-person, or virtually.

PHNs offer in-person staff training and practice sessions in glucagon administration to 2 to 4 designated staff in schools when parents of students with diabetes request glucagon be administered as part of the medical alert plan.

➤ Glucagon is available as a nasal powder or injection.

➤ The presentation may also be [viewed](#) on our IH YouTube Channel, however it does not replace in-person training provided by the PHN.

Parents are responsible for providing glucagon to their child's school. **Schools are responsible** to select staff for training and alert the school PHN that training is needed. More information can be found on the [Interior Health website](#) and [Diabetes at School](#) website.

Seizures and Epilepsy

PHNs are available to provide general seizure presentations to school staff upon request. The presentation may be offered in-person, or virtually.

Nursing Support Services (NSS)

[NSS staff](#) support children with special health care needs in the school setting. They will provide training and ongoing monitoring to school staff for delegated care needs of individual students requiring assistance with gastrostomy tube meals, Type 1 Diabetes, seizure management, clean intermittent catheterization, and oral suctioning. For more information see the [Interior Health website](#) and [BC Children's Hospital](#) website.

Parents are responsible for their child's care during the school day until training of school staff is completed.

A list of the NSS nurses can be found on the School Staff page [here](#).

Anaphylaxis

Anaphylaxis training is offered to school staff by Public Health Nurses once or twice a year, and upon request. Nurses have demonstrator units of auto-injectors to share with staff during the training session. Another option available to school staff is to complete the 30 minute free on-line [self-learning module](#) from www.allergyaware.ca.

Epinephrine is the only treatment shown to stop an anaphylactic reaction, and the only treatment that should be given in the school setting. All high-risk children should have two auto-injectors available in the school setting.

Allerject, Epi-pen and Emerade auto-injector are now available in Canada.

More information can be found here:

[Anaphylaxis Protection Order](#)

[Anaphylaxis in Schools and Other Settings, 3rd edition](#)

[Ministry of Education – Anaphylaxis](#)

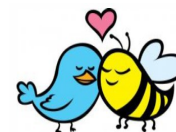
Free Condoms for Secondary Schools

Free condoms are available to all secondary schools and alternate schools in our health authority. These condoms are available to support contraceptive education, sexually transmitted disease prevention, and pregnancy prevention. Information and order forms can be found on the public website: [free condom supply form](#) . Orders can be picked up at the local Health Centre.



Sexual Health Resources

The Ministry of Education [resources](#) can be enhanced with information found on the [Interior Health website](#).



The Interior Health [Sexual Health Teaching Toolkit](#) has links to lesson plans by grade and topic to help facilitate important discussion around consent, the gender spectrum, physical development, communicable diseases and human reproduction.

Schools in BC are required to provide menstrual products to all students who may require them. Helpful information about products that can be considered for your schools can be found at: [Menstrual product information for schools](#).

Evidence-based Substance Use Resources

This June the BC Coroners Service released a report on [Youth Unregulated Drug Toxicity Deaths in British Columbia](#). Tragically, the report shows that youth unregulated drug toxicity deaths (overdoses) have increased since 2016 and are now the **top cause of unnatural death among youth under the age of 19 in BC**. Now is a good time to evaluate your school's approach to substance use.

The Interior Health Youth Harm Reduction Team has a number of resources for schools including:

[Safety First: Real Drug Education for Teens](#) - a curricular aligned learning resource to provide teens with honest and scientifically accurate information on alcohol, tobacco /vaping, cannabis and more.

[Naloxone blue kit program](#) – this program provides free naloxone kits to schools who implement an overdose response plan.

[Youth harm reduction toolkit](#) – one-stop shop to find credible substance use information, resources and tools.

Check out the Youth Harm Reduction Team's [program brochure](#) for more information. Reach out to the team - harmreduction.coordinator@interiorhealth.ca

Head Lice



Information and tips for schools dealing with head lice can be found on the [Interior Health Website](#).

We appreciate your assistance in informing schools that the most up to date resources can be found here online.

Public Health Nurses may be able to provide head lice education sessions to staff and parent groups. Please contact your [school PHN](#) to see when this can be arranged.

Dental, Hearing and Vision

[Kindergarten vision screening](#): this service is on hold. Vision testing information can be found on the Interior Health [website](#).

[Dental Program staff](#) will accept referrals for any student with active pain and/or infection. In-school Kindergarten dental surveys occur every three years. The next one is planned for 2025

Hearing service locations are found on the Interior Health [website](#).

Nutrition & Food Security

Public Health Dietitians are available to support school districts working on initiatives related to meal programs, food security, food literacy, the school food environment, and healthy school policies. Public Health Dietitians work with Health Promoting School Coordinators, where available, to provide resources, information about funding opportunities, review grant applications, and connect districts to local food resources. They can also offer consultation and expertise on district initiatives.

Visit Interior Health's School Nutrition [web page](#) for information on:

- Teaching Food and Nutrition and Popular School Food Initiatives such as:
 - [Teach Food First](#): An Educators Toolkit for Exploring Canada's Food Guide
 - [Hands on Food](#): Lessons plans using food to teach curriculum
 - [Educational Resources](#) (K-12) (BC Agriculture in the Classroom)
 - [BC School Fruit and Vegetable Nutrition Program](#)
 - [Farm to School BC](#)
- Healthy Fundraising For schools
- Meal Programs and Food Guidelines



Disordered eating is common among youth and can go unnoticed for many months and years by parents, families, and school staff. School staff with concerns can find more information in the following document: [Guidelines for Helping a Student with a Suspected Eating Disorder](#). For information on Eating Disorder Treatment Services and resources, visit: the [Interior Health website](#).

Tobacco & Vapour Prevention and Control Resources

Tobacco and Vapour Reduction Coordinators provide support to tobacco and vaping prevention and reduction initiatives. They offer district wide consultation on policy, strategy and legislation compliance; training to school staff to assist students to prevent and/or reduce risks from the use of tobacco and vapour products; and information and resources for schools and educators.

Contact the Tobacco and Vapour Reduction team at tobaccoandvape@interiorhealth.ca. For more information and resources, visit the [Tobacco and Vaping Information for Schools](#) section of our website.

Cessation Support and Information:

- [BC Smoking Cessation Program](#)
- [Quash App - Lung Health Foundation](#)
- [QuitNow - BC Lung Foundation](#)
- [Respecting Tobacco - FNHA](#)
- [Vaping Toolkit for Schools - IH](#)
- [Quitting Tobacco or Vaping - IH](#)
- [Tobacco & Vaping Information for Teens - IH](#)



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Mental Health Resources

Accessing Services and Resources

Recognizing that student and staff mental health is a priority, the following are some resources that may be helpful:

[Interior Health Mental Health and Substance Use Website](#)

Service access and navigation support: 310-MHSU (**310-6478**)

[Accessing Mental Health and Substance Use Services](#)

[Foundry Virtual BC](#)

[KeltyMentalHealth.ca](#)

[FamilySmart.ca](#)



Indigenous Youth Wellness (PHSA)

Resources to support Aboriginal youth in British Columbia in the areas of culture, identity, education and learning about Indigenous history, and mental health and substance use.

<http://www.indigenouslyouthwellness.ca/resources>

Métis Nation BC – Métis Youth Resources

The Métis Nation BC has a variety of resources to support Métis youth in cultural, employment, wellness, and community.

<https://www.mnbc.ca/youth>

FNHA First Nations Health Benefits Mental Wellness:

First Nations youth in British Columbia have access to a variety of mental wellness supports through the FNHA First Nations Health Benefits Program.

<https://www.fnha.ca/benefits/mental-health>

Educator Resources

[Foundry BC – Resources and Workshops for School Professionals](#)

[Kelty Mental Health - Mental Health Literacy Resources and Curriculum for the Classroom](#)

[Interior Health Website- Positive Mental Health Teaching Toolkit](#)

[Anxiety Canada - Educator Resources](#)

[Jack.org - Provincial and National Resources](#)

[Province of British Columbia- Erase](#)

PreVenture

Interior Health supports PreVenture, a personality focused, strengths based, targeted program delivered in schools. PreVenture workshops are delivered to select students in grade 7 or 8 by trained facilitators.

These workshops result in evidence based impacts around reducing substance use, bullying and experiences of psychosocial behaviours. Currently Interior Health offers the program in eight school districts (SDs 6, 19, 22, 27, 58, 67, 73 & 83), and is exploring expansion into independent and First Nations schools. You can find out more information on the [PreVenture website](#) . If you're curious about how your school district can be involved, you can email our team at: healthyschools@interiorhealth.ca

Injury Prevention



[The Concussion Awareness Training Tool \(CATT\)](#) is a series of free online educational modules and resources that provide training in recognizing, treating and managing concussions for school professionals as well as parents, players, and coaches. Good concussion management is pivotal to minimizing the risk of brain damage and may reduce long-term health consequences.

The [CATT E-Learning Module for School Professionals](#) is a course that provides information needed to respond and manage concussions.

[The Canadian Guideline on Concussion in Sport](#) has been developed to ensure that athletes with a suspected concussion receive timely and appropriate care, and proper management to allow them to return to their sport. The guideline is intended for use by athletes, parents, coaches, officials, teachers, trainers, and licensed healthcare professionals.

Healthy from the Start Program

Healthy From The Start (HFS) is a universal prenatal program offered through Interior Health. Teachers and counsellors are encouraged to offer pregnant students with information to allow them to connect with this resource. Information can be found on the [Prenatal Connections](#) section of the IH Website. Additional Information can also be found at: [Pregnancy and Childbirth](#).

Students can self-refer to HFS by calling toll free at 1-855-868-7710 or filling out the secure HFS online form at: [Healthy From The Start eForm](#).

When a pregnant student is referred to HFS, they will speak with a public health nurse, receive valuable information and get connected with programs and resources available in their community. Receiving early prenatal care and connecting with supports and services is especially important with pregnancy in youth.



Healthy Communities

Radon Screening

Radon is a serious indoor air quality issue within the BC interior. Children are vulnerable to radon through chronic exposure potentially increasing the risk of lung cancer later in life. Testing for radon at schools and at home is the only way to know if levels of radon exceed recommended thresholds. Mitigation can be simple. Interior Health recommends that all schools in our region prioritize radon testing and include radon in their routine school maintenance schedules. Parents and guardians are encouraged to inquire about radon test result data from school administration. The best time to do the 3 month test is during the cold months, from October through March. Testing is easy. For more information on Radon Gas and testing see: [The Interior Health Public Website](#). For inquiries about school test kits reach out to HealthySchools@interiorhealth.ca.

Active and Safe Routes to School

Walking and cycling to school is an important way for children and youth to add physical activity to their daily routine. Members of our Healthy Communities team can assist and support School Districts, parents and other community stakeholders with Safe Routes to School planning. For more information please contact Healthy Communities at hbe@interiorhealth.ca.

Aboriginal Resources

Indigenous Youth Wellness (PHSA):

Resources to support Aboriginal youth in British Columbia in the areas of culture, identity, education and learning about Indigenous history, and mental health and substance use.

<http://www.indigenouslyouthwellness.ca/resources>

Métis Nation BC – Métis Youth Resources:

The Métis Nation BC has a variety of resources to support Métis youth in cultural, employment, wellness, and community.

<https://www.mnbc.ca/youth>

FNHA First Nations Health Benefits Mental Wellness:

First Nations youth in British Columbia have access to a variety of mental wellness supports through the FNHA First Nations Health Benefits Program.

<https://www.fnha.ca/benefits/mental-health>

Interior Health Aboriginal Partnerships: The IH Aboriginal Partnerships portfolio supports initiatives across the health authority to be more culturally safe, inclusive, and equitable. For more information about the work of the team or to connect:

[Aboriginal Peoples, Families & Communities | Interior Health](#)

Additional Resources:

[School District Aboriginal Education Programs Contacts](#)

[BC Indigenous Education Enhancement Agreements](#)

[BC Tripartite Education Agreement: Supporting First Nation Student Success 2018](#)

[Jordan's Principle in BC Information](#)

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) and Indigenous communities](#)



Healthy Schools

The Healthy Schools BC website includes includes resources, success stories, and funding opportunities to assist with creating a healthy school. More information is available at:

healthyschoolsbc.ca.



Interior Health funding for **Health Promoting Schools Coordinators** continues in 15 of the 16 public school districts and some First Nations schools in the South Okanagan.

The [HPS Coordinators Contact List](#) is updated twice yearly.

The list of [Public Health Office](#) phone numbers by school can be found on the IH Public Website.

