

Welcome to Kindergarten

Supporting Healthy Learners at School

VCH's school health programs provide immunizations, health information, and referrals for school-aged children, staff, and parents. In this handout you will find information about public health programs, services and resources to support your child and family. Each school has a Public Health Nurse who works with schools and families to support healthy learners. More information about public health services related to school health can be found on the [North Shore School Health Manual](#).

Getting Ready for a Healthy Start to Learning

Starting Kindergarten is a big change. A brand new 'big' school, with new routines, many new people and friends. It is common for children and parents to feel many emotions and have questions about making friends, the new school and routines.

Resources for parents:

Helping kids cope with back to school emotions:

<https://www.anxietycanada.com/articles/helping-your-child-cope-with-back-to-school-anxiety/>

The morning struggle:

<http://vch.eduhealth.ca/PDFs/GK/GK.600.M67.pdf>

Sleep and your preschooler:

<http://vch.eduhealth.ca/PDFs/GK/GK.600.S54.pdf>

Screen Time and Your Child:

<http://vch.eduhealth.ca/PDFs/GK/GK.300.T45.pdf>

Best Start – A booklet for parents: Learning to Play and Playing to Learn:

https://www.beststart.org/resources/html/child_dev/pdf/school_readiness_english_fnl.pdf

Kindergarten Immunization

Immunization is your child's best protection now and in the future and it is important to ensure they are up-to-date. At kindergarten an immunization booster is needed for Diphtheria, Whooping cough, Tetanus, Polio **and** a booster of Measles, Mumps, Rubella, Chicken Pox. For more information:

immunizebc.ca

It is recommended children receive the kindergarten immunizations before starting school. If your child has not had their 4-6 year old booster shots, you can have them done with your Family Dr. or Public Health, to book an appointment with Public Health please visit us at Jane App: <https://northshorepublichealth.janeapp.com/>

Immunization Records

Providing immunization records to public health helps us respond quickly to outbreaks in schools and helps everyone get back to learning as soon as possible. Since 2019, the collection of immunization information for school age students is also required by law. If your Child's record is not on file or Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) does not have it on file you can submit it to

Northshorevaccinerecord@vch.ca

COVID-19 Information

Please see the BCCDC and VCH websites for the most up to date information. If you have specific questions, please call 811.

Students Requiring Additional Support

Please review with the school staff EVERY year if your child has the following:

- Anaphylaxis (severe allergy)
- Diabetes
- Seizures
- Asthma
- Attention, behavior, learning needs
- Blood clotting disorder
- Heart conditions
- Another life threatening condition
- Complex feeding
- Developmental disabilities



Dental

Children with healthy teeth have better mental and social well-being, and learn better at school. Tooth decay can be prevented with good daily dental care, nutrition and regular visits to the dentist or dental hygienist every six months. It is important to limiting sweet, sticky foods, brushing with fluoride toothpaste 2 times a day and visiting the dentist regularly starting around 1 year of age. Resources are available for children who do not have dental benefits.

Vision

Good vision is important for children's learning and development. All children should see an optometrist before Kindergarten, to start school ready to learn. There is no cost for vision exams for children. If your child has visual difficulties or a known hearing loss, please talk to your child's teacher.

BC Healthy Kids Program

If your family has limited income, your child may qualify for the BC Healthy Kids Program. This program provides dental and vision coverage for children under 19 years. For information, call Ministry of Health at 1-866-866-0800.

Raising a Healthy Eater

Healthy eating will help your child have energy to learn and play.

Ways to help your child include:

- Enjoying meals together as much as possible without screens or other distractions.
- Remembering that the Parent's/caregiver's responsibility is what, when and where children eat, and that the child's responsibility is if and how much they eat at each meal.

During kindergarten hours, children need a healthy lunch and two snacks. Water is the best choice for thirst.

Health Link BC

To speak with a Dietitian, Pharmacist or Nurse call Health Link BC at 8-1-1 or you can visit healthlinkbc.ca to find resources. This free 24 hour service is available in many different languages.

Hearing

The Hearing Screening Team visits kindergarten students in every elementary school to screen for hearing loss and for medical conditions of the outer and middle ear.

Keeping Your Child Well

Parents play an important role in teaching children to wash their hands. Handwashing can become a lifelong healthy habit if you start teaching it at an early age. Handwashing with soap and water, for at least 30 seconds, is the best way to stop the spread of germs. Handwashing is important before and after eating, using the toilet, blowing their noses.

When Should I keep My Child Home from school?

Please keep your child home if they:

- Have a fever.
- Have any cold, flu like symptoms you are unsure about.
- Have a suspected or known communicable disease (i.e. strep throat, chicken pox).
- Are vomiting or have diarrhea. It is recommended that students be symptom free at least 24 hours before returning to school.
- For up to date information on childhood infections visit www.sneezedisease.com.

Sleep

Children age five to twelve require 9 – 11 hours of uninterrupted sleep per night. As they start Kindergarten, due to all the changes, the amount of learning they are doing as well as any extra-curricular and social activities they are participating in; children often appear more tired. Therefore, sleep is more important than ever to support their behavior and ability to transition and navigate their new world. The right amount of sleep fosters learning and the ability to adapt to the demands and emotions that they will experience. Regular and early bed times are important.

Children Learn Through Play!

Children who are physically active are healthier and perform better at school. Canadian guidelines recommend 60 minutes of moderate to intense physical activity per day for children. Choosing to walk or bicycle to school can help to meet this guideline and, increase the children's safety by reducing traffic around the school.

