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For Immediate Release

Ambulance paramedics offer tips to help young students with hand hygiene & masks

VANCOUVER, B.C., August 24, 2020 – Due to the nature of their jobs, ambulance paramedics practice good hand hygiene, and as BC gets set to open schools, the Ambulance Paramedics of BC want to help alleviate anxiety among parents by sharing some tips to ensure children – especially the younger set – wear masks and wash their hands properly.

“Every year at the start of the school season, we educate parents and children about hazards of the road. Who would have thought we would add a pandemic to our public education,” said Troy Clifford, president of Ambulance Paramedics of B.C.

“Research shows that children as young as three understand the concept of germs,” said Megan Lawrence, public education director with the Ambulance Paramedics of BC. “Good hand hygiene starts at home and now we need to take it to classrooms.”

Lawrence offers these tips for parents:

- Put glitter on your child’s hands and let them play with a few toys. After a few minutes, together with your child, examine where the glitter is – all over the toys and likely their face and body. Explain that germs will stick to everything, just like glitter, and that is why washing hands thoroughly is important.
- Remind your child to sing “Happy Birthday” twice before they finish washing their hands.
- Be sure to teach them to rub their fingertips during hand washing.
- To help children avoid touching their face, keep hair shorter or put long hair in a ponytail to reduce the temptation to adjust hair and touch face.
- Consider using sunglass lanyards on masks for younger children to avoid having them get dropped or lost.
- Let your children pick a personalized mask so it feels less clinical and reflects their individuality and personal style.

Rules of the road

BC’s ambulance paramedics remind drivers to respect school-zone speed limits and watch for children who don’t necessarily know the rules of the road. Also, parents need to be vigilant and patient during drop-offs and pick-ups.

“Never call your child from across the road because your child may assume it is safe to cross,” said Lawrence.

Here are some tips for students:

- Be visible – wear bright colours and reflective gear so others can see you
- Make sure traffic has stopped and make eye contact with drivers before stepping out on the road to cross the street
- When possible, walk on sidewalks or pathways. If you must walk on the road, never walk with your back to oncoming traffic.
- Don’t text while walking or cycling.
- If you are wearing headphones, keep one earbud out and the volume low. You need to *see* and *hear* what is going on around you.

Ambulance Paramedics of British Columbia is the union that represents the 4,500+ Paramedics and Emergency Medical Dispatchers of the province of British Columbia. Please visit www.apbc.ca for more information.

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