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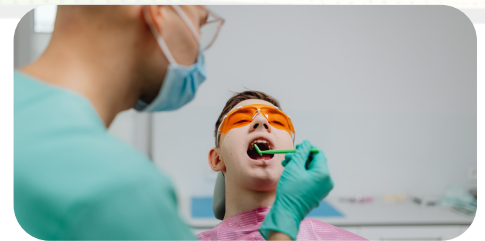
THE SCHOOL HEALTH NEWSLETTER



Celebrating Oral Health Month

Smile! April is National Oral Health Month.

During the 2024/25 school year, Public Health provided dental screenings for 6069 students in select grades in Grey Bruce. A screening involves a visual scan by a registered Dental Hygienist, using a sterilized mirror to inspect for any oral health concerns. After the screening, a dental report card is sent home with findings and recommendations.



Families who cannot afford to visit the dentist can access the Healthy Smiles Ontario program. For support with the application process or to answer other questions, parents or educators can call 519-376-9420 ext. 8 to speak with an oral health professional.

Remember, lifelong smiles start with early prevention!

Rethinking Poison

What comes to mind when you think of poison? Scary chemicals in a lab? It's not always that simple. Many everyday items—like medications, vitamins, plants, and even some foods—are safe when used properly but can be harmful if used incorrectly.

Medications, cough and cold products, and natural health products are among the most common causes of poisoning in Canada. Always read labels, follow instructions carefully, and consult a health-care provider if you're unsure.

If you suspect poisoning, contact the *Ontario Poison Centre* at **1-800-268-9017**.



School Immunizations

In Ontario, as per the [*Immunization of School Pupils Act, 1990*](#) (ISPA), all students between the ages of 4-17 must provide proof of routine childhood immunization against Tetanus, Diphtheria, Pertussis, Polio, Measles, Mumps, Rubella, Meningitis, and Varicella (for children born in 2010 and after), or have a valid exemption, to attend school. This information is used to help protect students and the public in case of a vaccine-preventable disease outbreak in our community.

Each year, Grey Bruce Public Health assesses student immunization records in Grey-Bruce. Students who can't provide proof of immunization or a valid exemption may be suspended from school for up to 20 school days. Over several months leading up to this suspension period, students and/or guardians are provided with notices and an opportunity to ensure their immunizations and records are up to date.

In addition to our school clinics and regular community clinics, Grey Bruce Public Health held several immunization clinics over March Break to help students get the vaccines they need to comply with the ISPA.

This year, the school suspension period runs from **March 24, 2026, to April 22, 2026**, inclusive, for students whose vaccine records remain incomplete at that time. Public Health Units and schools are required to enforce the ISPA.

During the suspension period, Grey Bruce Public Health will maintain a real-time listing, each business day, of students in each school who are on the ISPA suspension list. This will start at least one week before the suspension period and will be shared with Principals, Vice-Principals, Office Managers, and, in some cases, an additional office staff member, so multiple members of the school staff have access to this information promptly. If you have not yet sent us a list of who in your school needs access (and their email address), please do so now. We recommend that 2-4 staff at each school have access.

Please send your school name and list of staff to:

- Email: immunization@publichealthgreybruce.on.ca
- Fax: 519-376-7782

You can direct students and families to call Grey Bruce Public Health at 519-376-9420 if they have any questions regarding the suspension process.

We sincerely thank you for your partnership in this process and your help in building a healthier future for all.

In-School Vision Screening



Free, in-school vision screenings for senior kindergarten students are returning to Bluewater Schools.

Did you know that up to 80 percent of learning in school relies on vision? Vision is essential to health and development, but sometimes problems can go unnoticed. Children may not be aware of their poor vision, assuming others see the way they do, and adults may not recognize poor vision if the child is functioning well.

Signs a student may be struggling with their eyes in your class include:

- Losing place while reading
- Holding materials closer than usual
- Eye rubbing
- Red, itchy, or watery eyes
- Frequent headaches
- Squinting at the board

Vision screening will be conducted during the school day by trained Lions Club volunteers and overseen by Public Health. Screenings consist of three simple, non-invasive tools which check for common childhood vision concerns. In-school vision screening clinics promote the importance of early eye health; they do not replace comprehensive eye examinations.



Regardless of how students perform with the screening tools, all parents are provided with guidance to have their child seen by an optometrist for a comprehensive eye examination. Early intervention can support a child's academic achievement and social confidence.

OHIP covers annual exams for those under 20. If students require prescription glasses, financial support may be available.

Please reach out to the School Health Team if your school has any questions related to this program or if a family needs support – schools@publichealthgreybruce.on.ca.

Routine Grade 7 Immunization Clinics

The Grey Bruce Public Health Vaccine Preventable Diseases nurses will once again be attending elementary schools this spring to offer all grade 7 students the mandatory Meningococcal vaccine, and the recommended Hepatitis B and Human Papillomavirus vaccines.

Any grade 8 students who missed one of these clinics last year will also be offered the vaccines they need to complete this series.

These clinics will begin in April 2026, and schedules have been provided to each school through the school boards.



Students Against Impaired Driving (SAID) Day - May 14

Alcohol-impaired driving is one of the leading causes of death on the roads in Ontario.

Teachers and students can raise awareness of these tragedies by organizing SAID Day activities at their school. Promote the importance of never driving impaired or riding with an impaired driver through activities such as:

- School announcements
- Social media accounts using #saidday2026
- Starting an OSAID group at your school
- Hosting trivia challenges
- Singing a pledge

The first 50 schools to sign up and promote SAID Day at their school will receive free promotional materials, including T-shirts, 2'x6' pledge signing banner and stickers, decals, posters, and more! Also, monetary prizes will be awarded to the schools with the best overall SAID Day activities (\$200), second-best overall (\$50), and a random draw for all participating schools (\$50).

You can find general substance use and harm reduction curriculum content and classroom resources on our public [website](#).