

September 2018

Dear Principals of Elementary Schools

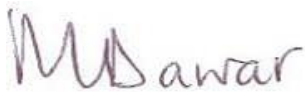
School Health & Program Highlights 2018-2019

This is our annual letter to welcome you back to schools with an update on health programs for this fall. We thank you for your continued support of school health programs and draw your attention to a few highlights:

- 1. Immunization delivery in school** is important to protecting students against serious communicable diseases and prevent outbreaks within school and in the community. Thank you for your support in providing sufficient space and time so students can be immunized safely. Immunization coverage for your school is available [on line](#).
- 2. On-line immunization curriculum in support of provincial objectives now available at kidsboostimmunity.com.** The curriculum aligns with grade 6 social studies objectives on international cooperation and response to global issues, and grade 8 science objectives on microorganisms, immune system, vaccination and impacts of epidemics on populations. This curriculum has been evaluated, and has received raving reviews from students and teachers.
- 3.** The recently released [2018 ParticipACTION Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth](#) reports that **'Canadian children need to move more to boost their brain health'**. Physical activity improves both cognitive function and mental wellness. Leading a more active life can improve how children perform in the classroom, problem-solve and maintain focus. It can improve mood, strengthen self-esteem, decrease feelings of depression and bolster the ability to cope with and recover from stress and anxiety. As only **11%** of Richmond children and youth are getting enough exercise, **we recommend that you consider building in at least 30 mins of moderate to vigorous physical activity for every child during the school day** in order to help them in reaching their daily 60 minute target. In addition, promotion of walking and cycling to school builds in light physical activity which also supports better learning and health outcomes.
- 4.** As **concussion recognition and management** (including back to school planning post injury) are key to decreasing the risk of brain injury, we encourage all staff to participate in the **Concussion Awareness Training Toolkit (CATT) for School Professionals** program. The training is available at cattonline.com.
- 5. 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.

We are keen to partner with you to promote healthy eating, physical activity, mental wellness, and prevention of tobacco and substance use. If you have any questions about the programs and services we offer or 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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Medical Health Officer, Richmond
604-233-3170



Chris Salgado,
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Public Health Programs for Elementary Schools 2018 - 2019

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 & Grade 6).
- Performs individual health assessments and consultation, health education and promotion.
- School Immunization rates are posted at <http://www.vch.ca/for-health-professionals/health-data/immunization-coverage>

Nutrition

- Strengthen food and health literacy initiatives by building capacity and ensuring alignment with the new school curriculum.
- Promote the implementation of the 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 insecurity concerns through collaboration with the broader community, eg, Art Truck, Food Bank Back Pack Program, Feed-U-Cate 38, Nutrition for Learning Fund.
- 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 2017/2018 school year, 97% of Kindergarten students were screened for hearing.
- Five students were diagnosed with a permanent hearing loss.
- Early detection is important.

Vision

- In 2017/2018 school year, 97% of Kindergarten students were screened for vision with 18% of children referred for further testing.
- Vision screening in kindergarten is to detect vision disorders such as refractive errors, amblyopia and strabismus at an early age (less than 6 years).
- Visual concerns for students enrolled in grades 1 to 12 should be assessed by an optometrist. A comprehensive eye exam is usually provided at no cost to parents.

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 occurs every **three** years and **will occur** this school year, 2018- 2019.
- In 2015/2016 screening, 18.5% of Kindergarten students had visible tooth decay on at least one tooth, and a further 2% had pain and/or infection.

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.