

Date:	August 23, 2019
To:	Program Leads, Public Health Practice Public Health Resource Nurses (PHRNs) Interprofessional Teams (IPTs) Community Service Managers (CSMs) Team Leads (TLs) Site Coordinators Primary Care Nurses (PCNs) Public Health Nurses (PHNs)
cc.	Population and Preventive Public Health
From:	Petrina Bryant, Regional Nursing Lead, Healthy Schools and Youth Population and Preventive Public Health
Re:	School health priorities for the 2019/2020 school year

This memo provides information on the required tasks performed by the Interprofessional teams (IPTs) in the school setting for the 2019/2020 school year. It also includes the [letter and documents](#) shared with school districts by our Chief Medical Health Officer and Medical Health Officers regarding the Northern Health supports that are available to schools across the north.

Foundational support to a healthy school:

Supporting school health and creating healthy schools involves ongoing support and relationship between the school and a health professional throughout the school year. Evidence suggests that school health is improved when there is continuous interaction between the school and an identified health professional, with open communication for connection in both directions. Therefore, it is a strategic priority that IPT dedicate individuals to regular communication and coordination with each school to develop this ongoing relationship. This is a first step in supporting comprehensive school health.

Comprehensive School Health:

The Comprehensive School Health (CSH) approach is critical to planning broad school health services and health promotion. It is a framework that holistically addresses health and wellness in the school setting, so students are supported to realize their full potential as learners and as healthy, productive members of society. Population and Preventive Public Health acknowledges that IPT teams are faced with complex realities and competing priorities; over time, CSH is not intended to be more work but rather a more holistic way of approaching the work.

Priority tasks for Interprofessional teams in the 2019/2020 school year:

The required tasks listed below are meant to be undertaken during the school year based on school needs. If you have any questions regarding these activities, please contact your Public Health Resource Nurse. (Practice support resources are available on the [Healthy Schools](#) OurNH page).

- Connect with school principals early in the school year to discuss school health programming.¹ An [“Introduction to your School’s Health Care Team” letter](#) has been used in previous years. A template for the letter is on OurNH and can be adapted and used at the discretion of CSMs and Team Leads.
- To support practice, we recommend that the PCN or other member of the IPT complete the [School Health Profile](#) with the school principal and keep a record in their school binder.
- Plan, coordinate, and implement school immunization programs for students in grade 6 and grade 9.
- Plan, coordinate, and implement kindergarten health events that include immunizations, screening for vision, audiology and dental; display and provide health promotion resources.
- Regarding students with potentially life threatening medical conditions:
 - Ensure schools have a primary and ongoing contact with a Primary Care Nurse or another member of the IPT for planning and consultation.
 - Provide annual education for school staff around potentially life threatening illnesses such as anaphylaxis, epilepsy and diabetes (include glucagon administration training when requested by a parent).
 - Refer children and youth to Nursing Support Services when required.
- Provide follow up for questions and investigations related to communicable disease, including situations involving a more urgent infectious disease, such as measles, mumps, or pertussis.

Other information and resources: In addition to the work that the IPT does in the schools, other NH programs also focus on health promotion initiatives and provide supports to schools. There is no current identified role for IPTs in this work, yet ongoing efforts will be made to coordinate activities through organizational system change.

Population and Preventive Public Health Programs:

Regional Population and Preventive Public Health programs also provide supports in developing healthy schools. Activities performed by regional programs in the 2019/2020 school year will include:

- School inspections (food safety, water, sanitation, air quality, physical environment, etc.) inspections occur every 3 years and are organized by local Northern Health Environmental Health Teams.

¹ For your information, School Districts receive an information package from Northern Health’s Chief Medical Health Officer in August 2019. In this package, school districts are assigned to designated School Medical Health Officers. The package also contains a letter and documents that outlines the NH supports available to schools.

- Regional health promotion activities and resources.

Practice Change for Communicable Disease (CD) Reporting in 2017:

In 2017, practice changes were implemented for school absenteeism reporting. Schools are no longer required to routinely report >10% absenteeism to Northern Health. The purpose of reporting was to enable NH public health staff to assist with CD outbreak and the implementation of infection control measures. We believe that the same goal can be achieved more efficiently by providing schools with educational resources on control of common communicable diseases (such as common colds, influenza, and gastroenteritis) at the beginning of the school year. This will equip them to prevent CD outbreaks from occurring in the first place, and support effective control of outbreaks should they occur. Schools are encouraged to keep track of specific reasons for absences due to common illnesses, in order to detect situations requiring increased attention to infection control.

- Resources and information on CD and infection control measures are sent to School District Superintendents (for distribution to schools) from the Chief Medical Health Officer and Medical Health Officers.

For more information and resources to support schools and practice visit the external Northern Health [School and Youth Health](#) website or the [Healthy Schools](#) page on OurNH. I look forward to supporting comprehensive school health in the upcoming 2019/2020 school year.

Best Regards,



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