



# WELCOME to VANIER!

## Information for NEW Gr. 9-12 Students & Parents

Welcome!

We are looking forward to having our new students 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 1,300 learners with nearly 120 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 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

## THE TIMETABLE

Vanier runs on a semester system, offering 4, 80 minute classes per day. Monday through Thursday we have a rotating block schedule, while Friday changes each week. Check MYED for the block rotation.

## 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.

## LOCKERS

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

## 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 to 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.

## 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. The cafeteria typically opens up in the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of classes. Free soup and a bun is offered to students in the cafeteria daily.

## ABSENCES

Please report student absences on the GP Vanier website or email or call the school if your student will be absent or sick so that they can be excused. You can also download the School Messenger App to do this.

## SCHOOL FEES

Student fees are \$10 for the 2024/2025 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.

## 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; [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.

## EXTRA CURRICULAR

Joining an extracurricular club, team or group is a great way to have fun, meet new people, and gain and improve 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. More information about clubs can be found at clubs day during lunch in the beginning of September. Stay tuned to announcements!

## MYED PARENT PORTAL

Using the MYED parent (and student) portal on a daily or weekly basis will let you see student schedules, marks, and missing assignments. It is a valuable tool to stay on top of student progress. The portal can be accessed from the GP Vanier website. Contact the office if you are having difficulty logging in. The MYED link and instructions are available [here](#).

## KNOW YOUR SUPPORT TEAM

### LEARNER SUPPORT

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. Check the website to see which counsellor to communicate with.

## 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. Our 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 and families.

## WORK EXPERIENCE/TRADES OFFICE

Vanier has dedicated teachers and support staff who provide work experience and volunteer opportunities for students. As part of the Dogwood graduation program, all students need 30 hours of documented volunteer or work experience in order to graduate. Students begin exploring Trades opportunities in grade 10 and will learn more about these opportunities as the years go on. Dual-credit academic 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 on the website by last name/alphabet), 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.

## 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 schoolwork 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](#).

## WHAT ARE FLEX DAYS?

### FLEX DAY OPPORTUNITIES

Flex Days are designed to meet the needs of our diverse learning community. For some students this means coming to school and getting extra help. For others, Flex days are about taking part in enrichment opportunities in the school, at home, or in the community.

If your child is getting less than 60% in a class or has been asked to come in for a Flex day, they must attend. If a student is getting above 60% or hasn't been told by a teacher or parent to come in on a flex day, we'd love to see them, but they won't be marked absent. Students who are not required to come to school on Flex days and who choose not to come into the classroom are encouraged to take part in enrichment learning opportunities at home and in the community. Work experience, passion projects, online learning, clubs, mentorship, peer-tutoring, are some of the many activities students work on during Flex time.

## HOW TO HELP YOUR CHILD BE SUCCESSFUL AT VANIER

### TIPS FOR PARENTS

- Monitor your child's marks and progress on the [MYED Parent Portal](#).
- 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 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.

## STAY CONNECTED

- Check your email for important updates and information from the school.
- [GP Vanier Website](#)
- → 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/)

