

## MEDIA RELEASE

# ***How are Richmond adolescents doing?***

McCreary Centre Society today released the regional results of the 2018 BC Adolescent Health Survey for Richmond.

The survey was completed by over 38,000 of the province's Grade 7–12 students, and Richmond results show that most local students are happy, healthy and engaged in their school and community.

Encouraging findings included decreases in the percentage of students who experienced a serious concussion, smoked tobacco and engaged in binge drinking; and a decrease in the percentage of girls who had attempted suicide. There was also an increase in the percentage of youth who felt they had an adult in their community who cared about them, and in males who felt connected to their community.

However, not all the local results were positive, as McCreary's Executive Director Annie Smith explained: *"It is worrying to see the rise in discrimination, sexual harassment and mental health challenges reported by Richmond youth, and to see the percentage who didn't access needed mental health services almost doubled from five years ago – particularly when one of the main reasons they miss out on services is that they are worried about their parents finding out."*

Smith went on to say *"Despite some worrying trends we do see that youth in Richmond are faring better than their peers in many other parts of the province – and even in areas where they have traditionally reported poorer results there are encouraging findings. For example, we have seen a decline in organized sports participation across BC but not in Richmond where participation rates are still at the same level they were a decade ago - which is not only bucking provincial trends but Canadian and International trends too."*

Smith concluded *"I also think what really comes through in the report is the importance of young people having unstructured time, time offline, enough sleep, healthy eating habits, and supportive adults and friends."*

A copy of the report, *Balance and connection in Richmond: The health and well-being of our youth*, and results of the 2018 BC Adolescent Health Survey can be obtained at [www.mcs.bc.ca](http://www.mcs.bc.ca).

**The report will be available at 9am on September 19th at [www.mcs.bc.ca](http://www.mcs.bc.ca).**

A Power Point presentation is also available at [www.mcs.bc.ca](http://www.mcs.bc.ca).

*McCreary Centre Society is a non-government, non-profit organization committed to improving the health of BC youth through research, evaluation and community-based projects.*

*Founded in 1977, our vision is that all youth are supported to be healthy and connected.*

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## **BACKGROUNDER**

The 2018 BC Adolescent Health Survey was conducted in 58 of BC's 60 school districts and is the sixth time students have been asked to complete the comprehensive health survey since 1992. Richmond has participated in five of the six waves of the survey.

Participation was the highest since the survey began, and the results are considered representative of over 95% of mainstream school students in Grades 7–12 in the province.

The survey provides essential information about health trends, and about risk and protective factors that can influence young people's healthy transitions to adulthood. The 2018 survey included 140 questions asking youth about their perceptions of their current physical and mental health, their engagement in health promoting and health risk behaviours, and about factors that can contribute to a healthy transition to adulthood.

### **Some key findings from the report:**

Although Richmond youth remained less likely than those across the province to have met Canadian physical activity guidelines, the percentage of females aged 12–17 who exercised for 60 minutes daily increased (from 7% in 2013 to 10%). The percentage who played weekly organized sports remained stable (52%).

There was a decrease in the percentage of Richmond students who experienced a concussion in the past year (from 11% in 2013 to 8%). A little over half (54%) of those who experienced a concussion received medical treatment for their head injury.

There was an increase in the percentage of Richmond students who reported having a mental health condition, including Depression (12% vs. 7% in 2013) and Anxiety Disorder/panic attacks (12% vs. 6% in 2013).

The percentage who had seriously considered suicide in the past year rose from 10% in 2013 to 15%. However, there was a decrease in the percentage of females who attempted suicide, and Richmond youth were less likely than their peers provincially to have attempted suicide (3% vs. 5%).

The percentage of Richmond students who had not accessed needed mental health services in the past year rose from 10% in 2013 to 19%. The most common reasons for missing out on care included not wanting their parents to know and thinking or hoping the problem would go away.

There was a decrease in smoking tobacco (from 14% in 2013 to 9% in 2018). However, 9% of youth who had never smoked tobacco had vaped with nicotine and 10% had vaped without nicotine in the past month.

Students in Richmond were generally less likely to have used substances than their peers across BC. Local students who did use substances waited longer to first try tobacco or marijuana than their peers in previous years and were less likely to engage in binge drinking. However, compared to 2013 the percentage who had driven after drinking alcohol doubled.

Youth in Richmond were more likely than those across BC to have experienced racial discrimination (17% vs. 14%). Additionally, there were local increases in this type of discrimination as well as discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender/sex.

There was an increase from 2013 in females who experienced sexual harassment in the past year. However, Richmond females were less likely than those across the province to have experienced either verbal (42% vs. 50%) or physical (24% vs. 31%) sexual harassment.

Most students had parents who monitored their free time and their time online. However, 11% had parents who rarely or never knew what they were doing in their free time, and 37% reported their parents rarely or never monitored their time online.

Overall, 78% of Richmond students felt safe at school, which was higher than the 73% across BC.

Similar to youth across the province, 45% of students in Richmond felt quite a bit or very connected to their community. Female rates of community connectedness remained stable, and there was an increase for males (from 36% in 2013 to 46% in 2018).

The percentage of youth who felt there was an adult in their community who cared about them rose from 51% in 2013 to 59% in 2018.

Just under a third of youth (31%) had at least one close friend online whom they had never met in person, and 6% had dated someone online whom they had never met in person.

Around 1 in 5 (21%) did not feel they got to spend enough time with their family, and the same percentage did not feel they got enough time to do what they wanted on their own. Also, 46% did not feel they got enough time in nature.

Students who felt they had the right amount of time to spend on their own were more likely to report positive mental health and well-being, including feeling happy in the past month, and were less likely to experience extreme stress.

Most youth could identify something they were really good at, and felt good about themselves. Also, Richmond youth generally reported satisfaction with their life (e.g., felt they have a good life) and were hopeful for their future.