



# Vancouver Aboriginal Health Society

## Puberty Rites Day Camp – July 25-28 at New Brighton Park Information for Parents/Guardians

July 8, 2022

Dear Parents/Guardians,

We would like to welcome participants to the first VAHS Puberty Rites Day Camp. My name is Jackie Hans and I am the VAHS Cultural Coordinator. I would like to share more information around what you and your children can expect at the camp.

We will start each day with a morning cultural greeting, prayers, and songs with Elders. There will be a variety of activities, crafts, ceremonies, and games throughout the camp, including a drum making workshop. Smudging will also be taught and shared.

On our first day, we will hold an introductory sweat lodge ceremony. The sweat lodge will be warm, not hot, so participants can be comfortable if it is their first experience. We will also hold a water ceremony or spirit bath, which will be taught in ocean water on a safe beach.

**We will discuss a variety of topics, including:** sexual health, body changes during puberty, gender, sexuality, and relationships. These discussions will be led by nurses, Elders, and Knowledge Keepers, with support from VAHS staff. Most activities will take place in Girls and Boys groups, and we support youth who are Two-Spirit, transgender, intersex, and/or non-binary to join the group that is best for their needs.

At the end of the four days, participants who complete the training will receive a certificate and a cultural wellness bundle that includes a feather.

**We ask that each participant brings sunscreen, a bathing suit, a towel, and a sun hat to the camp.** We will be asking all participants to **not use technology** during the day and to leave devices at home if possible. VAHS staff will be available at all times for emergency calls.

If a ride is needed to/from the camp, we will leave 717 Princess Avenue at 9:00 AM each day and return at approximately 3:45 PM. Breakfast will be served starting at 8:30.

We will have more information on the camp closer to the first day. I will be the main contact person for the camp and ask you to contact me directly if you have any questions or concerns at **(236) 518-4864**. We look forward to supporting your children in this important time in their lives.

All my relations,

**Jackie Hans, VAHS Cultural Coordinator**