



SUTHERLAND SECONDARY SCHOOL

1860 Sutherland Avenue, North Vancouver, BC V7L 4C2 Telephone: 604-903-3500



August 29, 2024

Dear Sutherland Families,

Tl'iknumut, and welcome! Sutherland staff have been busy preparing for the beginning of another exciting school year, and we're pleased to provide the following updates to help students and their families transition into the fall routine. Please take a few moments to review the following important information.

With a projected enrolment of over 1025 students, including almost 200 new Grade 8 Sabres, and over 75 staff, Sutherland continues to be a growing school community. This year, we are excited to welcome a few new faces to our teaching staff: Georgia Curtis-Corkum (Learning Services), Karen Birchenall (Learning Services), Jared Abreu (Socials Studies), Tatiana Kuehn (Math / Business), David Murton (Science), and Stephanie Mile (Science). Other returning teaching staff who we are pleased to have back include Kate Inch (PHE / Science) and Paul Towler (Socials / English). We're looking forward to welcoming new Education Assistants Argine Ramirez, Maggie Bryan, and Vanessa Brookes.

Our immensely popular school theme of "Pride, Passion, Place" from last year will continue into the 2024-25 school year. These three words speak to a desire to help students find their place in an inclusive and welcoming school, to give them a strong sense of belonging and identity as members of our school – to feel proud to be a Sabre – and to situate that identity within the larger community. We hope you'll continue to notice tangible evidence of this theme throughout the year in activities, groups, events, and initiatives.

One of the first great activities of the year is the *Grade 8 Retreat*; an event our school takes passionate pride in and helps our newest cohort of students find their sense of place. This year's retreat will be happening October 2-4 at the beautiful Cheakamus Centre in Brackendale, just north of Squamish. Incoming Grade 8 students will be receiving a package of information about this event during homeroom on Tuesday, September 3rd, and a follow up email with digital copies of all the information will be sent home on Friday, September 6th to ensure it reaches Grade 8 families. Questions about the retreat can be directed to Vice Principal, Ms. Cora Pross (cpross@sd44.ca). As part of the retreat our Grade 8s will be inducted as Sabres in a new Sutherland t-shirt!

At the start of 2024 the Provincial Government announced measures regarding the restriction of digital devices in schools. Sutherland has been ahead of the curve in this respect having already implemented our own measures around cell phones at the beginning of last school year. Beginning this school year **all** NVSD secondary schools will be implementing similar guidelines which stipulate that **access to, and use of personal digital devices (PDDs) will not be permitted during instructional time**. At the teacher's discretion, an exemption may be made when the use of such devices supports a specific curricular objective and is part of instructional planning. Students with specific educational or medical needs outlined in their Individual Education Plan (IEP) or Learning Support Plan (LSP) will

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continue to use PDDs to support their educational or medical needs. If you have any questions, please contact your child's case manager.

In a related development, and to help improve access to the school district internet for students and staff, the application *TikTok* will no longer be accessible via the NVSD network for personal devices. This change was developed through the district ICT Advisory Committee which includes representatives from stakeholder groups including students, staff, and parents, and was fully supported by all members of the committee. We hope this measure will help improve the network experience for users making appropriate use of the internet for educational purposes.

As a final technology update, a reminder that secondary student passwords expire at the start of the school year and need to be changed annually to provide an extra layer of security and help protect students from potential unauthorized access to their accounts. Students will need to reset their password when they first log in to email, Microsoft Teams, OneDrive, NVSD Portal or a school device. Students are advised to reset their password via <https://tscd.sd44.ca/updatepassword> before the start of the school year. For additional information, please visit the [Student District Login FAQ](#). IT staff will be at the school on September 4th to provide support, and school staff can reset a password if your child can no longer remember their old password. Thank you to all our families in advance for your support with all the measures being taken around technology use, and for supporting your students as we work towards maintaining a high degree of engagement in our classes.

In other news, over the summer our facilities department was busy making some updates and upgrades to our building and campus. One item of particular note was the repainting of the lines for parking stalls, speed bumps and traffic arrows. A reminder that the parking lot at Sutherland allows for one-way traffic only. Please be mindful when entering the drop-off and parking area that drivers are following the appropriate flow of traffic and taking care when pulling in and out of the drop-off area. As always, we continue to encourage active transport to and from school for students, including walking, biking and public transit.

As previously announced, Sutherland's timetable this year will remain in a semester model. Sutherland teachers are available for drop-in Tutorial Time from 8:30am to 9:11am Tuesday to Friday, and Monday's by appointment. I encourage all our students to make the most of this time by connecting with their teachers each morning to avail themselves of this excellent support. Our full daily schedule can be found on our school website [here](#).

We are looking forward to welcoming students back into the building on Tuesday, September 3rd for their opening day assemblies, facilitated by their grade counselors and administrators. Please note the following schedule:

- **Grade 8 – Tuesday, Sept 3 @ 9:45am**
- **Grade 9 & 10 – Tuesday, Sept 3 @ 12:00pm**
- **Grade 11 & 12 – Tuesday, Sept 3 @ 1:00pm**

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Grade 8 students will have orientation activities following their assembly and should anticipate attending school from 9:45am until 12:00pm. Grades 9 to 12 will attend first a 45 min assembly, followed by a 15-minute homeroom for demographic and IT updates on the opening Tuesday.

Wednesday, September 4th is the first official day of classes. We will be holding another mandatory 8:30am [homeroom](#) for all students to return important start-of-year information, including emergency & demographic items, and to distribute schedules for grade 9-12 students. Lockers will be distributed to Grade 8 students, while Grades 9 through 12 will be invited optionally to register for a locker using a QR code posted in the school.

School start-up is an exceptionally busy time for all, especially for our grade-counselors. I know that Ms. Dhanji (Gr 8 & 12), Mr. Pather (Gr 11 & International), and Ms. Lo (Gr 9 & 10) endeavour to respond to families in as timely a manner as possible, and in most cases within 48 hours of a message. Families' patience in circumstances when it takes a bit longer, particularly at this time of the year, is much appreciated. During the first week of school, counselors are prioritizing students who have empty or incomplete timetables. A reminder for families that our firm add/drop date for any course changes is September 24th. It is vitally important that class enrolments are settled by this date and that students are not leaving classes after this date, especially in the semester model where the same classes are meeting each and every day.

Finally, I would like to extend a special acknowledgement to our Grade 12 students: the Class of 2025. I am extremely excited to be working you in the final year of your K-12 experience. Please keep an eye on your inboxes and Teams page as Ms. Smart, your grade administrator, Ms. Dhanji, and I will be sending out some important information in the coming weeks with respect to Graduation 2025. Grade 12 is a year filled with many memorable occasions, and we want to ensure that your last year as a Sabre is filled with fun, but most of all is a safe one. Please note that all school-sanctioned event information will be sent from directly from Sutherland through school messenger or MS Teams.

I look forward to supporting all our families and invite you to contact me at any time with your concerns, hopes or highlights. Sutherland maintains a reputation as a welcoming and inclusive school that excels in academics, arts, and athletics, and I am excited to build upon that strong tradition in the upcoming school year.

Sincerely,

Mark Barrett
Principal
Sutherland Secondary

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