

Attachment 1: Toronto Public Health's School Health Services

In accordance with the [Ontario Public Health Standards \(OPHS\), 2021](#) and [School Health Guideline, 2018](#), Toronto Public Health (TPH) delivers a broad range of school health services, which are outlined below.

Preparing Students for a Successful Transition to School

School readiness programs help children and families prepare for a healthy and successful transition to school. Toronto Public Health provides resources and information about key topics such as disease prevention, immunization, stress, sleep, physical activity, nutrition, dental and oral care, speech and language, and vision health. This includes facilitating workshops to prepare children for kindergarten, such as Welcome to Kindergarten and Getting Ready for Kindergarten. Toronto Public Health's Reproductive and Early Years and Healthy Babies, Healthy Children programs also contribute to school readiness by helping children establish a healthy start in life. These services are offered to parents/caregivers during the preconception, prenatal, postpartum, early parenting and child development stages, providing a range of services related to breastfeeding and infant feeding, parenting, postpartum adjustment, healthy attachment and early identification of developmental concerns.

Preventing Infectious Diseases

As required by the OPHS and the accompanying [Immunization for Children in Schools and Licensed Child Care Settings Protocol, 2018](#), TPH implements and enforces Ontario's Immunization of School Pupils Act (ISPA), which requires students who attend elementary and secondary school to be vaccinated against nine designated diseases or to have a valid exemption. A key priority for TPH is to reduce the number of students that are suspended from school (due to non-compliance with the ISPA) and reduce the average duration of ISPA-related student suspensions. Immunization services for school-age children and youth have been scaled up following disruptions to vaccine access during the COVID-19 pandemic. A multi-faceted approach is used to facilitate high vaccination rates among elementary and secondary school-aged students and prevent vaccine-preventable disease outbreaks in schools, this includes:

- assessing and maintaining immunization records and/or exemptions for students attending school in Toronto, including an enforcement function to confirm ISPA compliance (e.g. issuing notification letters and suspension orders).
- providing education, resources and information about the ISPA through city-wide public education and outreach efforts to improve knowledge and confidence in immunization programs and services.
- delivering the Student Immunization Program (SIP) which provides free meningococcal, hepatitis B and human papillomavirus vaccines in schools to grade 7 and 8 students who are behind on their immunization.

- hosting community-based vaccine clinics as an option for school-aged children who do not have a healthcare provider to receive vaccinations (e.g. ISPA vaccine catch-up, measles response).
- conducting proactive outreach to parents and principals prior to active suspensions and providing remote and or/onsite assistance during the active suspension period related to the ISPA.

In the 2024-25 school year, TPH held 879 SIP clinics at 435 schools (across all four Toronto public school boards and select independent schools), providing 79,785 vaccines and vaccinating a total of 20,893 students in grades 7 and 8. In addition, TPH hosted 27 high school vaccine clinics, and 65 community catch up clinics which provided extra vaccination opportunities for school-aged children.

Promoting Vision Health and Comprehensive Eye Exams

As per the OPHS, public health units are required to support awareness of, access to, and utilization of visual health services. Toronto Public health promotes vision health and comprehensive eye exams by raising awareness among parents about the importance of early identification of vision problems. This is achieved through targeted digital, social, and print media communications. The goals of the communication strategy are to:

- raise awareness about the importance of visual health, early identification of vision issues and school board initiatives.
- help parents and caregivers navigate the health care system to find vision services.
- increase awareness that comprehensive eye exams are covered by OHIP for anyone 19 years or age and under.

Dental Screening and Education to Improve Oral Health

In accordance with the OPHS and its [Oral Health Protocol, 2019](#), TPH conducts annual dental screenings in elementary schools. Screenings target specific grades, including Junior Kindergarten, Senior Kindergarten and grade 2 in all schools, as well as grades 4 and 7 based on the overall level of risk for the school. These screenings identify emergency, essential and preventative dental needs. Children and families also receive oral health education and information, assistance enrolling in the Healthy Smiles Ontario Program, and help finding a dental provider to access treatment. Eligible children and youth can also access free dental care services at TPH Dental Clinics. In the 2024-2025 school year: ^{1 2}

- 174,850 dental screenings of school-aged children in schools were performed by TPH
- 25,985 children were identified with tooth decay and referred for treatment. Of these children:
 - 8,248 were identified as urgent and 17,737 as non-urgent decay
 - 46,137 children identified as requiring preventative care

Promoting Mental Health and Preventing Substance Use-Related Harms

As per the OPHS, public health units are required to assist school boards with the implementation of health-related curriculum to address health needs. [As previously reported in 2023](#), mental health and substance use have been identified as challenges for school-aged children and youth in recent years, particularly following the COVID-19 pandemic. These issues remain key priorities for TPH and school board partners. While the provision of direct mental health or substance use services falls outside of TPH's mandate in schools, health promotion efforts focus on strengthening protective factors such as a positive school climate, healthy coping strategies, self-confidence, a strong sense of belonging, and positive self-esteem. Toronto Public Health shares curriculum learning materials, provides consultation, education and referrals; and responds to school service requests about mental health and/or substance use.

Toronto Public Health works with school staff, administration, parents/guardians and youth to prevent and reduce harms related to substance use, including alcohol, cannabis, vaping and tobacco. Prevention efforts focus on education about the risks and harms of substance use to help students make healthier choices. These efforts include online tools and resources such as the [Safer Partying Toolkit](#), a [Vaping Hub](#) with accessible and culturally responsive resources and programming on smoking/vaping prevention and cessation, school-based education and youth leadership programming, and public awareness campaigns about the health risks associated with substance use.

Toronto Public Health supports the implementation of mental health promotion initiatives that foster emotional resilience, reduce stigma, promote help-seeking behaviours and prevent violence. For example, TPH is partnering with the Toronto District School Board to implement Western University's Centre for School Mental Health program, the Healthy Relationships Plus program. This program promotes healthy relationships, supports positive mental health, and reduces dating and peer violence with grade 7/8 students. This aligns with the [Toronto Healthy Schools Strategy](#) goal to expand research on the health of students, including their mental health and well-being.

Health promotion initiatives also address broader factors that impact mental health. The Into Kids' Health (IKH) program is an example of a comprehensive, evidence-informed initiative that aims to create healthy school communities and reduce health disparities among children and youth. Toronto Public Health conducts comprehensive school community assessments, develops and implements action plans, coordinates services with local partners, engages parents and students, and provides small grants for action plan activities. In the 2024-25 school year, TPH partnered with the Toronto District School Board and Toronto Catholic District School Board to implement IKH in 30 new schools, reaching approximately 7000 students.³ Initiatives included revitalizing outdoor spaces such as gardens, playgrounds, and outdoor inquiry centres, replenishing play equipment and promoting daily physical activity, water consumption, and food literacy. For the 2025-2026 school year, the program is expected to expand to 32 additional schools and reach an additional 6500 students.

Promoting Physical Activity and Exercise

The OPHS recommends physical activity as a key topic for health curriculum in schools. Nutrition and physical activity are also key components of the Foundations for a Healthy School Framework and are integrated into all aspects of the school environment. In 2023, the Ontario Student Drug Use and Health Survey found that 23.5 percent of students in grades 7-12 in the Greater Toronto Area reported being physically active daily for at least 60 minutes in the past week.⁴ Toronto Public Health provides health information and resources to promote physical activity through curriculum and student engagement initiatives such as the Playground Activity Leaders in Schools program. Toronto Public Health also collaborates with Green Communities Canada on the School Travel Planning Initiative which encourages active and sustainable travel to school, including walking and cycling, and supports improved road safety.

Promoting Healthy Eating and Improving Access to Nutritious Food

The City of Toronto is making significant investments towards expanding Student Nutrition Programs (SNPs). In June 2025, City Council adopted recommendations on a vision and strategy for SNPs where a universal morning meal program will be implemented by 2026 and a universal lunch program implemented by 2030. Toronto Public Health is working in collaboration with the City Manager's Office to support the phased expansion of a universal morning meal program. The SNP entered Phase 2 of the expansion in Fall 2025 by adding 49 new school communities. By the end of the Phase 2 expansion, 685 school communities or 81% of Toronto's public schools will operate a SNP. Through TPH, the City of Toronto provides funding to school communities via foundation partners to assist with the delivery of healthy meals or snacks, with TPH overseeing the grant application and review process.

Toronto Public Health promotes healthy eating in children, youth, and parents / guardians by planning and implementing food literacy activities for staff, parents and students. This includes providing nutrition consultation and menu planning services to help programs follow the Ontario Student Nutrition Program Nutrition Guidelines, while monitoring implementation of the Ontario Food Premises Regulations. During the 2023-2024 school year, 87 percent (325 of 373) of high priority municipally funded SNPs received nutrition consultation services, with 91 percent of participants indicating satisfaction with the health nutrition training received.⁵

Promoting Healthy Sexuality and Preventing Negative Health Outcomes

The OPHS recommends healthy sexuality as a key topic for school health curriculum. Toronto Public Health's Sexual Health Promotion (SHP) team delivers a wide range of services and programs to students to prevent sexually transmitted and blood-borne infections, unintended pregnancies, and promote healthy sexuality throughout the lifespan. Key activities include providing education, outreach, consultation services, and tailored workshops on sexual health topics such as consent and communication,

healthy relationships, healthy growth and development, reproductive health, gender identity, sexual orientation and healthy sexuality.

Toronto Public Health delivers these services directly to students while also supporting parents/guardians/caregivers, educators, and service providers with increasing awareness, education and capacity building initiatives. Services and resources are age and developmentally appropriate, accessible and reflect diverse identities, experiences and social locations of students and their families. The SHP program also funds and co-administers the City's Condom Distribution Program which provides community schools/organizations serving priority communities with quantities of free safer sex supplies to distribute to their communities.

Promoting Healthy Indoor Environments

The Ontario Ministry of Education oversees the administration and management of schools, including establishing health and safety measures to maintain safe learning environments, such as infrastructure improvements (e.g. updates to ventilation systems). In alignment with the Foundations for a Healthy School Framework, TPH collaborates with local school boards and individual schools to enhance overall school health promotion. Toronto Public Health shares information and resources to reduce the spread of respiratory infections and works directly with schools to promote these resources within their school communities. These efforts contribute to the prevention of respiratory illnesses at school and at home.

Responding to Cases and Outbreaks of Reportable Diseases in Schools

The [Health Protection and Promotion Act \(HPPA\)](#) and [Ontario Reg. 135/18](#) requires school principals to report suspected or confirmed cases of specified diseases of public health significance to local public health units. Toronto Public Health's Control of Infectious Diseases and Infection Control team works with schools to complete outbreak investigations and implement appropriate control measures to minimize and stop the spread of outbreaks in the schools. This includes confirming the diagnosis, identifying the possible source of infection, and identifying contacts for public health management and education.

Creating Safe Eating Environments and Water Facilities

As required by the [Food Safety Protocol 2019](#), TPH enforces the [Food Premises Regulation](#) and conducts food safety inspections of cafeterias, student nutrition programs and other food premises located in all publicly funded and independent schools to help maintain safe food handling and service to prevent foodborne illnesses. Additionally, as mandated by the [Ontario Recreational Water Protocol 2019](#), TPH enforces the [Ontario Regulation 565 \(Public Pools\)](#) and conducts compliance inspections of public swimming pools and recreational water facilities in schools to help maintain safe and healthy recreational water facilities.

Supporting Learning Environments that are Free of Smoke, Vapour & Tobacco

As required by the [Tobacco, Vapour & Smoke Protocol](#), TPH enforces the Smoke-Free Ontario Act and conducts annual compliance inspections at each secondary school. Coupled with substance use health promotion activities these efforts work to reduce the use and deter uptake of vaping and smoking.

1 Toronto Public Health. (2025). Population Health Status Indicator Dashboard: Child and Youth Health. Available from:

<https://www.ontariohealthprofiles.ca/torontohealthstatus/child&youth.php>

2 Toronto Public Health (2025). Dental and Oral Health Services Program Data.

3 Toronto Public Health (2025). School Health Data.

⁴ Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (2023). The Mental Health and Well-Being of Ontario Students 1991-2023: Findings from the Ontario Student Drug Use and Healthy Survey Summary Report. Retrieved at; https://www.camh.ca/-/media/research-files/osduhs-summary_mental-health-and-wellbeing-report_2023.pdf

5 Toronto Public Health (2025). Student Nutrition Program Data