

WELCOME BACK TO SCHOOL

COVID-19 SCREENING

Screening for COVID-19 symptoms is important before attending school each day. The online screening tool can help you decide if your child should or should not go to school. Anyone who is feeling sick should stay home until symptoms have improved for at least 24 hours and there is no fever. The removal of provincial requirements does not mean that the risk for COVID-19 is gone. We still need to do our part to protect ourselves and others from COVID-19. This includes practicing good hand hygiene and wearing a mask where recommended or required.

HANDWASHING

The single most important thing that can be done to prevent infections in a school setting is to keep hands clean.

To stop the spread of germs in your family, make regular hand washing a rule for everyone. It's especially important:

- before eating and cooking
- after using the bathroom
- after cleaning around the house
- after touching animals, including family pets
- before and after visiting or taking care of any sick friends or relatives
- after blowing one's nose, coughing, or sneezing
- after being outside (playing, gardening, walking the dog, etc.)

IMMUNIZATIONS

Vaccinating your children is the best way to keep them safe from many serious and potentially deadly diseases.

Parents/guardians are required to provide updated information to the Health Unit, as health care providers do not necessarily report this information to us. Call the Health Unit to review your child's vaccination record or go online: Timiskaming Health Unit Immunization Record (Yellow Card). Below are the routine school vaccines. For 4-year-old vaccines, please book an appointment with the Timiskaming Health Unit or your family doctor. For grade 7 and students aged 14 to 16, keep an eye out for consent forms for your child to receive their vaccines at school. They can also book an appointment at the Health Unit if they prefer.

- **Students aged 4:** Measles, Mumps, Rubella, Varicella (MMRV), and the Tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis and polio (Tdap-IPV) vaccines
- **Grade 7:** The meningococcal conjugate vaccine and the human papillomavirus (HPV) and hepatitis B vaccines series.
- **Students aged 14 to 16:** A three-in-one Tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis (Tdap) booster vaccine.



VAPING, ALCOHOL & DRUGS

As parents and caregivers, you can have a positive influence in your child's life!

The best way to help avoid problematic substance use is to prevent and delay use of alcohol, tobacco and other substances. This all starts with what researchers call protective factors or developmental assets. These factors or assets can help contribute to a child's healthy development, self-esteem, success and resilience. The more supported and connected kids are, the less likely they are to participate in high risk behaviours like vaping, drinking alcohol or using drugs.

This means having positive family communication and support, relationships with other positive adults who are good role models, establishing clear and consistent boundaries, as well as involvement in youth programs and sports.

We do our best by teaching them how to go through life safely and in good health. Just as you would talk with your kids about other safety issues, begin the conversations about substances early on, and make sure the information you give them is right for their age and stage of development. Take this opportunity to build empathy in your child and avoid language that can be stigmatizing to those experiencing substance use disorders.

Starting early and keeping the lines of communication open as your child grows can make a big difference in preventing problematic substance use. Be sure to check out our website for great tools to help guide your conversation.

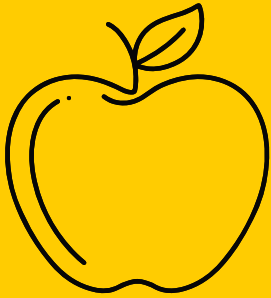
MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health is more than the absence of mental illness. Positive mental health is a state of well-being that allows us to enjoy our lives and can help children and youth dealt with the normal ups and downs of life. Taking care of our mental health is just as important as taking care of our physical health. Positive mental health in childhood builds the foundation for a healthy, happy and productive life. Good mental health contributes to strong relationships, academic success, ability to adapt to changes, and healthy lifestyle behaviours and can help prevent the onset of anxiety and depression. As a caring adult, you play an important role in helping promote positive mental health of the children in your care by:

- Encouraging them with kind words and noticing their efforts
- Praising their good choices and behaviours
- Listening and respecting their feelings
- Spending time together, and giving them your undivided attention
- Showing them affection – giving hugs can help create a sense of belonging and increase self-esteem.
- Being active together
- Talking about mental health with their health care provider.
- Being a good role model and taking care of your own mental health.
- Teaching them that sometimes, it's ok to not be ok.



NUTRITION



Children and teens are growing and likely so are their appetites! Healthy eating is important at every age. Creating healthy habits when kids are young can help them through their whole life. Involve your child or teen in planning and preparing meals will give them the confidence they need to make healthy choices and learn the skills they will need in adulthood. Eat together as a family as often as possible. Children and teens should get a variety of vegetables and fruits, whole grains, and protein rich foods every day. Making healthy drink choices is as important as food choices too! Water should be the first choice but other options can be unsweetened juices, or low fat white milk.

PACKING HEALTHY SCHOOL LUNCHES

Your child is ready to learn and is more alert when they eat a variety of foods as recommended by Canada's Food Guide. Follow these easy steps to pack their school lunch:

- Pack plenty of vegetables and fruit!
- Include a protein rich food like lentils, chickpeas, bean dip, a hard-boiled egg, cheese, canned light tuna or salmon, yogurt or sliced lean meat.
- Include wholegrain food like pasta, brown rice, quinoa, pita, a bun or a tortilla.

To learn how to make your own lunch kit, check this [resource](#)



PROMOTING A HEALTHY BODY IMAGE



Children start to form eating habits and develop a body image as young as three years old! As a parent, you can play an important role. Your actions and words can have a big influence. Be aware of the messages you send about your body and the comments you make about the appearance of others. Reinforcing positive messaging that healthy bodies come in different shapes and sizes, focusing on skills and abilities rather than appearance, and educating young people about the influence of media are important ways to help young people develop a positive body image.

SLEEP

Sleep is essential for healthy development and mental health. Youth need between 8-13 hours of sleep a night depending on their age. See the [24-Hour Movement Guidelines](#) for age specific information. Here are some tips to help your child get a good night's rest:

- Limit screen time before bed. Using electronic media and being exposed to the screen's light before trying to sleep can make it harder to fall asleep. Try using the blue light filter, and having all screens turned off when it's bedtime.
- Encourage a relaxing bedtime routine. Having a warm bath or shower, or reading a book are good ways to help slow down and signal to their brain that it's time for bed.
- Set the mood. Keep their room cool, dark and quiet but open the curtains or turn on the lights as soon as they get up in the morning. The room should also be free of televisions and other screen devices.
- Provide a sit down bedtime snack even if your child didn't eat much at dinner. Make it something filling but not thrilling, such as: cereal and 2% or whole milk, fruit and yogurt dip, sliced veggies and hummus or whole grain crackers and low-fat cheese. Offer the bedtime snack at least one hour before bed.
- Avoid offering foods or drinks high in caffeine (pop, chocolate, tea, coffee), sugar, or salt. They may make your child more alert and awake and interfere with their sleep.
- Encourage them to fall asleep in their bed. Use your bed for sleeping only. If possible, avoid doing homework, using a smartphone or tablet, or playing video games while in bed. Try to be in bed with the lights out for at least 8 hours every night.
- Napping during the day can make it difficult to fall asleep. If your child/teen wants to nap, keep it short (less than 30 minutes). Definitely don't nap after dinner.
- Get exercise every day, but avoid very strenuous exercise or play in the evening. Going for a walk, yoga or gentle stretching may help their body prepare for sleep.
- Maintain a regular bedtime and morning wake-up routine. Going to bed and getting up at relatively the same time everyday helps to maintain good sleep patterns.

ORAL HEALTH

Our dental team will offer dental screenings for children in JK, SK, grades 2, 4 and 7. Keep an eye out for more information that will be sent out throughout the school year before the dental team comes to your child's school.

Some children may be eligible to enroll in the Healthy Smiles Ontario program if financial aid is required. For more information, visit Ontario.ca/healthysmiles or contact us.



CHECK OUT THESE WEBSITES FOR MORE INFORMATION

[Drug Free Kids Canada](#) for tips on how to talk to your kids about substances, parent support hubs, facts on different substances and more.

[Search Institute](#) to learn more about the developmental assets and the positive factors kids need to thrive.

[School Mental Health Ontario](#) for information on mental health, when and how to seek support for your child.

[Canada's Food Guide](#) on how to help your family develop healthy eating habits

[ParticipACTION](#) for how physical activity can help every part of your life

24 Hour Movement Guidelines for [Early Years \(0-4\)](#) | [Children & Youth \(5-17\)](#)

[CaringForKids.cps.ca](#) for trusted information from Canadian pediatricians

[WalkNRoll.ca](#) Local active school travel routes and road safety tips for youth

[About Kids Health](#) for tips on how to help promote positive body image

[School Lunch Your Kids Will Munch](#) for ideas for a healthy school lunch.

[Unlock Food](#) for information from the Dietitians of Canada on healthy eating, picky eating, and cooking with kids.

[Ontario.ca/HealthySmiles](#) for information on the dental program

[Ontario.ca/COVID-19](#) for up to date information on COVID-10 screening,, vaccination eligibility and more

ACTIVE SCHOOL TRAVEL

Walking, wheeling (ie. bike, scooter, skateboard), carpooling, parking 1-2 blocks away and walking the last leg of the journey helps students and families get active while reducing car traffic around the school. Taking the time to walk together to and from school allows you time connect with your child and provides an opportunity to reinforce road safety (crossing the road, using sidewalks etc.). Practicing the route together with younger children helps them gain confidence in walking to and from school independently when they are the appropriate age. Plan the route to school, identifying possible dangers – visit [WalkNRoll.ca](#) for a map of your school's walk zone.

Road safety is everyone's responsibility. As a driver be alert – pedestrians (both children and teens) can be unpredictable, drive slower in school zones to help increase your reaction time and reduce the risk of a collision



CONTACT US

Need more information about our programs and services, get in touch!



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[www.timiskaminghu.com](#)



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Health Unit