

HEALTH PROMOTING SCHOOLS NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2026

DENTAL HEALTH

Healthy Smiles: The Foundation for Better Learning

The beginning of a new school year provides an opportunity to reset daily routines to support healthy foundations for learning, growth and development. A healthy mouth is a significant aspect of these foundations. Dental pain, infection or discomfort can interfere with sleep, concentration, participation at school and negatively affects overall wellness.

Teachers can support healthy foundations by including oral health conversations and activities in classroom curriculum. Inviting students to have conversations about everyday oral health routines such as twice a day brushing with fluoride toothpaste and drinking water throughout the day provide students the chance to share routines, priorities, and circumstances.



Resource Spotlight – Classroom Activities

- The [Canadian Dental Association](#) offers free, curriculum-friendly oral health resources for elementary classrooms, including colouring sheets, puzzles, word searches, connect-the-dots activities, posters, and teacher resources that can easily be incorporated into a health lesson, learning centre, or indoor activity.
- Interior Health offers Healthy Schools Toolkit Series for teachers. [Healthy Schools Toolkit Template - October 2024](#). The Dental and Oral Health Toolkit offers a variety of resources for teachers to use in their classroom for all grade levels.

Contact Interior Health Early Childhood Development Dental Program for more information. [Children & Youth Health \(5-18 Years\) | Interior Health](#)

FOOD AND NUTRITION

A new school year brings new opportunities to support food and nutrition learning and create positive school food environments. Here are some resources to support your school this year.

School Food Programs

- [BC School Food Toolkit](#) – Guidance and practical resources for creating healthy school food environments.
- [Talking Tips for School Food Providers](#) – Tips for using positive food messaging.
- [Nourishing Relations](#) – Stories and practical resources for bringing Indigenous foodways into classrooms and school meal programs.

Teaching About Food & Nutrition

- [Teach Food First](#) – Lesson plans and nutrition messaging aligned with the B.C. curriculum.
- [Hands on Food](#) – Activities to build students' food skills and confidence.



Body Image & Inclusive Schools - Resources to help create school environments where all bodies feel welcome and valued:

- [Being Me, Being Us – Creating a School Community Where Every Body Belongs](#)
- [Promoting Positive Body Image – A Resource for Educators](#)

Fundraising Ideas

- [BC School Food Toolkit – School Fundraisers](#) - Check out the toolkit for creative ideas, including nutritious and non-food options.

The Interior Health Public Health Dietitian team is available to support school district's efforts to create nutritious, stigma-free meal programs and healthy school food environments. For questions email schoolnutrition@interiorhealth.ca

PHYSICAL LITERACY

The [Spotlight on Physical Activity For Children and Youth: 2026 Progress Report](#) reviews overall physical activity, active play, active transportation, organized sport, sedentary behaviours and sleep. The report highlights that Canada's children and youth are not as physically active as they once were and are not meeting screen time recommendations. Please view the full report for grades and key findings.



The following resources can assist in encouraging Canada's children and youth in being more active at school and at home:

- [Learning in Motion – Physical Activity & Physical Literacy Resources](#)
- [Physical Activity and Physical Literacy Social Media Toolkit | BC Alliance for Healthy Living](#)
- [Healthy Screen Use | Centre for Healthy Screen Use](#)
- [Sedentary behaviour and screen time | Northern Health](#)

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

Electric kick scooters (e-scooters) are becoming increasingly popular, but it's important to know the rules before riding. In BC, riders must be **at least 16 years old** to operate an e-scooter on public roads. In addition, e-scooters are only permitted on public roads in communities participating in the [Electric kick scooter pilot project - Province of British Columbia](#). Riding an e-scooter on public roads if you are under 16, or in a community that is not part of the pilot program, is illegal. For riders aged 16 **and** older living in a pilot community, always wear a helmet, never carry passengers, and be sure to review and follow your local bylaws before riding.

IMMUNIZATION

Many students in BC received their routine vaccines at school as per the [Immunization schedules for children in BC](#). Some students experience anxiety and fear around needles and vaccines. School staff and teachers can assist to support students using programs such as the CARD (Comfort, Ask, Relax, Distract). The [CARD System for Vaccination](#) has toolkits and resources that can assist school staff in improving the vaccination experience for students at school.



LEGAL SUBSTANCES

Calling Youth Artists! Annual Poster Contest Returns This Fall

The Legal Substances Team at IH is preparing to launch its 5th annual [poster contest](#). Students in grades 6 to 12 across the [IH region](#) are invited to share their perspectives on belonging and connection and/or tobacco industry marketing tactics through original artwork for a chance to win a \$150 gift card.

New this year: Participating schools will be entered into a draw for a chance to **win \$500** to support a student wellbeing initiative.

More information will be emailed directly to schools prior to the mid-October launch. Stay tuned!

Vaping Support

The Legal Substances Team is available to support schools with evidence-informed approaches to preventing and addressing youth vaping and other legal substance use concerns. We provide consultation, resources, and guidance to help schools strengthen prevention efforts and respond to student substance use in supportive and consistent ways.



NEW: Substance Use Resources for Schools Brochure

Looking for substance use education and prevention resources for your school community? The Youth Harm Reduction Team has developed a new brochure that brings together a variety of evidence-informed resources in one convenient place. Explore curricular activities, student resources, parent information, and more to support healthy conversations and learning about substance use.

View the brochure here: [Substance Use Resources for Schools Brochure - YHR](#)

Visit our [website](#) to explore school resources and learn about available supports. Contact us: legalsubstances@interiorhealth.ca

SLEEP

Sleeping well assists kids with both their physical and mental health. Review the following resources on sleeping well:

- [Sleeping Well | Kelty Mental Health](#)
- [healthy-schools-toolkit-sleep.pdf](#)

MENTAL HEALTH

There are several new mental health resources to support kids in school this year.

1. [Educators and School Professionals - HealthyMindsBC](#) is evidence informed, curriculum-aligned courses offered to provide strategies for K-12 students while contributing to the mental health literacy of educators.
2. The [Home - Child and Youth Well-Being Action Plan](#) is part of a long-term effort to improve how systems work together across BC to support children and families.



There are numerous resources that can help support your child's mental health as they go back to school:

- [Interior Health Mental Health Services for Children & Youth](#)
- [Interior Health Mental Health and Substance Use Website](#)
- [Foundry Virtual BC](#)
- [KeltyMentalHealth.ca](#)
- [FamilySmart.ca](#)

There are several webinars held through [Kelty Mental Health](#) that review back to school routine resources that can assist in kids' mental health.

RESOURCES

Interior Health Resources

The [School Health](#) section of the Interior Health Public Website will take you to the following sections where you can find more information: [School Staff](#), [Promoting Health of Children & Youth in School](#), and [Medical Conditions at School](#).

Harm Reduction Resources

For resources visit the [Interior Health Website](#).

To connect with a Harm Reduction Coordinator email: YHRC@interiorhealth.ca

Legal Substances Program

For resources on tobacco, vaping or cannabis use, visit the Interior Health [Tobacco & Vaping Information for Schools](#) webpage or the [Cannabis Information for Youth](#) webpage.

To connect with a Legal Substances Reduction Coordinator, email:

LegalSubstances@interiorhealth.ca

Healthy Schools BC

<https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/living-well/healthy-schools>

Healthy schools is a collection of resources and evidence-based supports for B.C. educators. Healthy Schools BC involves a partnership between the ministries of Health and Education, health authorities, education professionals and other key partners.

School Districts Healthy Schools Information

The following School Districts have a Healthy Schools tab on their websites. Take a look at all the great information available from: [SD 5](#), [SD 8](#), [SD 19](#), [SD 23](#), [SD 53](#), [SD 73](#), [SD 83](#)

For previous newsletters: [Health Promoting Schools Newsletters](#)

Please contact the healthy school team with any questions at: healthyschools@interiorhealth.ca

