

HEALTH and SAFETY

HEALTH NEWS

VAPING/ELECTRONIC CIGARETTES

Vaping rates among Canadian teens has skyrocketed in recent years and e-cigarettes are the most frequently used tobacco product among adolescents. Health Canada released information this fall, warning potential users of an increased risk to lung damage and to monitor their health for symptoms of pulmonary illness. This summer, the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention in the United States also launched an investigation into why more than 149 people — primarily teens and young adults — have been hospitalized with severe lung illness after vaping. Health Canada states that children and youth are especially susceptible to the harmful effects of nicotine, including addiction. They may become dependent on nicotine with lower levels of exposure than adults.

Nicotine:

- can affect memory and concentration
- is known to alter teen brain development

Exposure to nicotine during adolescence may cause:

- reduced impulse control
- cognitive and behavioural problems

Vaping may predispose youth to addiction to nicotine and possibly other drugs. Alberta Health Services has released the following information and tips for parents.

What do parents need to know?

- Nicotine can affect brain development in teens.
- Teaching your teen the negative effects early could make the difference.
- Some e-cigarettes have candy flavouring, which could make them appealing to someone who has not smoked before, especially teens.
- E-cigarettes don't leave a smell like tobacco so it's going to be harder to know if your teen is vaping.

What can parents do?

- Be clear that smoking of any kind is off limits.
- Educate your kids that e-cigarettes may contain nicotine which is highly addictive.
- Learn as much as you can about e-cigarettes and know what they look like.
- Watch for signs of use, such as dry cough, as well as mouth and throat irritation.

For more information and support, visit albertaquits.ca or call toll free **1 866 710-QUIT (7848)**



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FENTANYL

According to Health Canada, Canada's illegal drug supply is being contaminated with illegal fentanyl and other fentanyl-like drugs (e.g. carfentanil). You can't see, taste or smell fentanyl and a few grains can be enough to kill you. Fentanyl is an inexpensive way for drug dealers to make street drugs more powerful and it is causing high rates of overdoses and overdose deaths.

What makes fentanyl so dangerous?

Fentanyl is a dangerous drug because:

- it is 20 to 40 times more potent than heroin and 100 times more potent than morphine, which makes the risk of accidental overdose very high
- a very small amount (about the size of a few grains of salt) of pure fentanyl is enough to kill the average adult
- it is odourless and tasteless, so you may not even know you are taking it
- it can be mixed with other drugs such as heroin and cocaine, and is also being found in counterfeit pills that are made to look like prescription opioids

Signs of a fentanyl or opioid overdose

The signs of a fentanyl overdose are the same as for all opioid overdoses:

- severe sleepiness or loss of consciousness
- slow, shallow breathing
- lips and nails turn blue
- person is unresponsive
- gurgling sounds or snoring
- cold and clammy skin
- tiny pupils

What to do if you suspect an overdose

If you think someone is overdosing on fentanyl or any other opioid:

- call 911 immediately for emergency medical assistance:
 - [*Canada's Good Samaritan Drug Overdose Act*](#) provides an exemption from charges of simple possession of a controlled substance as well as from charges concerning a pre-trial release, probation order, conditional sentence or parole violations related to simple possession for people who call 911 for themselves or another person suffering an overdose, as well as anyone who is at the scene when emergency help arrives.

- administer naloxone, a drug that can temporarily reverse the effects of an opioid overdose:
 - naloxone wears off in 20 to 90 minutes, so it is important to seek further medical attention
 - Visit [*Alberta Health Services*](#) for information on where to pick up a naloxone kit.
- give the person another dose of naloxone if signs and symptoms do not disappear or reappear
- stay until emergency services arrive



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MENTAL HEALTH

Edmonton Catholic Schools will be supporting student mental health through a Comprehensive School Health Framework. This framework is an internationally recognized approach to supporting improvements in students' educational outcomes while addressing school health in a planned, integrated and holistic way.

This whole-school model builds capacity to incorporate well-being as an essential aspect of student achievement. Actions address four distinct, but inter-related components that comprise a comprehensive school health approach:

- Social and physical environment
- Teaching and learning
- Healthy school policy
- Partnerships and services

When actions in all four components are harmonized, students are supported to realize their full potential as learners – and as healthy, productive members of society.

To view our Mental Health Strategic Plan click [here](#).



HEALTH and SAFETY

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

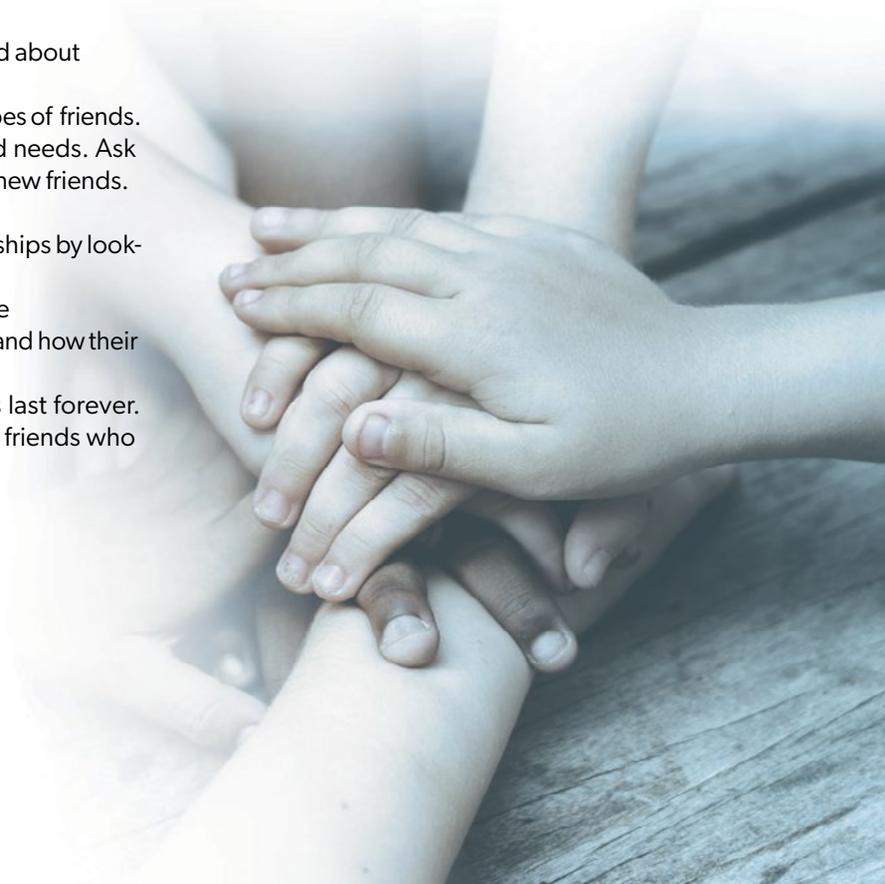
Children learn about relationships through example your relationship with your child creates the template for their future relationships. Peer relationships are important for children's well-being and development, providing children with developmental and social opportunities not available in their relationships with adults.

Making new friends can be difficult for some children and teenagers. Here are some tips for your children to build social skills and create new healthy friendships.

- Watch and learn from sociable people
- Listen and don't always feel like you have to talk
- Ask people about themselves. Make eye contact while they're speaking and follow up with a couple of questions.
- Be patient; the process can take time
- Disconnect from technology
- Get out and join clubs or groups at school or in the community.

What can parents do?

- Teach your child conversation starters.
- Discuss social skills. Talk with your child about social cues and rules.
- Remind them that there are different types of friends.
- Understand what your child wants and needs. Ask your child what they are looking for in new friends.
- Help them recognize possible friends.
- Explore new ways they can start friendships by looking at your child's interests.
- Talk about behaviours that can damage friendships and help your child understand how their behaviour can impact other people.
- Explain that friendships don't always last forever. Support your kids spending time with friends who have a positive influence.



HEALTH and SAFETY

SAFETY NEWS

THE DANGERS OF LIVE STREAMING

The dangers of live streaming video are very real for both children and their parents. With the vast access to cameras, connecting with video is easier than ever and live streaming is now mainstream. Apps like Instagram Live, Facebook Live, Snapchat and others allow us to engage and are very popular with tweens and teens.

There is no safety-net with live-streaming and The National Crime Agency has warned that sex offenders are increasingly using them to exploit children and there's an urgent need to educate children about the dangers.

Cyber Smart Canada lists the following as some of the dangers of live streaming:

- Children being followed and interacting with adults—most of these conversations are inappropriate and live-streaming is a dream come true for online predators. They're able to view the person in an unedited, intimate moment and there is little or no incriminating data once it is done.
- Some kids give out their social media information with their entire audience. (A child giving out their Facebook, Snapchat, or Instagram information like this, allows any stranger a way to find, connect and follow your child online.)

- Lots of kids broadcast from their bedrooms. A child's bedroom is no place for strangers, both in person or virtually – it is a very private space and should remain that way.
- Broadcasting live also opens your kids to online bullies and trolls. These individuals are cruel and can harm a child's self-esteem.

What can parents do?

- It is important to stay involved in your child's online life.
- Be aware of the apps your kids have on their devices.
- Be certain to use the proper safety settings and always disable location services on your child's device.



HEALTH and SAFETY

YELLOW SCHOOL BUS SAFETY

Student safety on the bus ride to and from school is a priority for the District. Here is specific information regarding bus delays, cold weather and winter road conditions.

Delayed bus

As soon as Transportation Services is advised by the bus company that a bus route is running more than 10 minutes late, an automated phone message is sent to parents with the approximate time delay. The message is sent to the phone number(s) and email address completed on the transportation application form.

Cold Weather

Given the weather extremes in Edmonton, it is impossible to guarantee that buses will always run on time. Parents are reminded to dress their children warmly for the cold weather and to ensure that their child knows to return home or to a pre-selected location if the bus does not show up on time. Parents are advised to exercise their own discretion as to how long a student should wait for the bus.

Winter Road Conditions

Due to road conditions, especially on the residential neighbourhood streets, a bus may not be able to operate safely and travel to all stops. In this situation, parents may receive a phone call from their child's bus driver if it is not safe to drop-off or pick-up at the designated stop and an alternate, temporary safe stop location will be arranged with the parents and bus driver.

For more information about transportation, parents can contact their child's school or ECSD Transportation Services Department at **780 441-6078**. Transportation Services is open from 7:15 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. (4:00 p.m. on early dismissal Thursdays).



SAFETY

Stay clear of the danger zone, the area directly around a school bus. As soon as you step down from the bus, take 5 giant steps away from the bus. Remember that if you can't see the driver, then the driver can't see you.

Arrive at the bus stop 5 minutes before your scheduled time.

Find your assigned seat and stay seated, facing forward at all times.

Everyone needs to listen to the bus driver's instructions.

Treat everyone on the bus with courtesy and respect. Remember the Golden Rule – treat others as you would like to be treated.

Your safety is our #1 priority. Please follow the safety rules.