



Date: May 11, 2021
To: Administrators and Staff of Vancouver Public and Independent Schools, Elementary and Secondary
From: Dr. Alex Choi, VCH-Vancouver Medical Health Officer
Laura Neilsen Manager, VCH-Vancouver Public Health
Natasha Burnham, Clinical Operations Supervisor, VCH-Vancouver
Cc: Radhika Bhagat, Director, VCH-Public Health

Re: Update on Public Health Services supports for your school community for the 2020-2021 Year

As we head into the remainder of the 2020-2021 school year, we hope that your staff and students remain safe and healthy.

As you are likely aware, Public Health continues to adjust a number of our services in order to prioritize management of the COVID-19 pandemic, and mitigation of COVID-19 transmission in our communities. This includes case and contact follow up and now happily, the delivery of COVID-19 vaccines.

Several services to school age children continue to be available, but are being delivered in a modified fashion. Please review the attached school resources and share with your staff/parents as needed.

Immunization of students in K, grades 6 and 9

Immunizations within the school setting and at Public Health offices are currently on hold due to the demands of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, immunizations for routine vaccine preventable illnesses are important and we encourage children to be immunized on schedule through their Family Physicians and select pharmacies. Please see the link below for a list of participating pharmacies in Vancouver: <http://www.vch.ca/public-health/communicable-diseases-immunizations/immunizations/school-age-immunization-campaign>.

Keeping Public Health updated with any immunizations you receive is important. It helps us to respond quickly to outbreaks in schools and helps everyone get back to learning as soon as possible.

You can provide us with your child's immunization record by using the form "Your Child's Immunization Information" given by the school during registration or online: www.vch.ca/child-immunization-report

Please do not hesitate to reach out and contact us. These are unique and challenging times, and we look forward to working together to support the health of your school communities.

Thank you for your continued work in keeping our communities safe and healthy.

Yours in health,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alex Choi".

Alex Choi MD MHSc CCFP

Medical Health Officer
Vancouver Coastal Health

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Public Health Service

Hearing Screening

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, hearing screening may not be offered to all students in Kindergarten for the 2021/22 school year. If you have concerns about your child at any age, please call 604-659-1100 for a clinic appointment.

Vision Screening

Screening of Kindergarten students in school-based settings is on hold for this school year. Resources for students and their families seeking vision support are as follows:

- Vision information for children and teens is available at [Health Link](#)
- [Medical Services Plan](#) (MSP) covers one full eye examination annually for children aged 0- 18 years. Please note that some Optometrists may charge a fee above what is covered by MSP, and the client is expected to pay the balance if there is one.
- BC [Healthy Kids Program](#) helps middle and low income families with the costs of prescription eyewear for their children. As of January 1, 2020, eligibility for the Healthy Kids Program is based on eligibility for MSP Supplementary Benefits

Dental

For tips on caring for your child’s teeth or to find out if your child is eligible for Public Health Dental services, please see the [Vancouver Public Health Children’s Dental Program](#) or call 604-675-3981.

Public Health Nurse designate:

Many of our Public Health Nurses (PHNs) have been redeployed to management of the COVID-19 pandemic including conducting case and contact management for COVID-19 cases, and **vaccinations** for COVID-19. As a result, we are currently unable to assign dedicated Public Health nursing support to individual schools. If you have specific questions about your child’s health, please call 811.

Medical management of Students with chronic health conditions:

Annual Health & Safety Training looks different this school year. Information on the medical management of students in the school living with anaphylaxis, asthma, diabetes, and can be found on our [School Health Manual](#).

COVID-19 Questions:

Information regarding the COVID-19 pandemic is constantly changing. Up to date information can be found on the BCCDC and VCH websites. If you have individual questions about the health of you or your loved ones, call 811.

Youth Services

Youth Clinic services remain by appointment only in Vancouver. Vancouver youth clinics are centralized and operating out of the East Van Youth Clinic location (1669 East Broadway). Youth can leave a message on the central phone line (778-871-7132) to book an appointment.

