



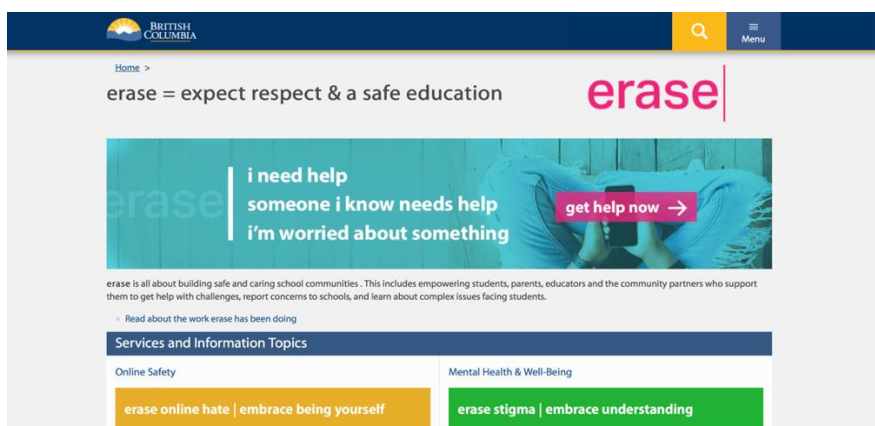
## Creating Safer Schools



*Students thrive when they feel respected and safe in their classrooms and in their communities, including those online. The recently expanded erase strategy (Expect Respect and a Safe Education) is contributing to a safe and inclusive education system through an updated website, training sessions for educators, tools for students to get help and support, and sessions for students and parents.*

*erase* was launched in 2012 with a primary focus on creating safe and caring schools, preventing bullying, identifying risks and responding to threats through training and resources for educators and community partners. Theresa Campbell, president of Safer Schools Together and the developer and lead trainer of *erase*, says that British Columbia “is the only province to have a comprehensive prevention and intervention student-safety strategy to help prevent, identify and stop harmful behaviours that occur online, at school or in the community.”

With the evolution of social media and a growing recognition of the need to support youth mental health, *erase* has evolved in response to emerging wellness and safety concerns.



## A Resource-Rich Website

At the centre of the initiative is a new and enhanced website ([erase.gov.bc.ca](https://erase.gov.bc.ca)) with resources on topics that include mental health and wellness, substance use, social media, bullying and violence, and sexual orientation and gender identity.

*“The erase site’s expansion of content supports the message that our schools are safe communities that engage and welcome all students,” says Scott Stinson, Superintendent of Schools for School District No. 62. “The new content gives our students additional pathways to engage in discussion or seek resolution and support for challenges.”*

Downloadable PDFs, links to online resources, videos and brochures all provide accessible and easy-to-understand information on a range of topics.

The site prominently showcases a **Get Help** section, where students can access 24/7 phone and text support and online chats if they, or someone they know, needs help. There’s also a **Report It tool** for sending a direct message to the student’s school or district’s safe school co-ordinator. Students do not have to provide their name when using these supports.



## Capacity-Building Training

Professional learning has been a hallmark of *erase* from the beginning. Since 2012, more than 18,000 educators and community partners have attended over 280 training sessions on creating safe schools and communities. That training is being expanded and now incorporates online threat assessment and traumatic event systems (trauma response and recovery).

New initiatives also include online training modules so teachers can stay up to date on best practices in identifying worrisome behaviour, school connectedness, violence and social media. Workshops for parents on mental health awareness and raising digitally responsible youth will continue to be offered.

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## Bringing People Together to Support Our Students

The success of *erase* reminds us that building a positive school culture requires a multi-faceted approach and the commitment of many organizations and individuals.

In February, the Ministry of Education is hosting its second annual School Community Mental Health Conference entitled *Leading Mentally Healthy Schools in BC*. This two-day conference will bring together representatives from school districts, law enforcement, and child and youth mental health services to strengthen the capacity of school-community teams to support students and promote mental health and wellness in BC schools.



## Learn More

- › Share the word! **erase.gov.bc.ca** includes a wealth of resources for educators, students, parents and the general public.
- › The **Tools for Schools** section of the *erase* site includes downloadable graphics and logos you can use to promote *erase* at your school.
- › **Safer Schools Together** works with the Ministry of Education to ensure the *erase* strategy continues to respond to current concerns; the organization's website includes a list of presentations, links to resources for professionals and parents, and updates on emerging issues.