



JANUARY NEWSLETTER



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Important Dates:

Jan 4	First Day back (Tuesday)
Jan 12	Flex Day
Jan 19	Flex Day
Jan 24-27	Gr 10/12 Literacy Assessments
Jan 27	Last Day of Semester 1
Jan 28	Non-Instructional Day
Jan 31	Semester 2 begins



G.P. Vanier – Flex Day Parent Survey

Good morning and happy holidays from all of us here at GP Vanier,
In 2020 the idea of a Flex Day was created here at GP Vanier, knowing that learning does not just happen in the classroom but anytime and anyplace.

As we move through the 2021-2022 school year, we are reviewing ways we can most effectively reach students and provide our diverse learners with a healthy combination of support and flexibility with their learning. We value your input on this matter and so are seeking parent/guardian feedback on the current Flex Day Structure here at Vanier.

Please take a few minutes to answer some important questions that will give us direction and help guide us in our decision-making process here at Vanier.

[GP Vanier Flex Day- Parent Survey](#)

For more information on our current Flex Day model, please check out the GP Vanier Webpage link below:

[GP Vanier Flex Days- information](#)

Thank you in advance and best wishes through this holiday season,

Lee McKillican
Vice Principal
GP Vanier



Have You Ordered Your 2021-22 Yearbook Yet?

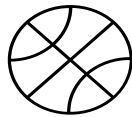
We have a very limited number of books left and have extended sales until Monday, January 10. This year's book is even bigger than last year with 208 pages of memories and photographs of the people, sports, clubs and events that make GP Vanier so amazing! After January 10 you will no longer be able to purchase a book - order now to avoid disappointment. \$50 through MyEdBC or at the main office.



Criminal Record Checks for Coaches and Parent Volunteers

Our district policy around criminal record checks has changed and moving forward all volunteer parent drivers will need to have a criminal record check, not just coaches and chaperones. If you are planning to drive for a field trip or sporting event, please start the process asap.

Here is the link: <https://www.comoxvalleyschools.ca/gp-vanier-secondary/wp-content/uploads/sites/29/2021/06/Criminal-Record-Check-Form.pdf>



The Winter Sports Season is Now Underway

We have 7 basketball teams competing at the various girls and boys levels with weekly league games until early February. Our Sr Girls started the season with a 1st place finish at their home Tournament, with great cheering support from our Sr Boys team. The Sr Boys team also started their season off with a Championship at the Mount Doug Tournament. Our Jr Girls have their home tournament Dec 17/18th and the Sr Boys tournament is Jan 6/7/8. Jr Boys host Jan 14/15th and grade 9 boys host Jan 28/29th.

We also have a gymnastics team (they practice with Chimo Gymnastics) registered with BCSS that will have a couple students competing for Vanier.

Our Ski and Snowboard team will start in January, with practices on Sundays and races on Mondays. It is great to see our student athletes in action once again.

David Mayert
Vice Principal





Note Regarding Student School Outings to Places Where Proof of Vaccination is Required

As we engage in activities such as field trips and sports tournaments, it's important to note that all families need to ensure their child's vaccination status is current if visiting a location that requires the BC Vaccine Card. Parents should speak with their child's teacher or coach to see if they may need to accompany their child, if they are unable to



enter a facility that requires the BC Vaccine Card. Students must always be supervised by an adult on school trips.

Proof of vaccination is required in BC for people over age 12 attending certain social and recreational settings and events, including:

- Indoor ticketed sporting events with more than 50 people
- Indoor concerts, theatre, dance and symphony events with more than 50 people
- Gyms, exercise and dance facilities or studios
- Includes these activities happening in recreation facilities
- Businesses offering indoor exercise/fitness
- Indoor skating rink



Bridget Mawhinney
(School Counsellor, SD#71)

Tara Ryan
(District Outreach
Counsellor, SD #71)

Counsellors' Corner

Home For the Holidays

"It's The Most Wonderful Time of the Year"or is it?

We are on the countdown! How many more sleeps? For some this brings joy and excitement and for others: worry, stress, and anxiety are experienced. The holiday season is portrayed as a time of happy families, celebration, and traditions. It can also be a time of great family stress: expectations of family traditions, pressures of creating magical memories, financial pressures, work/childcare concerns, sibling conflict, family disagreements as well as grieving those who are no longer with us or traditions that no longer bring us joy. This experience of anticipation partnered with underlying pressures is a common experience. You are not alone. In this newsletter, we want to share an understanding of what is happening for your children from a social/emotional perspective as well as some suggestions for how to decrease holiday stress and make this season more enjoyable.

What's Happening for Children and Youth

- Kids are tired! Anticipating the holidays while following routines and school protocols is draining.
- Society starts the celebration of the holiday season early. Our children and youth have observed the focus turn towards Winter concerts, decorating, gift-buying, community gatherings, and everything "December" early on.
- Changes in temperature, "snow days," shorter days, can all contribute to different moods, patience, energy, and ability to be resilient.
- Schools, malls, parades, family photos, etc. can become over-stimulating for some – which leads to a need to avoid and/or decompress.
- Some children and youth enjoy the structure of school as well as the connections; for them, they are sad to say goodbye to friends and routines for a few weeks.
- For families where "Santa lists" and "I wants" are part of the holidays; expectations, demands, and perhaps disappointment is experienced.
- We all feel a level of stress and/or peace during the holidays; our children pick up on the emotional tone of the home. It's important for family members to look after themselves and check in with each other ("I notice.....how can I help?")
- Depending on the age and stage of children and youth "boredom" may become a factor, leading to increases in screen time and/or challenging behaviours.

Suggestions for Decreasing Holiday Stress

- Have a family meeting to discuss and decide on your family values: where do you want to put your efforts? Do you value outdoor time/adventure, exchanging gifts, following family traditions, making lasting memories, religious celebrations...?
- Set a budget for whatever it is that you value. Will you spend this budget on going up the mountain skiing, taking a trip, exchanging gifts, decorating the house, hosting company? Including your children in these decisions in an age-appropriate way can help set reasonable expectations for the season and decrease the possibility of disappointment. A holiday celebration can turn into resentment and arguing if each of your family values (and expects) different things from the season.
- Set boundaries for company that fit with what you can do and afford. Allow yourself to have dinners and clean-up as collaborative family activities. If you can start your children young in participating in the work, it can become one of your family traditions so that all the work doesn't fall on parents' shoulders. For example, grandma makes the salad, the youngest stirs the cranberry sauce, dad makes the turkey, etc.
- Consider how long you want the season to last. When will you decorate (if that is one of your traditions), when will you take down the decorations? Think about returning the house to its pre-season state a few days before returning to school so you aren't stressed about clean-up after your regular routines are back up and running.
- Sleep, rest, engage in some activities that you enjoy as well.

- Set a "top-5" list that you want to accomplish over the holidays that is reasonable and light. It might be as simple as, "Play holiday music on the stereo for an hour a day," "Go for 2 family walks over the break," etc.
- If you are feeling financial stress, please consider accepting help. There are many organizations in the community who love to contribute to ensure everyone has a happy holiday. The counsellor at your child's school can work with you (confidentially) to help you access the support you need. School district counsellors can be reached by phone or email (firstname.lastname@sd71.bc.ca).



Preparing For the Return to School

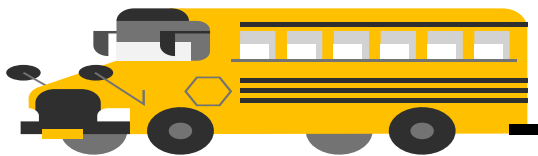
- Start the process of adjusting the sleep schedule back to what it was before the holidays. You can begin this process 3 -4 days before school starts back up. You will likely have a day or two of tired mornings and resistance to going to bed on time at night, but it will make the first day back much easier!
- Start returning to having mealtimes back where they were before the holidays.
- Begin to limit tech time to the expectations you have during the school year (for elementary students, we recommend 1-2 hours maximum as appropriate; for high school, $\frac{1}{4}$ of their age up to a maximum of 4 hours per day.
- Consider having a small get-together with a best friend to get back into "social" mode.
- If your kids haven't been reading through the holidays, encourage some book time before bed, just to get the focus working again.
- If you exchange holiday gifts, find a home for each of them before the return to school. Some families have their children donate or hand-down an item for every gift they receive, to keep the closets from over-filling.
- Contact your child's teacher, administrator, or school counsellor if there have been any significant changes over the break that may impact how we support your child at school.



"You've got this!"

Tara and Bridget

Tara Ryan, B.Ed., M.Ed., R.C.C.
Bridget Mawhinney, B.SpEd., M.Ed.



Foster Homes Needed!

There are over 1,000 foster children on Vancouver Island

Can you help just one?



FOSTER HOMES NEEDED IN COMOX VALLEY

Some people think of fostering as taking care of someone else's children. What if we stopped thinking of the children and their parents as strangers and started thinking of them as equal members of our community in need?

Can you help a family near you that is going through a difficult time? Fostering can be an incredibly rewarding experience. Our foster caregivers will tell you, it's the small things that make it all worthwhile. A smile. A hug. Knowing you have genuinely made a difference in the life of a child or youth.



Interested in fostering but not ready for a full-time commitment? There are options.

Respite provides a place for children who are not in care but whose parents need time to rest and recharge. **Relief** provides care for children and youth of foster parents for a few days.

**Learn more about the difference you
can make in your community.**

***Maybe fostering is something
you've never thought about.
Maybe it's something you've
thought about for a long time.
Maybe now is the time.***

Call Laurie Sheldon (MCFD)
236-936-2036
for more information

Register for a Foster Hope Information Session at

fosterhope.ca





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FOSTER HOMES NEEDED FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH WITH SUPPORT NEEDS IN COMOX VALLEY

Every child and youth who comes into care deserves unconditional support, compassion, and acceptance. Some have needs that go beyond the everyday. They require caregivers who can see, understand, and meet their unique challenges. A caregiver with training in behaviour management, crisis resolution, and/or a medical background is essential.

Are you that caregiver?

If you have experience with children or youth with complex medical, social, or behavioural support needs, consider welcoming someone new into your heart and home. You can provide the support and acceptance one child is waiting for to discover their true potential.



**Learn more about the difference
you can make in your community.**



Can you offer a child a safe place to stay
while they and their families heal and
become strong again?

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