

Services to Schools

This list describes an overview of current Interior Health (IH) services to schools

Audiology (Hearing)

Audiology services are provided to children aged 0-19 through local health unit/centre hearing clinics. Visit [Hearing Health](#) on the Children and Youth page for more information. Financial assistance for hearing instruments for eligible low income families may be available from the [Healthy Kids Program](#).

Examples of Audiology Activities:

- ◆ Hearing assessments
- ◆ Hearing aid assessment, selection, sales, fitting and monitoring
- ◆ Remote microphone technology (RM) equipment and assistive learning devices (ALD) needs assessment, selection, fitting, monitoring
- ◆ Technical services, e.g. maintenance of hearing aids and RM/ALD equipment; sale and fit of ear molds, swim molds, hearing aids
- ◆ In-service training for school staff on hearing topics such as: hearing development, hearing loss, hearing aids and RM/ALD equipment accessories

Dental

IH Dental staff link with schools to act as a resource, monitor dental health trends and support the development of healthy dental practices. Visit the [Promoting Health of Children & Youth in Schools](#) web page, Dental Health section. Financial assistance for basic dental services for eligible low income families may be available from the [Healthy Kids Program](#).

Examples of Activities of the Dental Program:

- ◆ Conduct Kindergarten-age surveys every 3 years as per Ministry requirement
- ◆ Provide an online resource (Toolkit) that has age-appropriate dental educational information that can be used to teach about oral health practices

Dietitians

Public Health Dietitians are available to work with school districts and their Health Promoting School Coordinators to:

- ◆ Provide resources for integrating food literacy into the curriculum
- ◆ Support healthy school food environments
- ◆ Develop school nutrition policies and follow provincial guidelines as they apply to school food

For resources to support curriculum and for information on healthy eating at school go to [Teaching About Food and Nutrition](#) on Interior Health's Nutrition and Food Security page.

Environmental Public Health

Environmental Public Health personnel work to ensure that schools are safe environments for children. Visit [Environment Health and Hazards](#) for more information.

Examples of Activities:

- ◆ Inspection and permits for food premises that are open to the public e.g. cafeterias
- ◆ Provide support to the water purveyor with water quality of drinking water
- ◆ Licensing of child care programs on school grounds
- ◆ Consultation on food safety, outdoor and indoor air quality, including radon gas, water quality, enteric and zoonotic diseases, sanitation and other health protection issues

The following additional links may be helpful:

- ◆ [Radon](#)
- ◆ [Air Quality](#)
- ◆ [Climate Change](#)
- ◆ [Child Care](#)

Healthy Schools Program Specialists

The Program Specialists collaborate with school districts to support health promotion and provide health education support and resources for Health Promoting Schools Coordinators. They also lead program development and provide education support for Public Health Nurses working with school aged children and youth.

Examples of Activities:

- ◆ Communication of health information to schools, parents, and administrators through the [School Staff, Promoting Health of Children & Youth in School](#) and [Medical Conditions at School](#) pages of the Interior Health public website
- ◆ Participation in district Health Promoting Schools Coordinator education events
- ◆ Development of standard resources for use by Public Health Nurses

Indigenous Partnerships

Visit [Indigenous Health and Wellness](#) on the IH website for more information. While Aboriginal Health Staff do not currently provide services directly in schools, they can inform and liaise with Interior Health (IH) Staff that provide direct services, including public health nurses.

Interior Health Children's Assessment Network (IHCAN)

IH staff and a network of service providers offer assessment and diagnostic services for children with complex behavioral conditions, e.g. Autism, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder and other Complex Developmental Behavioral Conditions. Referral must come from a medical professional. Call 1-250-763-4122 or visit the [IHCAN website](#).

Medical Health Officer (MHO)

Medical Health Officers assist in addressing school health issues and in the formation and implementation of healthy school policies. [Medical Health Officers](#) also have a legal responsibility and mandate under the School and Public Health Acts for protecting the health of students in the school environment.

Examples of Activities:

- ◆ Acting as medical consultants for school health related issues
- ◆ Providing consultation to public health staff as well as community health providers on school health issues
- ◆ Supporting emergency response situations
- ◆ Promoting wellbeing
- ◆ Protecting health and preventing disease in the school setting

Legal Substances Program

Legal Substance Reduction Coordinators provide support to schools looking to support their students with tobacco, vaping, cannabis and alcohol reduction initiatives. Please visit the Legal Substances Program [information pages](#) to find more information for schools and teens, as well as the [Vaping Toolkit for Schools](#) for information and resources.

Examples of activities offered:

- ◆ Provide consultation and feedback on school and/or district policies
- ◆ Provide educational sessions to faculty and staff about legal substances
- ◆ Offer evidence-based resources
- ◆ Collaborate and provide support with school program implementation

Mental Health and Substance Use (MHSU)

Interior Health and community partner agencies provide a range of mental health and substance use supports for children, youth and families. Services are welcoming of all peoples, all gender identities, cultures, ethnicities and backgrounds.

For further information on the specialist MHSU services available, visit our [Mental Health Services for Children and Youth](#) and [Substance Use Services Available for Youth](#) pages.

Nursing Support Services (NSS)

Nursing Support Service coordinators provide assessment, care plan development and education, consultation, resources and ongoing monitoring services for children ages 0-19 with chronic and/or severe, complex health conditions. Visit the [School Nursing Support Services](#) pages for more information.

Examples of Activities:

- ◆ Training and support of school staff to provide delegated care
- ◆ Provision of nursing care services in very complex situations

PreVenture

PreVenture is a mental health promotion and substance use prevention program aimed at students in grades 7 or 8. The program is strengths based, personality focused, and evidence informed. PreVenture has demonstrated positive outcomes in mental wellness, self management and decision-making, as well as reductions in bullying and substance use behaviours. Interior Health offers support to school districts interested in delivering the PreVenture program in two or more of their schools, and is also partnering with interested Independent and First Nations schools.

If you would like more information about PreVenture and how to become involved, please email healthyschools@interiorhealth.ca. To learn more about the developers of the program and read published research, visit [PreVenture](#).

Public Health Nursing

Public Health Nurses work in partnership with school staff, students, parents and the community to promote health and prevent disease and injury for school-aged children and youth. See the [School Staff](#) page for the [School Nurses List](#) and for [Health Promotion Resources](#).

Examples of Activities:

- ◆ Immunization
- ◆ Education on health topics e.g. anaphylaxis training, general diabetes and seizure information
- ◆ Education and support for health curriculum and activities
- ◆ Participation in school based clinics, offering health information and care for students
- ◆ Collaboration on Health Promoting School Initiatives e.g. harm reduction

Vision

The Interior Health Vision Screening Program for Kindergarten students remains on hold while the province reviews the program.

The Canadian Pediatric Society recommends vision screening for all children by Kindergarten entry. The Doctors of Optometry [website](#) suggests a first visit should occur between 6-9 months of age and then annually between ages 2-18 years of age.

In British Columbia, children 0-18 years of age are eligible for one basic eye exam per year. MSP will help contribute to all or a portion of the examination cost, depending on the clinic visited. The [Healthy Kids Program](#) may be able to support eligible low income families with financial assistance for their child's prescription glasses. To find a local optometrist see the Find a Doctor section of the BC Doctors of Optometry [website](#).

More information can be found on the Interior Health School Health Care page under [vision](#).

Youth Harm Reduction (yHR) Program

The Youth Harm Reduction team works with the people and systems that provide services to youth, including schools. Through a capacity building approach, the program aims to create more safe spaces where youth can talk openly and ask questions about substance use, access needed services and ultimately reduce substance use related harms.

The program offers a number of services for schools including:

- ◆ Training for staff on responding to the effects of substances and overdose response
- ◆ Naloxone kits for schools through the [Blue Kit program](#)
- ◆ Substance use and overdose response policy consultations
- ◆ Consultation on substance use education approaches and curricular aligned resources
- ◆ An extensive [toolkit of resources](#) – including information specifically for schools
- ◆ [Safety First Real Drug Education for Teens](#) a B.C curricular aligned learning resource to provide teens with honest and scientifically accurate information, and to empower them to reduce drug-related harms. Contains B.C. and Canadian content.
- ◆ Facilitating youth access to harm reduction services and supplies including naloxone programs, safer sex, and safer substance use supplies, and drug checking services

Visit the [Youth Harm Reduction](#) section of our website for more information and resources.

Website

For more information see the [School Health](#) and [School Staff](#) pages of the Interior Health public website.