

PUBLIC HEALTH NEWS ... CREATING HEALTHY SCHOOLS TOGETHER

INFORMATION FOR SCHOOLS

OCTOBER 2020

Interior Health Services to Schools

Healthy schools contribute to the safety and health of our children and youth. For an overview of current IH services that are available to schools see the following links for the [detailed](#) or [infographic](#) versions. Please note that some services typically offered by Interior Health may be impacted by COVID-19.

COVID-19 & Schools

Message from the Interior Health Medical Health Officers ...

The start of this school year has presented great successes and some challenges. We would like to thank each and every one of you on all of the efforts put into planning and implementing safety plans. With your support in creating a safe environment, we will be able to have as many students as possible in our schools. Unfortunately, some schools in the Interior region have already experienced COVID-19 exposures, but this is not unexpected. Despite our best efforts, we will continue to find COVID-19 exposures at schools, this is part of the new normal.

Please know that if this occurs, 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 COVID-19 in your school, we invite superintendents to reach out during regular business hours to their geographical MHO. If you have questions outside of regular business hours you can contact the On-Call Medical Health Officer.

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

- [COVID-19 Information for Schools](#)
- [COVID-19 School Exposures](#)
- [COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for K-12 School Settings](#)
- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) and Indigenous communities](#)

School Contacts

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

Dr. Carol Fenton	Dr. Karin Goodison
Dr. Shobhit Maruti	Dr. Silvina Mema
Dr. Sue Pollock	Dr. Fatemeh Sabet

For specific school-based questions: please contact your public health nurse: [Public Health Nurses by school district](#)

For district-level non urgent 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
Penny Liao-lussier (Manager)	Penny.Liao-lussier@interiorhealth.ca

COVID-19 Pandemic & Delivery of School Immunization Services

Public Health Nurses will follow the [COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for K-12 School Settings](#) and the [BCCDC Guidance for Influenza Vaccine Delivery in the Presence of COVID-19](#) for guidance regarding use of masks, physical distancing, and when planning to enter the school setting

Vaccine Status Reporting Regulation

On July 1, 2019, the B.C. Government approved the [Vaccination Status Reporting Regulation](#) 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 centre. Interior Health plans to continue efforts to follow-up with students whose records are not in the provincial database.

Class Lists

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 new 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 each Grade 6 and Grade 9 student in both public and independent schools in all areas of IH. 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 addresses and phone numbers are up to date.** Personalized consents provide the opportunity for students to be offered school immunizations and missing routine childhood immunizations. Paper copies of school immunization consents and supporting documents are sent to parents and students via schools. Other information regarding school immunization can be found on the [Interior Health website](#).

Mature Minor Consent (MMC)

Students in grades 9 can provide [MMC for immunization](#) as per the legislation under the Infants Act. MMC stipulates that a youth 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.

Catch-up immunizations

Interior Health will be providing catch-up immunizations to students in kindergarten, grade 1, 6, and 9 for the upcoming year. Catch-up immunizations will be provided in public health centres or school clinics, depending on the area and age of students.

Kids Boost Immunity

A new [grade 6 lesson plan](#) has been developed 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.



School Absenteeism (changes coming for 2021-22 school year)

Monitoring school absenteeism is one way public health identifies outbreaks of disease.

Many respiratory and gastrointestinal illnesses (other than COVID-19) continue to circulate in our communities and children are often responsible for early disease transmission in communities. Schools experiencing student absenteeism of 10% or greater should contact their school [Public Health Nurse](#).

Information sheets for respiratory and gastrointestinal illness for schools are available here and will be distributed to schools by their school public health nurse:

- [Respiratory Infection in Schools](#)
- [Gastrointestinal Infection in Schools](#)



No Child Without® Free MedicAlert Program

Are your elementary and middle schools enrolled?

The **MedicAlert® Foundation Canada** is a charitable organization and the leading provider of emergency medical information services linked to customized medical bracelets and necklaces. They offer **free** MedicAlert memberships to students (**from age 4 to their 14th birthday**) through the **No Child Without®** (NCW) program in select schools. For more information see:

www.medicalert.ca/No-Child-Without Schools can enroll in the NCW program online or call: **1-800-668-1507**.



call:



Medical Alerts



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, virtually or [viewed](#) on our IH YouTube Channel.

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.

- New this year, glucagon is available as a nasal powder.
- The presentation may 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](#).

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](#).

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 [Interior Health Public Website](#)

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, EpiPen and Emerade auto-injectors are available in Canada:

More information can be found here:

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

Epilepsy

PHNs are available to provide general epilepsy presentations to all school staff upon request.

- The presentation may be offered in-person, virtually or [viewed](#) on our IH YouTube Channel.

Dental, Hearing and Vision

[Kindergarten vision screening](#): please contact your local Health Centre for vision screening related inquiries at your school.

[Dental Program staff](#) will accept referrals for any student with active pain and/or infection.

Hearing concerns and referrals can be made to an audiologist at the nearest [Interior Health Hearing Clinic](#).

Free Condoms for Secondary Schools

Free condoms are available to all secondary schools and alternate schools in our health authority. These condoms are to support contraceptive education, sexually transmitted disease prevention, and pregnancy prevention.

Information and forms can be found on the public website:

[free condom supply form](#)

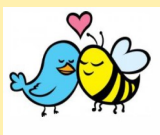


Sexual Health Resources

Teaching Sexual Health can be fun!

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

[Sexual Health Resources for Teachers and PHNs](#) 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. Information about products that can be considered for your schools can be found at: [Menstrual product information for schools](#).

NEW

Community Nutrition & Food Security

Public Health Dietitians are available to support school districts working on initiatives related to 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, as well as provide consultation and expertise on district initiatives.

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

- School food initiatives such as:
 - [BC School Fruit & Vegetable Nutritional Program](#)
 - [BC Farm to School Program](#)
 - [Cook it. Try it. Like it!](#)
- Resources to support nutrition education
- Information about the BC School Food Guidelines

Harm Reduction Information for Schools

The following resources are available for teachers and parents:

[Safe Needle Disposal](#)

[Opioid Overdose Information for Schools](#)

[Harm Reduction- Information for Youth](#)

Tobacco & Vapour Prevention & Control Resources

Tobacco and Vapour Reduction Coordinators and Enforcement Officers provide support to tobacco reduction initiatives.

Tobacco and Vapour Reduction Coordinators offer training to teachers, counsellors and other school staff to assist students to prevent and/or reduce risks from the use of tobacco and vapour products.

Contact the Tobacco and Vapour Prevention Control Program at tobacco@interiorhealth.ca for more information.

For more information:

[Tobacco Reduction Website](#)

[Tobacco Free Schools](#)

Tobacco and Vape Cessation Information:

QuitNow: www.quitnow.ca

[BC Smoking Cessation Program](#)

Tobacco and Vapour Products Control Act

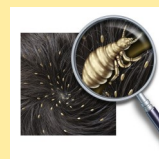
For support with School Compliance please visit: the [Interior Health Website](#) or contact tobacco@interiorhealth.ca

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 up to date resources can be found here.

This year, Public Health Nurses will have limited availability to provide head lice education sessions to staff and parent groups. Please contact your school PHN to find out more.





[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.

[Active & Safe](#) is a BC resource that allows children, youth and adults who engage in or facilitate sport and recreational activities to be informed, prevent injury and stay active and safe.



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 provide pregnant students with information to allow them to connect with this resource. Information is available from the IH Website at:



[Having a Baby.](#)

All pregnant youth and women can self-refer to HFS by calling toll free at 1-855-868-7710 or filling out the secure HFS online form at:

www.interiorhealth.caHealthyFromTheStart

When a pregnant student is referred to HFS, she will speak with a public health nurse, receive health screening and valuable information, as well as get connected with programs and resources available in her community. Receiving early prenatal care and connecting with supports and services is especially important with pregnancy in young women.

Eating Disorders

Disordered eating is common among youth and can go unnoticed for many months and years by parents, families, and school staff. Schools are often the entry point for recognition, early intervention, and treatment.

For more information on how to help a student with a suspected eating disorder see:

[Guidelines for School Staff:Helping a Student with a Suspected Eating Disorder](#)

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/mnbc-ministries/youth-ministry/>

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 Health:

The IH Aboriginal Health team 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:

<https://www.interiorhealth.ca/YourHealth/AboriginalHealth/Pages/default.aspx>

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 resources, success stories, and funding opportunities to assist with creating a healthy school. More information is available at: <https://healthyschoolsbc.ca/>.

Interior Health funding for **Health Promoting Schools Coordinators** is continuing in 15 of the 16 public school districts and some First Nations schools in the Okanagan. The [Health Promoting Schools Coordinator](#) list is updated twice yearly.

This year, **Public Health Nurses** will have limited capacity due to COVID-19 to become involved with Healthy School Initiatives. Please contact your school PHN to find out more. The list of [Public Health Nurses by school district](#) can be found on the IH Public Website.



Healthy Communities

Public Health Overdose Emergency

For more information see:

[The Interior Health Website](#)

Radon Screening

Radon is a serious indoor air quality issue within the BC interior. Children are more vulnerable to the chronic consequences of radon such as lung cancer later in life. Testing for radon in public and private schools, as well as private homes, is important because it is the only way to know the level of radon. Radon should be on the routine agenda of school maintenance. Parents and guardians are encouraged to inquire about radon test result data from school administration. The best time to test is during the cold months, from October through March. Testing is easy. For more information on Radon Gas see: [The Interior Health Public Website](#)

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 or to start a conversation contact Healthy Communities at 1-855-744-6328 extension 4 or email: hbe@interiorhealth.ca.