

A NEW STANDARD FOR

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

Information for Students & Young People



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

# What is this About?

A new pan-Canadian standard has been created to guide how schools support students' health and wellbeing and respond to student substance use. Young people helped build this standard.

## What is a standard?

It's like a set of directions to help everyone get on the right path and head in the same direction.

This standard has four goals:



Prevent harms  
before they start



Help students feel  
and do their best



Teach correct  
information



Offer support instead  
of punishing students

# Why was it created?

The best substance use programs give students honest information, help them build skills, and respond with support when someone is struggling. But right now, schools across Canada don't have a shared guide for how to do this. Approaches are different from place to place, and many schools are working hard without the direction they need. Young people across Canada have been clear about what they want: a school where they feel like they belong, supportive relationships with adults, honest information (rather than messages meant to scare them), and help and respect when they need it.

This standard was built to match what the research shows works best and what young people are asking for.

## Students want and deserve:

  
**HONEST  
INFORMATION**

**TO FEEL LIKE  
THEY BELONG**



**SUPPORTIVE  
RELATIONSHIPS**





# Your Voice Matters!

One of the key ideas in the standard is **student voice**. This means young people aren't just the focus — they are active partners in shaping what happens. The standard says students should have a real say in how schools reduce risks and respond to substance use.

**Your ideas, experiences, and feedback should help shape the plans and decisions your school makes.** The goal is for students to be involved in how schools put it into action.

# What could change or keep getting better at your school?



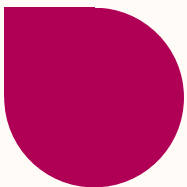
Your school may already be doing a lot of this. The standard helps schools keep building on it:



Make school a place where you belong, because feeling safe and connected at school helps students in all parts of their lives



Respond with care when a student is struggling, instead of jumping to suspension or other punishment



Help you build skills like making healthy choices, handling stress, and knowing how to get help when you or a friend needs it



Give honest, clear information instead of using messages meant to scare you



Include you in choices about how your school talks about and responds to substance use

## Learn More:

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



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