

September 2017

Dear Principals of Elementary Schools

School Health Program Highlights: 2017-2018

On behalf of Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH), we thank you for your continued support of school health programs and services. In this letter, we draw your attention to a few highlights:

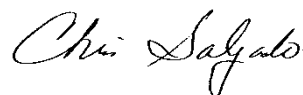
- 1. Immunization delivery in school:** Immunizations are important to protect against serious communicable diseases. Thank you for your support in providing sufficient space and time so students can be immunized safely. Immunization coverage for your school is available at this [VCH web location](#). New this year is the expansion of the **Human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine** program to include grade 6 boys. While girls have been offered HPV vaccine since 2008, we are pleased that similar protection is now funded for all boys starting with this year's grade 6 class.
- 2. Concussion Awareness Training Toolkit (CATT) for School Professionals:** is now available [online](#); as concussion recognition and management (including back to school planning post injury) are key to decreasing the risk of brain injury, we highly recommend this course to educators and administrators. Our staff are also prepared to facilitate training on this tool kit at a Pro-D day.
- 3. Adolescent Health Survey (BC AHS) to be administered in the current school year:** As you are likely aware, this survey is administered every five years to children in grades 7-12. The survey will be administered by public health nurses and nursing students January - May 2018, and results are anticipated by March 2019.
- 4. Food Services in Schools:** Are you considering offering a new food service program or proposing a change to an existing program in your school? To ensure food safety, please ask a school staff member or parent group representative to first contact your local Environmental Health Officer (EHO) by calling our Health Protection Office at 604-233-3147.
- 5. Health curriculum opportunities that support the new provincial curriculum:** [The Academy for Tobacco Prevention](#) is available to grade 4-6 students to provide tobacco prevention education; the course also explores ways to resist social influence such as peer pressure. The program consists of four-45-minute lessons followed by an interactive and co-operative card game. If interested, please email smokefree@vch.ca or call 604-675-3801. Also new this fall will be a provincial **immunization course** on kidsboostimmunity.com that aligns with social studies competencies on international cooperation. This curriculum was piloted last year, received raving reviews from students and teachers, and is being updated with their input. We will send you a note when it is ready.

Vancouver Coastal Health is keen to act as a resource in supporting schools with promotion of healthy eating, physical activity, mental wellness, and prevention of tobacco and substance use. Also attached is a brief overview of other health services provided by VCH-Richmond Public Health. If you have any questions about the programs and services we offer or wish to explore ways to promote wellness, please speak with your school's public health nurse, or contact one of us directly.

Yours Sincerely,



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Public Health Programs for Elementary Schools 2017 - 2018

Public Health Nursing

- Works with school staff, parents and caregivers, children and community groups to provide preventive health services.
- Facilitates health education to groups of students and staff.
- Supports and promotes healthy school initiatives.
- Provides preventive measures (e.g. vaccines for K and grade 6).
- Performs individual health assessments and consultation, health education and promotion.
- School Immunization rates are posted at [VCH web location](#).

Nutrition

- Strengthen food and health literacy initiatives by building capacity and ensuring alignment with the new school curriculum.
- Promote the implementation of the mandated Guidelines for Food and Beverage Sales in BC Schools and advocate for a healthy school food environment.
- Provide Pro-D workshops and healthy eating resources for staff and Parent Advisory Councils.
- Address food access concerns through collaboration with the broader community, eg, Art Truck, Feed-U-Cate 38, Breakfast for Learning and B.C. Fruit and Vegetable Program.
- Facilitate the school community to understand the Richmond Food Charter, how it was developed, the partners involved and how it may align with food security initiatives in the school community.
- Support food gardens

Hearing

- In the 2016/2017 school year, 1504 Kindergarten students were screened and 11% (136 students) were referred for further testing.

- Hearing screening for elementary students older than K were referred by school personnel.

Vision

- Vision screening in Kindergarten to detect vision disorders such as refractive errors, amblyopia and strabismus at an early age (less than 6 years). In the 2016/2017 school year, 1504 k students were screened and 19.6% (295 students) were referred for further assessment.

Dental Health

- Facilitates free and/or low cost dental treatment for children whose families find dental services a financial barrier.
- Provides resources for student dental education.
- Kindergarten dental screening every three years for surveillance purposes. The universal screening was offered in the 2015-16 school year: 18.5% of Kindergarten students had visible tooth decay on at least one tooth, and a further 2% had pain and/or infection. Parents received info about their child's status and were offered free treatment resources.

Richmond Pediatric Team

- Team includes Community Health Nursing Occupational Therapy, and Physiotherapy.
- Provides school-base consultation for children aged 0-19 for nursing support and 5-19 years for occupational therapy and physical therapy.
- Provides educational in-services for school staff.
- Provides input into Individual Education Plan and school-based meetings to support inclusion in the school community.