

Northern BC Healthy K to 12 Schools Newsletter

ISSUE 3 | FALL 2022



Information for Northern BC schools,
students, and families



northern health
the northern way of caring

IN THIS ISSUE

FOR ALL SCHOOLS



3 Using QR codes

Follow the steps to access online resources using your mobile device's camera app.



7 Food allergy awareness

Learn how to manage food allergies at your school. Check out the tips on nut-aware lunches and snacks. Check out the tips on making nut-aware lunches and snacks.



4 Services to schools

See at-a-glance the types of services offered for families with school-age children and youth.



8 Teaching tools

Explore how these teaching tools help to support healthy schools.



5 Being active

Calling all outsiders! Make moving a fun part of your day and help make this world be free of cancer.



10 Child and youth mental wellness

Distance doesn't have to be a barrier. Let's talk by phone, video chat, meet online, and meet in person about mental wellness, education, and supports for you and your family.



6 Safety advice

Have fun, but keep safety in mind.



12 Mindfulness

Support your family's well-being one breath at a time



7 Communicable disease prevention

Help stop the spread of germs with these prevention measures.



12 Food literacy

Interested in trying a salad bar program at your school? It's available for loan at no cost.

FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS



13 ConfidentParents.ca WeAreIndigenous.ca

Free phone-based programs for families with children aged 3-12 experiencing anxiety or behavior challenges.



14 Understanding hearing loss

Hearing loss can happen at anytime in childhood. Remember to check your child's hearing.



13 Kindergarten entry immunizations

Help your child be ready for school by getting their immunizations up-to-date.



15 Seeing clearly helps learning

It's recommended all school-age children living in BC have an eye exam each year until 18 years of age. Make an appointment with your Optometrist.



14 Happy teeth, happy body

Did you know there are at least 17 teaspoons of sugar in 591ml of pop?



15 SunSense certified schools

Calling all Northern BC elementary schools and Parent Advisory Committees! Help your school to be sun safe and become a SunSense Certified School.

FOR ALL SCHOOLS

Using QR codes

In this newsletter, we use QR codes for various websites and resources. Here are steps to help you:



- **Step 1:** Open the Camera App from your mobile device (either on the home screen, control centre, or lock screen).
- **Step 2:** Hold your device so the QR code opens in the viewfinder and wait until you see a notification pop up with a link.
- **Step 3:** Click on the notification to open the link associated with the QR code.

Land acknowledgment

Northern Health acknowledges with gratitude and respect the traditional territories of the 55 First Nations upon whose lands we live, work, and learn. We also recognize the 11 Métis Chartered Communities, as well as the Inuit and Urban and Away from Home Indigenous peoples on these lands. We are thankful for the continued opportunity to work in partnership to optimize the health and well-being of Indigenous peoples whom we serve.

Services to schools



Healthy schools help to protect the health and safety of our children and youth in the North. For an overview of the current Northern Health (NH) services that are available to schools, visit the [NH School and Youth Health](#) webpage.

At a glance, the types of services offered for families with school-age children and youth include:

- Communicable disease follow-up
- Environmental health
- Immunizations at Kindergarten entry (4-6 years of age), Grade 6, and Grade 9



If you or your family need to connect with a health care provider, connect with the [health unit](#) in your community.

Note: Some services may vary from community to community and school to school.

Health education and promotion content to support curriculum are available for:

- Cannabis, tobacco, and vapor reduction
- Injury prevention
- Mental health and wellness
- Nutrition and healthy eating
- Physical activity
- Sexual and reproductive health
- Support for children with potentially life-threatening medical conditions
- Support for substance use, including access to harm reduction supplies



BEING ACTIVE

The [2022 report card on physical activity for children & youth](#) in Canada was just released.



Over the last few years, some opportunities to get active were lost while others were found. While children and youth are less active overall, they have managed to increase their participation in self-led activities like active transportation (e.g. walk, bike, and wheel) and active play.



Check out the website for tips on how to kids get more active!



[Tips to help your kids get more active!](#)



[How can schools and educators support kids' physical activity?](#)

Walktober

Join thousands of schools from around the world encouraging students to walk to school. When you register, you'll receive a full kit of activities and access to workshops to help get your students moving. The program will work from the classroom or at home. Kids, families, classes, and schools can participate in a way that works for them.



Canadian 24-hour movement guidelines



The whole day matters! Use these guidelines to move more, reduce sedentary time, and sleep well. Some is better than none! Make the most of your whole day by adding different types of movement at various intensity levels. The routine daily rituals of casual neighbourhood walks, gardening, household chores, and taking stairs instead of the elevator all contribute towards a healthy 24 hours.



International sedentary recommendations

Parents and schools play a critical role in improving health and well-being for children. You can help to manage sedentary behaviour and screen use though the 4 M approach.



- **M**anage sedentary behaviour
- Encourage **m**eaningful screen use
- **M**odel healthy and meaningful screen use
- **M**onitor for signs of problematic screen use



SAFETY ADVICE



Winter outdoor safety



Winter will soon be here. Outdoor winter activities help keep the whole family healthy while having fun. Try sledding, walking in the snow, and ice skating, but keep safety in mind.

Children should play indoors if the temperature or the wind chill falls below -25°C (-13°F). At this temperature, exposed skin freezes in a few minutes. Learn more about [winter outdoor safety](#) and the Parachute resources available for teachers, parents, and caring adults.



Remember:

Dress warmly and be cautious of ice on ponds, lakes, streams, and rivers.

Concussion prevention



A **concussion** can occur in any place we live, learn, work, and play.

The Concussion Awareness Training Tool is an excellent resource for parents, players, and educators. Learn how to prevent, recognize, and manage a [concussion](#).



This toolkit includes helpful resources such as packages to support the return to school or sport after a concussion.

Remember:

Any blow to the head, face, neck, or body that jars your head could cause a concussion.

Winter sun safety

Content adapted from [Canadian Cancer Society](#)



- Getting outdoors and being active is great for our bodies, minds, and souls
- When heading outside, we wear multiple layers to protect from windburn and frostbite, but we often forget to protect ourselves against the winter sun (which is just as dangerous as the summer sun).
- No matter what activity you engage in, it's important to protect your family from the sun's rays during the winter months.



FOOD ALLERGY AWARENESS



Resource guide for allergy aware schools

Are you wondering about managing food allergies at school? This resource guide offers information, tools, and resources about anaphylaxis emergency plans, epinephrine auto-injectors, awareness and prevention strategies, staff training, and more.



Allergy aware: Anaphylaxis in schools online course

This free 30 minute online course is for parents, caring adults and school staff. It covers: the basics of anaphylaxis, ways to reduce risks in a school setting, and the recommended emergency treatment.

Peanut and nut-aware lunches and snacks

Is your school peanut or nut aware? This handout offers tips and ideas for packing lunches.



Let's talk about food allergies at school!

Read this article about keeping students with food allergies safe at school with resources for staff, parents, and caregivers.

For more information or support connect with a Northern Health Population Health Dietitian at PopHthNutrition@northernhealth.ca. You can also check out [NH's Healthy Eating at School web pages](#).



COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PREVENTION

Attending school in person is important for students' education and well-being. Do your part to prevent the spread of communicable diseases such as COVID-19, common colds, influenza, and gastrointestinal illnesses ("stomach flu"). BCCDC recommends the following [personal prevention measures](#):



- Being up-to-date with immunizations
- Practicing health awareness
- Staying home when sick
- Washing your hands
- Respecting each other's personal space
- Supporting the use of face-coverings or non-medical masks based on personal choice



TEACHING TOOLS



Orange shirt day: Every child matters

September 30 is Canada's National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

By observing this day, we are committed to honoring the healing journey of the residential school survivors and their families. This day opens the door to creating bridges for reconciliation with meaningful discussions about the effects of residential schools and the legacy they left behind.



Teach food first: An educator's toolkit for exploring Canada's food guide with Kindergarten to Grade 8 students

There is a new toolkit featuring lessons and resources that connects BC curriculum and First Peoples principles of learning. It offers practical tips for teaching about food and nutrition in the classroom.



Vaping: Know the risks

Watch to understand the short and long term effects of vaping on lung health.



[Clearing the Cloud](#)
(Grades 5-7)



[Exploring the cloud](#)
(Grades 8-10)

Remember:

Keep cannabis safe from curious little children by using two barriers to keep them from being accidentally poisoned. Keep the substance out of reach and locked up.



Drug free kids

It might not seem like it, but they're listening. Start having talks about substance use with your kids.

Visit [#KeepTalking!](#) to access free resources to help family members to help family members have open discussions on substance use.



Teaching sexual health



Teach children and youth to make informed choices about their sexual and reproductive health.

For teachers: This website has evidence-based health information, lesson plans, tools, and resources to assist you in the classroom.

For parents: This website offers parents the knowledge and confidence to talk comfortably with your children about sexual health. It's never too early or too late to talk to your child and learn more yourself.



The Assembly of First Nations toolkit

This toolkit is designed to bring together First Nations and non-First Nations people to foster a spirit of cooperation, understanding, and action. Teachers and parents can use these lesson plans to learn about residential schools and treaties.



The CARD™ Toolkit



The [CARD™ toolkit](#) (Comfort, Ask, Relax, Distract), was developed by Anxiety Canada. It helps prepare children for stressful events, like school-based vaccinations, presentations, and examinations.

Students in Grades 4-12 can benefit from CARD™ strategies and adapt them to different circumstances (including home, school, and healthcare environments).

Farm to School BC's school garden mentorship program

Starting in January, interactive workshops will be offered with practical tips and resources for creating and sustaining a school garden. Topics include:



- Crop planning
- Classroom and outdoor growing
- Summer maintenance
- Harvesting
- Seed saving



CHILD AND YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Distance doesn't have to be a barrier. Let's talk by phone, video chat, meet online, and meet in person about mental wellness.

Check out these resources for support and education for you and your family.



NH child and youth mental health and substance use resource guide

This resource guide details resources available for families including:

- 24/7 urgent crisis supports
- Virtual counselling (non-emergency)
- Community-specific resources
- Resources for common mental wellness and substance use issues

CHECK OUT OUR GUIDE ON

CHILD & YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

- Find Information
- Learn About Programs
- Locate Local Services
- Virtual Options

Scan QR Code to access resource guide or visit <https://bit.ly/3BXBSEc>

northern health
the northern way of caring
10-035-6035 (11/21)

First Nations Health Authority (FNHA)

See FNHA's listing of culturally safe and trauma-informed services for cultural, emotional, and mental health needs, for Indigenous people of BC,.



For instance, the [Hope for Wellness Helpline](#) offers experienced mental health counselling and crisis intervention by phone or online chat. Counsellors can help if you:



- Want to talk
- Are distressed
- Are triggered by painful memories
- Have strong emotional reactions

BC Children's Hospital – Kelty Mental Health Resource Centre

- Helping families navigate the mental health system, connect with peer support, and access resources and tools to support wellbeing
- Providing school staff resources for teaching and lesson plans




The BC Children's Kelty Mental Health Resource Centre provides mental health and substance use information, resources, and peer support to parents and caregivers from across B.C.

Connect with us by phone (toll-free), email, in person, or online: keltymentalhealth.ca


All services are free and no referrals are required

Kelty Centre Supports for School Professionals
Did you know that the Kelty Centre also supports school professionals to promote the mental wellness of their students? Learn more at keltymentalhealth.ca/school-professionals



Foundry centres in Northern BC

[Foundry](#) is also available virtually from anywhere in BC!



Foundry offers young people in BC ages 12-24 and their caregivers easy access to mental health & substance use counselling and peer support, primary care and employment services.

All services are free and confidential.

Foundry centres in Northern BC:
Prince George
Terrace
Burns Lake – Coming soon!
Fort St. John – Coming soon!

Don't have a Foundry centre in your community?
Access Foundry's provincial virtual services from anywhere in BC, 7 days a week. Access **drop-in** and **scheduled appointments** through the **Foundry BC app** on your smartphone or computer device.



A mindful approach

“The most precious gift we can offer anyone is our attention. When mindfulness embraces those we love they will bloom like flowers” – Thich Nhat Hanh



Mind-ful-ness (noun): A state of mind where you pay attention to whatever is happening in the present moment with an openhearted, nonjudgmental attitude, to increase enjoyment of your daily life.

Family life can be super stressful at times. Mindfulness can be a powerful remedy to coping with this stress. It starts with one mindful breath. Teachers, parents, and children can [practice mindfulness](#) together and learn to stay calm and centered when connecting with loved ones.



Food Literacy

[NH's healthy eating at school web pages](#)

A one-stop-shop for information and resources for schools and educators related to school food programs, food and nutrition curriculum, granting opportunities, managing food allergies, and more.



[Salad bar equipment kits](#)



Interested in trying a salad bar program at your school? Salad bar equipment (including a plastic table top with stainless steel inserts, bowls, and food warmers) is available for loan to Northern schools at no cost.

For more information connect with a Northern Health Population Health Dietitian at PopHthNutrition@northernhealth.ca



ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Confident parents: thriving kids and We are Indigenous: big worries/fears

These free programs are designed to help parents and caregivers with children aged 3 to 12 who experience mild to moderate anxiety or behaviour challenges.

They offer three programs—Big worries/fears, anxiety, and behavior. Please see the website to learn more about these programs and how to be referred.



**Team up against
Anxiety or Behaviour
Challenges**

Free phone-based program for parents/caregivers with children age 3-12 throughout British Columbia

Confident Parents
Thriving Kids ConfidentParents.ca

We Are Indigenous
Big Worries/Fears WeAreIndigenous.ca **NEW**

Canadian Mental Health Association
British Columbia
Mental health for all

Kindergarten entry immunizations

Children entering Kindergarten (between 4 to 6 years) need booster vaccines against vaccine-preventable communicable childhood diseases.

Booster vaccinations include; Tetanus/ Diphtheria/Pertussis/Polio (Tdap-IPV), Measles/ Mumps/Rubella/Chickenpox (MMRV), and any other childhood vaccinations that may be overdue.

Contact your local health unit to find out when kindergarten immunization clinics will be held and to book an appointment.

You can [Check vaccination status](#)

Connect with your [local health unit](#)



HEALTH CHECKS

Healthy teeth, happy body

The start of a new school year is a great time to think about how we can support dental health for kids!

Did you know that regular intake of sugary, 'sugar-free', and energy drinks can lead to tooth decay? Unfortunately, these drinks are creatively marketed and packaged in fancy containers that appeal to kids. Help prevent tooth decay by:

- Being a positive role model
- Making water the drink of choice
- Avoiding sipping on drinks other than water through the day



Remember:



Brush and floss your teeth twice a day with a fluoride toothpaste. Good oral health makes your whole body happy. Watch this brushing and flossing [video!](#)

This 2022-2023 school year, the [Northern Health dental](#) team will be visiting classrooms to provide a dental screening on all kindergarten aged children.



Understanding Hearing loss



Good hearing is essential for speech and language development. It also plays an important part in a child's social and emotional growth.

Mild hearing loss may be hard to detect. Signs of hearing loss in children may include:

- Appearing distracted or withdrawn
- Turning up the volume on screens and other devices
- Difficulty learning



Remember:

Having a child wear hearing protection in noisy environments can help protect their hearing.

If you have a concern about your child's hearing, please ask your family physician or other health professional to refer your child to your local public health audiology (hearing) clinic.

Seeing clearly helps learning



The BC Doctors of Optometry recommends children:

- Receive their first eye exam when they are 6 months of age
- Follow-up exam at least once between 2 – 5 years of age
- Have yearly exams while in school (covered by BC's medical services plan until 18 years of age, but there may be a small fee charged by the optometrist)

Signs and symptoms of vision concerns may include:

- Avoiding books or screens
- Difficulty following objects or people
- Squinting or rubbing eyes
- Headaches

Remember:

You can help to protect their eyes by:

- Teaching your children to not run with sharp objects
- Limiting screen time
- Wearing sunglasses and/or hats

Learn more: [Young children and their vision \(HealthLink BC\)](#).

Be a SunSense Certified School



- Calling all Northern BC elementary schools, including Parent Advisory Committees!
- The Canadian Cancer Society invites you to become a SunSense Certified School.
- SunSense supports elementary schools to create sun safe environments that protect students and staff from harmful ultraviolet radiation from the sun.



Visit sunsense.ca to learn more about free tools and resources for teachers and students. Register today!

We hope that you had a safe, fun, and memorable summer and are returning to school strong and ready for a new year of learning adventures.



Important contact information

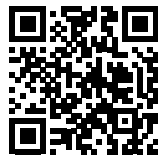
If you need to speak with a health care provider:

- Call your family doctor or nurse practitioner
- Connect with your local health unit
- Check out the NH website for more information

Here are some more options for you and your family:



Connect with the [First Nations Virtual Doctor of the Day](#)



Call [HealthLink BC](#) at 8-1-1



Contact the [Northern Health Virtual Clinic](#) at 1-844-645-7811



#healthynorth

northernhealth.ca

HealthySchools@northernhealth.ca

10-420-6131 (10/22)



northern health
the northern way of caring