

A NEW STANDARD FOR

# How Schools Support Student Well-Being and Respond to Substance Use

Information for Families and Caregivers



A national initiative to transform school-based substance use prevention, education, and intervention in Canada



# What is the standard?

**Schools across Canada are getting new guidance on how to support students around substance use.**

A pan-Canadian standard has been created to help schools support student well-being and respond to substance use. It guides schools in building a positive school climate where students feel they belong, teaching skills and strategies that prevent and reduce substance use, and supporting students who may be struggling. It was created by researchers, teachers, health workers, and young people from across Canada.

## What does it mean for my child?

The standard helps schools take a caring approach that fits your child's age and stage. In younger grades, the focus is on helping children build strong bonds, manage their emotions, and feel like they belong at school. In middle grades, students start learning about substance use and practice skills such as making healthy choices. In senior grades, students learn how to lower risks and get ready for life after high school.

At every stage, the standard asks schools to focus on what helps students do well and to support them when something goes wrong. This means making sure students feel safe, connected, and supported by caring adults.

## What does it mean for families?

**The standard sees families and caregivers as key partners.**

Schools are guided to include families in shaping how substance use is handled. They are also asked to share tools that help you talk with your child at home. When a student needs extra help, schools and families are encouraged to work together in partnership to support the student.



# What makes this standard different?

Our understanding of what works in substance use prevention, education, and intervention has grown a lot over the years.

We now know that students do best when they feel connected, supported, and informed. The new standard is built from this updated evidence. It focuses on building students' strengths, giving honest information when the time is right, and responding with care when a student is struggling.

**Students do best when they feel:**



## Learn More:

Anchoring Change is a national initiative to transform school-based substance use prevention, education, and intervention in Canada



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