



# WELCOME to VANIER!

## Information about GRADE 8 for Students & Parents

Welcome!

We are looking forward to having our new Grade 8's join us in September. The transition from elementary school to secondary school is an exciting time for students and their parents/guardians. Students typically look forward to a new school, new friends, and new opportunities, and are quite hopeful and confident in their abilities to cope with the changes that a new school brings. While most students' perceptions of this life transition are positive, it is also quite normal for students and parents/guardians to express anxiety and unease about the transition.

The purpose of this newsletter is to provide you with information and resources that will help ease any concerns you have about coming to Vanier. We look forward to working with you and your children in this next stage of their lives!

### About Vanier

G.P. Vanier Secondary is a school of more than 1,400 learners with nearly 125 teachers and support staff. We are a vibrant, diverse learning community which supports and encourages excellence in all aspects of school life. At Vanier, we:

- Honour diversity
- Connect with community
- Respect and treat others with dignity
- Encourage academic excellence
- Provide opportunities for students to grow as global citizens
- Celebrate accomplishments
- Foster positive relationships
- Value parents and co-educators

*-The Vanier Transition Team*

## BELL SCHEDULE

EVENT	START TIME	END TIME
Warning Bell	9:00 AM	
Block 1	9:05 AM	10:25 AM
Block 2	10:30 AM	11:50 AM
Lunch	11:50 AM	12:30 PM
Warning Bell	12:30 PM	
Block 3	12:35 PM	1:50 PM
Block 4	1:55 PM	3:10 PM

## Grade 8 Classes

1. **Humanities (English & Social Studies)**
2. **Math/Science**
3. **Physical Education**
4. **French**
5. **Exploratory Rotation**

### Optional: Band

Grade 8's have a core program of required academics, physical and health education, French and an exploratory rotation. Math and Science are taught by the same teacher-reducing teachers lessens transitions and helps ease students into high school.

Students who choose band will cycle through 4 exploratories throughout the year. Students who do not choose band will enroll in 8 exploratories.

Some of the grade 8 exploratories may include: Info Tech, Foods, Textiles, Woodwork, Metalwork, Outdoor Education & Survival Skills, Drama, Robotics.

## FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL

The first day of school is a half day for new students only. This includes grade 8's, new grade 10's and all other new students to Vanier. Students arrive at school in the morning and find their homeroom listed on the entrance doors. Staff are there to help students find their homerooms. When students get to their homeroom, they will be given a copy of their timetable and if school fees are paid, they are given locks and assigned lockers. Next, they proceed to each class on their timetable in the order that it occurs where they will meet their teachers and do some getting to know you activities. Students do not need to bring any supplies with them other than a binder, paper pen and pencils. Information about the first day will be sent to parents by email in August.

## EXTRA CURRICULAR

Joining an extracurricular club, team or group is a great way to have fun, meet new people, and gain skills. Students who are involved in extra-curricular activities tend to do better academically and have reported that they enjoy high school more. We are proud to offer a wide variety of extra-curricular and sports opportunities for students to choose from.

Opportunities range from Musical theatre and Improv, to sports like Basketball, Soccer, Volleyball, Wrestling, Disc golf, Climbing, Weight training, Ski & snowboard team, Golf, and Rugby. We also have clubs that include the Gender Sexuality Alliance, Mental Health Advocacy, Interac, Dungeons and Dragons, Indigenous Leadership, Student Government, and Environment Club.

## HOMework CLUB

Students who need extra support with school work are invited and encouraged to attend homework club in the Access Centre after school on Mondays and Thursdays.

## BUSES

Students who currently are on a bus at any one of our partner schools and residing within the Vanier catchment greater than 4.0 km from Vanier will have their current bus pass changed to a Vanier bus route. Students who have never had a bus pass need to register online for a new one, on the SD website [HERE](#).

Those residing in the Vanier catchment but living within 4.0 km of the school will need to apply or re-apply for a courtesy pass (see above link); ridership is not guaranteed and can change from year to year.

## Late BUSES

The late buses run in conjunction with homework club and other after school activities on Monday and Thursday afternoon. Late busses leave Vanier at 4:50pm. One bus goes North along the highway and the other goes South along the highway. Contact the office for more information.

## SCHOOL FEES

Student fees are \$25 for the school year. Depending on what activities students are involved in, or projects they choose to create, there may be additional activity or project fees. Hardship funds are available to help with fees. Please connect with your student's administrator or counsellor if financial assistance is needed.

## LOCKERS

All students are assigned a locker and lock for their own use. Locks are provided by the school (after students pay their school fees). Students cannot use their own lock from home. It's important that students keep their lock combination private and not share it with friends.

## LUNCH HOUR

Students have a few different options for lunch. They can bring a lunch or bring money and buy food at the cafeteria. Students can eat in the cafeteria, hallways, outside or in any open classrooms. There are many activities happening at lunch. The cafeteria typically opens up in the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of classes of each semester.

## ABSENCES

Please report all student absences to the school. There are many ways to do this but the easiest is to download the [School Messenger](#) App. You can also call or email the school. If students are away for an extended period, they should contact their teachers to arrange work.

## SCHOOL SUPPLIES

On the first day, students should just bring basic supplies:

- ✓ 3-ring binder
- ✓ Lined paper
- ✓ Pens, pencils & eraser
- ✓ Dividers

Individual teachers will let students know on the first day of classes if any additional supplies are needed.

## KNOW YOUR SUPPORT TEAM

### LEARNER SUPPORT

Learning Support Teachers work alongside Vanier and elementary school counsellors and administrators to help make Grade 8 a smooth transition for students with IEPs or who are needing learning support. Your child's teachers and elementary case manager will work together with your Vanier case manager to go over the student's IEP and plan for success at Vanier. If your student has an IEP you can expect to be contacted by a learning support teacher by mid-September. You are also invited to connect with them in advance if you have concerns you would like to address or information you want to make sure is passed along.

Learner Support Teachers are organized by student (last name) alphabet. [Check the website for contact information and to see which teacher to communicate with and connect by phone or by email.](#)

### SCHOOL COUNSELLING

Counselling services are a personal service for students and a resource for teachers and families. Counsellors are teachers who have a Master of Counseling degree and are specialized to assist youth and their families in the areas of mental health, academic counselling and post-secondary planning.

Counsellors are often the first point of contact for new students and students who are struggling academically or personally. Students or parents may make an appointment with the school counsellor by using the [booking system on the G.P. Vanier website](#). They can also drop by the counselling office or call to book a time to

meet. Counsellors are organized by student (last name) alphabet.

### YOUTH AND FAMILY PROGRAM WORKER

Vanier has a Youth and Family Program Worker who provides support to students and families. Students who are struggling with food insecurity mental health and addiction issues can reach out. The Youth and Family Program worker also provides support to teachers and staff by making classroom presentations and facilitating small groups on addiction and substance-use related topics. Our Youth and Family Program Worker's office is in the counselling department.

Students or parents may make an appointment with the Youth and Family Program Worker by using the booking system on the G.P. Vanier website. They can also drop by the counselling office or call to book a time to meet.

### INDIGENOUS EDUCATION

This is a program of inclusion for all students with a focus on students of Indigenous ancestry (First Nations, Metis or Inuit). Student ancestry is determined on a voluntary basis through self-identification and includes Status and Non-Status students and may extend several generations back in your family history.

Our Indigenous Education Program provides academic, cultural, leadership and personal support to students as well as arranging cultural presentations, and lunch time groups. Contact information for the Indigenous Education Support Workers and Teachers is available on the GP Vanier website.

## WORK EXPERIENCE/TRADES OFFICE

Vanier has dedicated teachers and support staff who provide work experience and volunteer opportunities for students. Students begin exploring trades opportunities in grade 10 and will learn more about these opportunities as the years go on. Dual-Credit courses and programs through North Island College are also coordinated through the Work Experience/Trades Office. For more information on anything Career, Trades, Dual-Credit, Volunteer or Work related, drop by the Work Experience office.

## ADMINISTRATION TEAM

Our Principal and Vice Principals (listed by last name/alphabet on the website), provide educational leadership and co-ordinate the day-to-day operations of the school. Our admin are master problem-solvers and seek to find collaborative solutions when problems arise. Facilitating school goals, providing program support and leading celebrations are some of the many roles our admin team takes on

## HOW TO HELP YOUR CHILD BE SUCCESSFUL AT VANIER

### TIPS FOR PARENTS

- Monitor your child's marks and progress on the [MYED Parent Portal](#). This is a valuable tool to stay on top of student progress.
- Set a regular time and place for homework to be done. Give and reinforce clear expectations.
- Work together with the school. If you have questions or concerns about a class, email or call the teacher.
- For other concerns, contact a school counsellor or vice- principal.
- Monitor your child's social media use, and encourage healthy sleep, exercise, and eating habits. These are key aspects of positive mental health & positive high school experiences.

### TIPS FOR STUDENTS FROM STUDENTS

- Join school clubs and teams to meet people & make friends
- Ask questions
- Do your homework & study for tests
- Skipping out is not cool
- Do not be late
- Don't blow off studying – It will catch up with you!
- Don't worry about the older kids... they are mostly concerned with their own school work & friend group.

## ATTENDANCE MATTERS

### Why is Attendance so important? Does it really matter if my child misses a few days of school?

Yes, attendance does matter, even if it is only a few days. Research has shown that students who attend less than 90% of the time (this is equivalent to ½ day per week; students who miss several consecutive days are even more at risk) have greater academic struggles, disengage from school, and are at risk for not graduating. Absenteeism is **the most significant predictor** of academic underachievement, disengagement from school and failure to graduate. Studies have linked absenteeism with mental health disorders, substance abuse, delinquency and future underemployment.

A sudden change in attendance behaviour indicates that something else may be going on. There may be a conflict with a peer or friend group. There may be a misunderstanding about school work or something deeper such as a learning issue, sleep issue or a mental health concern. Talk to your child to try to determine what is causing this change. Contact your child's school counsellor and/or vice-principal immediately to determine what has happened and what solutions and strategies can be put in place to re-engage them with school.

## CELL PHONE and PERSONAL ELECTRONICS POLICY

Personal Communication Devices (PCDs) are not to be operated during regularly scheduled instructional time, or during any school sponsored activity, such as an assembly or talk by a guest speaker, unless such use facilitates the learning activity as permitted by the teacher. Find out more about our Personal Electronics Policy can be found in our [Student Code of Conduct Handbook](#).

## STAY CONNECTED

- Check your email for important updates and information from the school
- Visit the [GP Vanier Website](#) to find:
  - Staff directory, bell schedule, course selection handbook, parent portal
  - Daily announcements and weekly calendar, search "Vanier Announcements"  
[www.comoxvalleyschools.ca/gp-vanier-secondary/](http://www.comoxvalleyschools.ca/gp-vanier-secondary/)

