



SUTHERLAND SECONDARY SCHOOL

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



December 13th, 2024

Dear Sutherland Families,

With only one week left, I know students and families are excitedly counting down the days until Winter Break, while also focusing on a strong finish to the calendar year. Although we haven't seen snow yet, it's timely to remind families of our District severe weather procedures. All North Vancouver Schools will remain open, if at all possible, during winter weather, including snowfalls. Any district-wide closure will be decided by 6:30am and announced through media, placed on the school district website and schools' websites, shared with parent/guardians via [School Messenger](#) (email and/or text) and emailed to staff. For more information, please visit the [Severe Weather Information](#) page.

On November 8th, students and special guests gathered in a school-wide assembly to acknowledge Remembrance Day. I want to thank all those who helped put together such a wonderfully poignant ceremony, and to highlight especially veteran guest speaker, Ms. Gwen Settle. Ms. Settle served as a Naval Operations Wren in the Royal Canadian Navy and continues to be active in veteran affairs in the community. Thank you to Ms. Settle, and to all Canadian veterans for their service.

Congratulations to our theatre department on their successful production of *Little Women*, which ran until the end of November. Based on Louisa May Alcott's classic novel, *Little Women* follows the lives of the four March sisters—Jo, Meg, Beth, and Amy—as they navigate the challenges of growing up during the Civil War. The admin team had the opportunity to see the show on Wednesday which was made possible by the collaborative efforts of passionate performing arts students and our theatre teacher, Ms. Gruetzner. Performing Arts at Sutherland continued its strong tradition of outstanding shows with the Winter Musical Concert, directed by Mr. Bevis, on Thursday, December 5th. Congratulations to all our performers.

Thank you to all families who have made timely payments for school fees via your [School Cash Online](#) Accounts. These fees provide for enrichment activities that extend learning opportunities for students beyond the basic educational program. Throughout the year, you may see additional fees added to your students' accounts in some circumstances if they have joined a team, club or other activity that requires a fee. Please take time to review your child's account, and if you have any questions about fees, don't hesitate to contact the main office.

The winter athletics season has begun, and Sutherland is proud to support a wide arrays of winter sport offerings, including gymnastics, wrestling, basketball and our alpine team. While some teams have competitive tryouts, many of our other offerings do not, which means there is a place for every student who is keen to wear a Sabres jersey with pride this winter. For more information on athletics, please visit our [Sutherland Athletics website](#), or contact Sutherland's Athletic Coordinators, Ms. Shidian or Mr. Madill.

One of the focuses of Staff Collaboration time has been on lateness, in all its forms. Staff have been working hard with students lately on a renewed focus on ensuring timely attendance and submission of assignments. I know staff appreciate families' support in this regard. If you have any feedback on our collective efforts around trying to remedy lateness, please don't hesitate to connect.

With the proliferation of artificial intelligence tools, there has been a real focus in our district on what this means for teaching and learning. At our school, the use of AI in the classroom is guided by principles that emphasize integrity, responsibility, and safety. Students are expected only to use AI tools in ways that align with our school expectations

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and code of conduct. AI tools should only be used when directed by teachers and in accordance with their specific guidelines for how and when these tools can support student learning. To maintain academic honesty, it is essential to acknowledge any use of AI in student work. Students must also safeguard their privacy by avoiding sharing personal or private information with AI tools. Finally, since AI tools can occasionally provide inaccurate or biased information, we encourage thoughtful evaluation and verification of their outputs to ensure quality and reliability. In the North Vancouver School District, we have a team of senior staff who are examining more closely the ways in which we can positively incorporate AI into teaching and learning, while simultaneously working to mitigate some of the risks and concerns.

Finally, in support of our Santa's Breakfast event being put on by Sutherland staff, we will have an adjusted bell schedule on Friday, December 20th. This is our last day of instruction before school closes for two weeks for Winter break. There will be a check-in desk as students arrive, and a suggested \$2 donation that morning in support of the [Harvest Project](#).

Dec 20th Bell Schedule

7:30 – 8:45 Santa's Breakfast
9:15 – 10:05 Period 2
10:10 – 11:00 Period 3
11:05 – 11:55 Period 1
11:55 – 12:10 Break
12:10 – 1:00 Period 4
1:00 Dismissal

As this is likely my last note before the end of the year, I'd like to wish all Sutherland families an enjoyable and restful winter break, surrounded by friends and family.

Sincerely,

Mark Barrett
Principal
Sutherland Secondary