

Getting Ready for a Healthy School Year

The public health nurse is the main point of contact for health services in your child's school. A number of other health care professionals also provide service. The link below is to the **North Shore School Health Manual (SHM)** which describes these services as well as provides general school health information.

www.vch.ca/schoolhealth/ns

Medical Alerts

If your child has a serious medical condition such as:

- A life-threatening allergy
- Diabetes
- Seizure disorder
- Severe asthma
- Blood clotting disorder
- Serious heart condition
- Special needs with a life threatening condition



Please:

1. Notify the school office and teacher.
2. Complete the Medical Alert forms from the office.
3. Provide any prescribed emergency medication at the start of the school year.

(See Section 12 SHM for more information and see school office staff for paperwork)

Vision and Hearing

Kindergarten students will have their vision and hearing checked at school. Vision and hearing are very important for student learning. It is recommended that children's vision be first screened at age 3. 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.

(See Section 5 and 6 SHM for more information)



www.healthyfamiliesbc.ca

Vaccinations (Immunizations)

You might be asked to submit a copy of your child's immunization history on entry to kindergarten by completing the *IMMUNIZATION HISTORY FORM* you receive from Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) in the mail. If you do not receive this form VCH already has a complete history on file for your child. Immunization histories can be submitted the following ways:

1. **At your child's school**
2. **Online:**
www.vch.ca/self-report-child-immunizations
3. **Fax: 604-983-6883**

Please Include **all** vaccine dates.

This information is important to quickly identify children who are not protected against vaccine preventable diseases in the event of a communicable disease outbreak.

Prior to starting kindergarten, your child should be up-to-date for all their vaccinations including the boosters recommended at this age. The Public Health Nurse will review your child's immunization history. You will be informed of any outstanding vaccines. Weekly clinics are offered by appointment or by drop-in.

(See Section 2 SHM for more information)

For more information on immunizations please visit:
www.immunizebc.ca

Dental

Dental health in children is important for their overall health and for their ability to speak and to learn to read. All children should visit a dentist at 1 year of age and should have their teeth checked and cleaned twice a year.



(See Section 7 SHM for more information)

Transitions

For a child starting kindergarten, this is an exciting time and a period of change and transition. Feeling anxious is normal and expected even for a child who has attended preschool and/or child-care. As a parent, it is important to support your child through this transition and help him/her to regulate their feelings. Resources to help your child cope with back to school anxiety, fears or worries can be found at:

<http://www.anxietybc.com/parenting/helping-your-child-cope-back-school-anxiety>



Healthy Lunch and Snacks

During kindergarten hours, children need a healthy lunch and two snacks to support healthy growth, development and learning. Choose foods from the four food groups from Canada's Food Guide: Vegetables and Fruit, Grain Products; Milk and Alternatives; and Meat and Alternatives. Water is the best choice for thirst. Food should be manageable for small hands. Regular healthy eating contributes to self regulation of emotions and feeling well. Please be aware of other children's allergies in your child's class.



(See Section 4 SHM for more information and examples)

Active Living

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 reduces school traffic.



Sleep

There is an increasing demand on your child's time from school, sports, and other extra-curricular and social activities. Sleep problems and disorders are common at this age. Poor or inadequate sleep can lead to mood swings, behavioral problems and poor thinking skills that could impact their ability to learn in school. For this reason, it is important that children age five to twelve get 10 – 11 hours of sleep per night.



Sleep Tips for School-aged Children

- Keep regular sleep and wake times.
- Relax before bed – allow for quiet time.
- Make child's bedroom conducive to sleep – dark, cool and quiet.
- Keep TV and computers out of the bedroom and no screen time at least 1 hour before bed.
- Avoid caffeine or sugar (sports drinks, pop, sugared cereal, chocolate).
- Practice an early bedtime routine well in advance of school starting in September.

www.healthyfamiliesbc.ca/home/articles/good-sleep-habits-10-tips-children

When Should I Keep My Child Home from School?

Please keep your child home if he/she:

- Has a fever.
- Is too sick to take part in all normal school activities.
- Has a suspected or known communicable disease (i.e. strep throat, chicken pox, measles or any other undiagnosed rash).
- Is vomiting or has diarrhea. It is recommended that students be symptom free at least 24 hours before returning to school.

(See Section 2 in the SHM for more information)

Hand Washing

Hand washing with soap and water, for at least 30 seconds, is the best way to stop the spread of germs. Teach children to always wash their hands before eating, after using the toilet or blowing their nose.

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