



Interior Health

Public Health News

INFORMATION AND RESOURCES FOR SCHOOLS

October 2024

Health and well-being for all

Quality | Integrity | Compassion | Safety

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Land Acknowledgement

Interior Health would like to recognize and acknowledge the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the Dãkelh Dené, Ktunaxa, Nlaka'pamux, Secwépemc, St'át'imc, Syilx, and T̕silhqot'in Nations where we live, learn, collaborate and work together.



Message from Dr. Sanaz Vaseghi, Medical Health Officer

I hope you had a wonderful summer and are feeling excited for a new school year.

As the school year gets underway, we want to thank you for your continued efforts to build healthy, safe and supportive school environments for your students, staff and school communities. We value our ongoing partnership with education leaders and are committed to our shared vision supporting young people to reach their goals, now and into the future.

At this time, we wanted to remind you of some of the health services and resources available to school-aged children through Interior Health's Public Health Services. If you have questions or would like to learn more about what Interior Health can offer, please refer to the below contacts.

Wishing you a healthy and engaging school year ahead,

Dr. Sanaz Vaseghi

School Contacts

❖ As per the School Act, Section 89, these are the Interior Health School Medical Officers:

Dr. Andy Delli Pizzi (Thompson Cariboo)

Dr. Silvina Mema (Central Okanagan)

Dr. Jonathan Malo (North Okanagan)

Dr. Sanaz Vaseghi (East Kootenay)

Dr. Sue Pollock (South Okanagan, West 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)

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Immunization

Respiratory Diseases Season and 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.

BCCDC CARD System for Vaccination

This year immunizations provided in school will be offered alongside the CARD System. The CARD System, which stands for **C**omfort, **A**sk, **R**elax and **D**istract, provides strategies students can use before and during the immunization to make the experience more positive. The system includes videos, handouts, and activities students can use to help prepare for immunizations.



Information for school staff, parents and students can be found here:

- ❖ **BCCDC:** [CARD System for Vaccination](#)
- ❖ **Kids Boost Immunity:** [Health Care Provider Toolkit: How to Handle Your Vaccines Like a Champ Lesson](#)



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**.





Diabetes and Glucagon

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

Public Health Nurses can 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.

There are 2 options of Glucagon available: nasal or injectable.

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

Solu Cortef Rescue Medication Administration

School Public Health Nurses are available to provide Solu Cortef Rescue Medication Administration training to select school staff. Please contact your school Public Health Nurse to arrange for training.

Seizures and Epilepsy

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

Anaphylaxis

Anaphylaxis training is offered to school staff by Public Health Nurses once or twice a year, and more often if requested. Nurses have demonstrator units of auto-injectors to share with staff during the training session for hands-on practice. School staff also have the option 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 at school.

More information can be found here:

- ❖ [Anaphylaxis Protection Order](#)
- ❖ [Anaphylaxis in Schools and Other Settings, 3rd edition](#)
- ❖ [Ministry of Education – Anaphylaxis](#)

Nursing Support Services

Nursing Support Services 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 support training with rescue medication, clean intermittent catheterization, and oral suctioning. For more information see [Nursing Support Services](#) (under the **School nurses** section) (Interior Health) and [Nursing Support Services](#) (BC Children's Hospital).

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

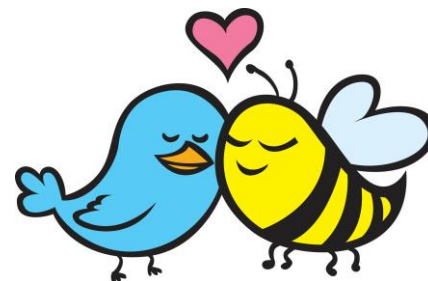
A list of the Nursing Support Services nurses can be found on the School Staff page [here](#).

Sexual Health

Resources

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

Additionally, 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 suitable products can be found at: [Menstrual product information for schools](#).

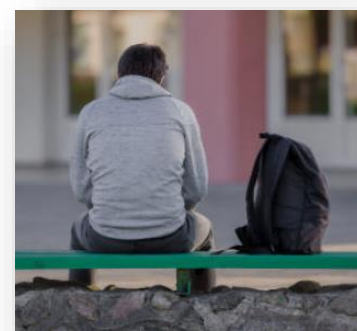
Free Condoms for Secondary Schools

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 are found on the public website: [free condom supply form](#). Orders can be picked up at the local Health Centre.

Substance Use

Evidence-based Resources

Tragically, youth unregulated drug toxicity deaths (overdoses) are now the leading cause of unnatural death among youth under the age of 19 in BC. The Interior Health Youth Harm Reduction Team is encouraging School Districts to evaluate their approaches to substance use including policies, overdose response preparedness, as well as staff and student education. The team has a number of resources to support schools in this work 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. Be sure to check expiry dates of current kits.
- ❖ [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 at: YHRC@interiorhealth.ca.



Legal Substances (formerly Tobacco and Vapour Prevention and Control)

The Legal Substances Team can provide support for matters related to commercial tobacco, vaping, cannabis or alcohol use. They are able to assist schools and districts with consultation on policy, provide educational seminars for school faculty and parents/guardians, share substance-use support resources, and provide guidance and support with substance-use prevention planning initiatives.

For more information on preventing and reducing cannabis, vapour product, commercial tobacco and alcohol use, visit our [Tobacco, Cannabis & Vaping page](#), or contact the Legal Substances Team at LegalSubstances@interiorhealth.ca.

Supportive and Informational Resources:

- ❖ [BC Smoking Cessation Program](#)
- ❖ [Quash App | Lung Health Foundation](#)
- ❖ [QuitNow | BC Lung Foundation](#)
- ❖ [Your Vape-Free Life | QuitNow](#)
- ❖ [Respecting Tobacco | First Nations Health Authority](#)
- ❖ [Non-Medical Cannabis & Supporting Youth | First Nations Health Authority](#)
- ❖ [Health Information for Youth | Interior Health](#)
- ❖ [Tools for Educators | Not An Experiment](#)
- ❖ [Vaping Health Education Toolkits for Parents & Teachers | BC Lung Foundation](#)

Quash.

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quitnow.ca





Head Lice

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

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



Dental, Hearing and Vision

Dental

In collaboration with the Ministry of Health, IH dental program staff provide in-school dental screenings every three years. The next Provincial Kindergarten Dental Survey is planned for 2025/2026. Dental information for families can be found on the [Interior Health website](#).



Hearing

Good hearing is essential for speech and language development and plays an important part in a child's social and emotional growth. Public Health's community audiologists provide hearing services for children from birth to 19 years of age. Anyone can refer their child for a hearing check. When in doubt, check it out. Hearing information and screening locations can be found on the [Hearing screening locations are found on the Interior Health website](#).



Vision

Children should have yearly eye exams with an optometrist (eye doctor) to help detect issues early and provide treatments. Optometrist services can be found on the BC [Doctors of Optometry](#) webpage. Vision information for families can be found on the [Interior Health website](#). Public Health does not currently provide vision screening in schools.





Food and Nutrition

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 and School Food Coordinators 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 school food resources 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](#)
- ❖ [Weight Bias and Stigma in Schools](#)

Eating Disorder Resources

Eating Disorders among youth can go unnoticed for many months or 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](#).



Mental Health

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](#)
- ❖ [Foundry Virtual BC](#)
- ❖ [KeltyMentalHealth.ca](#)
- ❖ [FamilySmart.ca](#)



Service access and navigation support:

- ❖ 310-MHSU (**310-6478**)

Indigenous Youth Wellness (PHSA)

Resources to support Indigenous 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](#)
- ❖ [Compass Mental Health Education](#)

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 delaying or reducing substance use, bullying, and mental health challenges. You can find more information on the [PreVenture website](#). This year, Interior Health is supporting ten School Districts (SDs 6, 10, 19, 20, 22, 27, 58, 67, 73 and 83), as well as one Independent School and one First Nations School to deliver the program. If you're curious about how your school or District can be involved, please email our team at: healthyschools@interiorhealth.ca.

Injury Prevention

Accessing Services and Resources

[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](#) provides information needed to respond and manage concussions in the school setting.





[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 [Pregnancy and Childbirth](#) section of the IH website.

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 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, and commends those that have tested. While supplies remain, we still have detectors for schools that have not yet tested. Parents, guardians and staff 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.





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 are an important way for children and youth to add physical activity to their daily routine. Members of our Healthy Community Development team can assist local governments and their community partners (School Districts, parents and others) with Safe Routes to School planning. For more information please contact: Healthy Community Development at hbe@interiorhealth.ca.



Indigenous Resources

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<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 Indigenous Partnerships

The IH Indigenous 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:

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

Additional Resources:

- ❖ [BC Indigenous Education Enhancement Agreements](#)
- ❖ [BC Tripartite Education Agreement: Supporting First Nation Student Success 2018](#)
- ❖ [Jordan's Principle in BC Information](#)



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:

- ❖ [Healthy Schools BC - Programs & Resources for School Health](#)

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.