



SUTHERLAND SECONDARY SCHOOL

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



August 31, 2023

Dear Sutherland Families,

Tl'iknumut, Bienvenue, 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 1000 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: Ms. Ahoy (Math / IT), Mr. Li (Tech Ed), Ms. Lo (Counseling), and Ms. Zhang (Math). We're pleased to welcome support staff members Mr. Historillo to our custodial team, and new Education Assistants Julia Davidis, Maryan Mirshekari, Ernie Siganay, and Sacha Thompson, as well as welcome back Katherine Bennett on a temporary basis to start the year in our main office. I am also excited to be joining the office team as a new member this school year.

This year's school theme was selected based on what students and the wider school community have expressed they hope to see more of. "**Pride. Passion. Place.**" 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 notice tangible evidence of this theme throughout the year in activities, groups, events, and initiatives.

One of the first great occasions 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 4-6 at the beautiful Cheakamus Centre in Brackendale, just north of Squamish. Incoming Grade 8 families should already have information regarding this event, but in case they do not, please contact Vice Principal, Mr. Paul Ruben (pruben@sd44.ca). As part of the retreat our Grade 8s will be inducted as Sabres in a new Sutherland t-shirt!



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One of the other recurrent pieces of feedback we have heard from our school community, particularly since 2020, is a desire to support our students with better decision making around technology, in particular mobile phones. As a result, we will be starting this school year with a refreshed school-wide shared understanding of what constitutes appropriate use of technology in the classroom. **The use of mobile phones during class time will be prohibited, unless explicitly provided for by the classroom teacher.** Technology is an important part of 21st century learning, and there are countless ways which Sutherland staff have, and will continue to support its implementation in classes. Equally important, however, is the need to develop students interpersonal and social skills. Face-to-face learning, collaboration and interaction is much more powerful when students are fully engaged and free from distraction. Parents and guardians can support this school-wide initiative by discussing with their child(ren) this renewed expectation, and by being mindful of not messaging their children during class time. If an emergent situation requires connecting quickly with your child, please contact the Main Office. Many classrooms will be equipped with mobile phone pockets at the front of class for storing phones. Alternatively, students may secure their phones in lockers, or ensure they are turned off/silent in their bags before class. The use of phones between classes, at breaks and during lunch time will continue to be permitted. Students who are unable to keep their phones away may be required to speak with an administrator, be asked to keep their phone at home, or will be subject to consequences as detailed in the Sutherland Student Code of Conduct. Thank you to all our families in advance for your support with this, and of your students as we work towards maintaining a high degree of engagement in our classes.

Our timetable this year will remain in a semester model. As in previous years, Sutherland teachers will be available for drop-in Tutorial Time from 8:30am to 9:12am 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 5th for their opening day assemblies, facilitated by their grade counselors and administrators. Please note the following schedule:

- **Grade 8 – Tuesday, Sept 5 @ 9:45am**
- **Grade 9 & 10 – Tuesday, Sept 5 @ 11:00am**
- **Grade 11 & 12 – Tuesday, Sept 5 @ 1:00pm**

Grade 8 students will have orientation activities following their assembly and should anticipate attending school from 9:45am until 12:00pm. Students in Grades 9 through 12 will be responsible only for attending their one-hour grade assembly on the opening Tuesday.

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Wednesday, September 6th is the first official day of classes. We will be holding a mandatory 8:30am [homeroom](#) for all students to cover important start-of-year information, including emergency items, and to distribute start-up materials. 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.

I would like to extend a special acknowledgement to our Grade 12 students: the Class of 2024. I am extremely excited to be working with our graduating class as the incoming Principal. I'd ask that you please keep an eye on your inboxes and Teams page as Mr. Ruben, your grade administrator, Ms. Dhanji, Grade 12 counselor, and I will be sending out some important information in the coming weeks with respect to Graduation 2024. 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 Sutherland through school messenger.**

Finally, and on a personal note, having spent this past school year as Principal at Handsworth, I am very excited to now get to know the Sutherland community better. I have already received such a warm welcome, and it is immediately apparent to me what tight-knit and caring school community this is. I am immensely humbled and honored to have the opportunity to lead Sutherland into its next chapter. It is a privilege to welcome students to the building each day, and to care for and nurture their social and intellectual growth. 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