

July 13, 2026

Toronto Board of Health
City Hall, Committee Room 1
100 Queen Street West
Toronto ON M5H 2N2

Dear Board Members,

**Re: Endorsement of the Council of Chief Medical Officers of Health Position
Statement on Digital Culture and Child and Youth Well-Being**

The Council of Chief Medical Officers of Health (CCMOH) recently released a position statement on digital culture and child and youth well-being. The statement highlights growing evidence that social media, smartphones and other online platforms can affect the health and well-being of children and youth. It concludes that the potential harms warrant a precautionary public health approach and coordinated action across sectors.

The statement was developed and endorsed by Chief Medical Officers of Health from across Canada. It recognizes that supporting healthy digital environments is a shared responsibility among families, schools, health systems, communities, industry and governments. It encourages consideration of digital culture through a public health lens and highlights the importance of coordinated action to support children and youth.

The Board of Health has consistently supported initiatives that promote the health and well-being of children and youth. On October 22, 2025, the Board of Health adopted item HL28.1 - Working with Schools to Improve the Health and Well-being of Children and Youth, which directed the Medical Officer of Health to work with school board partners on the development of the next Toronto Healthy Schools Strategy and to include a focus on student mental health and well-being, including the impacts of screen time. The principles outlined in the CCMOH position statement align with this direction and with ongoing work with school board partners to support student mental health and well-being and promote healthy school environments. The position statement also advances the goals of Our Health, Our City by supporting a coordinated approach to promoting child and youth health and well-being. By endorsing the CCMOH position statement and sharing it with school boards, the Board of Health can support an evidence-informed approach to addressing the impacts of digital culture on children and youth.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. The Board of Health endorse the position statement by the Council of Chief Medical Officers of Health on digital culture and child and youth well-being, that:
 - a. states the evidence of potential harm to children and youth from social media and smartphones warrants public health action; and
 - b. frames digital technology not only as a parenting or educational issue but as an emerging population health concern that requires coordinated action across sectors.
2. The Board of Health request the Medical Officer of Health to share the Council of Chief Medical Officers of Health Position Statement with school boards for consideration in the development of the next Toronto Healthy Schools Strategy, with respect to improving mental health and well-being of students, including the impacts of screen time.
3. Board of Health recommend City Council request the General Manager, Children's Services; Executive Director, Social Development; and the General Manager, Parks and Recreation to consider the Council of Chief Medical Officers of Health Position Statement on digital culture and child and youth well-being in the development of policies and programs, in particular, the following recommendations for mitigating the harms associated with digital culture:
 - a. Build digital literacy and digital 'checks' into training curriculums for professionals who educate and care for children and youth
 - b. Increase inclusive and accessible options for people to connect and engage offline across a range of interests and activities

Sincerely,



Chris Moise
City Councillor
Ward 13 - Toronto Centre

CM/mp