

HEALTH PROMOTING SCHOOLS NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2026

DENTAL HEALTH

Tooth be Told: April is Oral Health Month!



April is the perfect time to ‘Spring’ into oral health action and set new goals for our smiles. “Oral Health for Total Health” is the theme of the month, reminding us by taking good care of our mouth, teeth, and gums supports our overall physical and mental well-being. You can encourage student participation by getting your school involved and by incorporating fun celebration opportunities found below into your curriculum.

Toothbrushing Contest for K to Grade 3 Students

The British Columbia Dental Association (BCDA) promotes school participation and child engagement with a [Brush2Win](#) toothbrushing contest which runs April 1-30, 2026. This month-long contest promotes good dental health habits and challenges children to brush (and floss) twice daily. Schools that register during the contest period will be entered into a draw for one of five \$1,000 prizes. Download a toothbrushing calendar here: [Oral Health Month - BCDA Public Site](#)

National Colouring Contest: Up to Age 13 years

The Canadian Dental Hygienists Association is offering a [National Colouring Contest](#) promoting “Tooth Tips”

- Choose healthy snacks
- Brush 2 minutes, 2 times a day
- Clean between your teeth every day
- Use fluoride toothpaste
- Change your brush every 3 months

Colouring contest submissions are due by May 1st, 2026, with opportunities to win prizes in three age categories.

Additional Oral Health Promotion Ideas for Classroom Learning

- Interior Health Healthy School Toolkit Series: [Dental and Oral Health](#) offers many fun ideas on how to incorporate oral health promotion into your curriculum
- Dental Health Education Kit: Includes engaging interactive oral health lesson plans and visual aids to support educators. Designed for children ages 3-6 years. To borrow this kit, please contact your local [Interior Health Dental Program](#).

Happy Oral Health Month – Brush, Floss and Smile!

LEGAL SUBSTANCES

Calling All Teens: Join the YOUTHWISE Advisory Group!

Interior Health is looking for youth ages **13–19** to join the **YOUTHWISE Advisory Group**. This team of young advisors helps improve health and wellness services for teens across our region. Members meet **online every 6–8 weeks** and are **paid \$30/hour** for their participation. If you live in the Interior Health region, have internet access, and want to share your ideas to support youth health, this is a great opportunity to get involved.

To learn more or sign up: LegalSubstances@interiorhealth.ca

Help shape a healthier future for youth in Interior Health!



HARM REDUCTION

Limited Number of Free Naloxone Kits Available for Schools



The Interior Health's Youth Harm Reduction Program has a limited number of injectable* naloxone kits available at no cost for schools in the region. The kits are part of the Interior Health [School Naloxone Blue Kit Program](#). Schools wishing to participate in this free program are offered support to develop an overdose response policy/procedure and receive information on training options. The kits **expire in June 2027**. Schools can contact the Youth Harm Reduction Team

at yhrc@interiorhealth.ca to sign up.

** Schools who wish to acquire nasal naloxone must purchase it through a community pharmacy.*

Why get a Naloxone Blue kit for your school?

1. Ministerial Order.

On July 1 2025, the Minister of Education issued the [Support Services for Schools Ministerial Order](#) **, which includes a mandate for School Boards to establish, maintain, and make publicly available a policy for responding to unexpected health emergencies, including making naloxone available and readily accessible for use in the workplace.

The Order requires that naloxone be available in schools by the following deadlines:

- All public secondary schools: **December 31, 2025**
- All public middle and elementary schools: **September 8, 2026**

*** While the Order and the timelines noted above do not apply to First Nations, Private and Independent schools, they are eligible for these free kits.*

2. Youth are dying from overdose.

Last year, our region saw an increase in fatal and non-fatal toxic drug events (overdoses) among young people under the age of 19 - a trend not observed in other age groups. It is important for school staff to recognize and quickly respond to emergencies involving opioid overdoses, should they happen on site.

3. The Injectable Blue Kits are Free.

Outside of this opportunity, schools are required to purchase naloxone. The Take Home Naloxone kits available at Interior Health Public Health, Mental Health and Substance Use or community agencies are only for free for those needing naloxone for personal use.

FOOD LITERACY

Teaching Resources



[Spring Learning Activities \(Farm to School\)](#) - Looking for outdoor activities for your K-12 class this spring? With or without a garden space, there are plenty of BC curriculum-connected ideas to explore with your students.

[Spring/Summer Activity Pack \(BC Agriculture in the Classroom\)](#) - Engage your class with food and farming! Our new Spring/Summer pack is full of interactive activities for grades 2-7, including gardening, games, crafts, recipes, and puzzles.

Grant Opportunity

The [Indigenous Foodways in Schools Grant](#) from Farm to Cafeteria Canada helps schools bring Indigenous food knowledge into learning through gardening, land-based activities, and traditional food experiences, supporting cultural connection and student learning.

Grant applications close on May 8th, 2026.

Learn more about the Grant by joining a virtual conversation:

April 7th, register [HERE](#)

April 8th, register [HERE](#)

The Interior Health Public Health Dietitian team is available to support school district's food and nutrition literacy efforts and to create and support healthy school food environments. For questions email schoolnutrition@interiorhealth.ca

HEALTHY SCHOOLS DATA

Now available: 2025-2026 CHEQ Reports

Childhood Experiences Questionnaire (CHEQ) Reports for the 2025-2026 school year are now available to access via from UBC's Human Early Learning Project's Reports page. Available documents include the CHEQ BC Summary Report 2025, as well as individual School District and Neighbourhood Reports. Click [here](#) to access the reports.



Recently released: Reports on social media use, sleep, transit safety & FASD

McCreary Centre Society has released the following report and fact sheets sharing findings from around 38,500 Grade 7-12 BC students who completed the 2023 BC Adolescent Health Survey:

- REPORT: [Beyond the likes: Social media use among BC youth](#)
- FACT SHEET: [BC youth's sense of safety on public transit](#)
- FACT SHEET: [Sleep among BC youth](#)
- FACT SHEET: [Experiences of BC youth with FASD](#)

PHYSICAL LITERACY



Webinar Recording: Outdoor Play and Learning

Did you miss HELPs latest webinar Embracing Risky Play: At School and Beyond, with Megan Zeni and Mariana Brussoni? The recording, resources, and link to order their brand new book are all available on their [website](#) now. Want even more information/training on this topic? Checkout the [Embracing Risky Play Course](#) being offered this spring.

RESOURCES

Interior Health Website

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](#).

Healthy Schools BC Website – UPDATE!

Starting March 30, 2026, **the Healthy Schools BC website is now hosted and maintained by HealthLink BC under the Ministry of Health**. It will now be easier to access provincial school health promotion information and resources under one location alongside other evidence-based health information currently located on HealthLink BC.

The new Healthy Schools URL is: <http://www.healthLinkBC.ca/healthyschoolsbc>

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](#)

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

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