



McGirr Elementary



Phone: 250-758-8946

Website: <http://schools.sd68.bc.ca/mcge>

Principal: Mr. G. Halfyard

Vice-Principal: Ms. Lisa Thom

Secretaries: Mrs. Beverly Lundine and Mrs. M. Lockhart

September 1, 2019

Newsletter # 1

Special Labour Day Weekend Edition

Startup & Opening Day

Tuesday, September 3, 2019 students in grades 1-7 attend school for one-hour only 11:00 a.m.-12:00 noon. Students line up at their last year's classroom lineup location. They will spend the hour with their classmates and teacher from last year. New Students report to the gymnasium for sign in, attendance, an informational session and a tour of the school. Kindergarten students have a gradual entry into their classes until September 12. Teachers will inform students of their groups on Tuesday and direct them where to line up for Wednesday morning.

Welcome Back to School 😊

Opening Day Routine for **Tuesday September 3rd,**

Grade 1-7 Students will attend school for 1 hour only on Tuesday, 11 am – 12 noon, and 8:30-2:22 Wed. - Fri.

Students will NOT be placed into their permanent classes until the week of September 9 once we receive approval from the Board Office to set our classes. Until then, students will learn in grade groupings for the first week. We are asking that all students meet on the back patio/courtyard area (into the gym if raining) by the covered area.

When the bell goes, students will line up at the cone marked for their grade, Grade 1 – **Grade 1 Cone**, Grade 2 – **Grade 2 Cone** etc... McGirr staff will then greet the students and parents and begin collecting their grade groups.

The grade level teachers will divide students into groups (e.g., a,b,c,d) and inform them which classrooms/teachers to go to for the rest of the week. Teachers will be team teaching all of the students in their grade level this week until the superintendent's/Board approval is given for McGirr to organize students into their classes. Parents will pick up their child in the same location daily at 2:22.

When we get the go ahead to organize, teachers will divide the students into their regular classes and read out the divisions/class lists to students in the gym or rear courtyard. This could happen by the end of the week, but may not happen until the beginning of next week. Until then, we ask for your patience and understanding. We know everyone wants to know who their teacher is, but until we get approval, we have to wait.

We welcome everyone back to School. We look forward to having another Great Year!

***Note: Due to the high volume of students registering in July & August the district has released the following letter/statement to new families on the waitlist for elementary schools:**

- With the high volume of new registrations, most of which were received after the June 15 deadline, the response time is longer than anticipated. If you have not received confirmation that your child has been registered for school by Tuesday, September 3, 2019, you have a choice to bring your child to your catchment-area school or your child can remain home until placement is confirmed. If a student shows up who is not registered at McGirr, parents/guardians must confirm that they have completed an online registration and that they have supplied the required registration documents. If a student shows up at your McGirr and they have NOT registered online, they must do this before they can attend.

This message is *only* for families moving elementary schools:

If you have already made contact with your new school/district then there is no need to contact us as the new school will contact us directly. **(no need to read further)**

If your child is moving (**elementary**) schools **from McGirr Elementary to a different elementary school** (in district, out of district, out of province, out of country etc.) and you have **not** notified someone in our district please do so immediately by contacting our school office, at 250-758-8946 (we have a 24 hour voice mail, please leave a message if you get our voicemail).

Other information regarding changing schools:

If your child is moving to another elementary school in our district please ensure you follow the process for the move (for in district moves you would do this online, through central registration at:

<https://www.sd68.bc.ca/students-parents/registration-information/>

If you are moving outside of our district, please ensure you have already made contact with the new school/district and follow their registration process. Do not wait until next Tuesday, please do this ASAP.

Thank you, *Gregg Halfyard*

PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

We currently have 19 divisions with 443 K-7 students including 46 kindergarten students. With the growth of our population, we now have two upper intermediate classes in the portables (one portable is surplus currently). They have been retrofitted with water, stairs and a ramp and are bright, positive learning environments. One portable is new with air conditioning. If a 20th division is added to our organization, the new classroom will be placed in the third portable. With provincial class size and composition requirements, we cannot confirm the school organization until the second week of September. This is why we place students in grade groupings for the first week. Because of collective agreement language, we will have mostly blended (two grades) classes this year. Thank you to all McGirr families, staff and students for what we anticipate will be another positive and smooth start up to the 2019-2020 school year. Welcome back to another year of growing and learning.

We will be regularly communicating on curriculum, assessment and student progress through our reporting and ongoing communication of student learning. This continues to be an exciting time of change in education and we will communicate these changes frequently to our students and our parents as we progress through the fall. I am confident that our staff have fully embraced and implemented the provincial curriculum and local reporting guidelines. I encourage parents to visit the ministry website often to gain an understanding of the redesigned curriculum and reporting structures at <http://www.curriculum.gov.bc.ca>.

We look forward to seeing everyone at our Open House, **Thursday September 26th at 6:00-7:00 p.m.** This will be an informal affair with students and their parents meeting and greeting the teacher(s) and perusing their classrooms and observing some early art and/or writing projects, for example. Our open house is not a formal teacher interview time, rather, it is an opportunity to say hello and meet some of the McGirr staff who will be supporting and educating your child (ren) over the course of the school year.

Sincerely,

Gregg Halfyard

STAFFING UPDATES

We would like to welcome all of our returning staff members and welcome the following people to our school. We are pleased to welcome each new staff member. On behalf of the entire McGirr school community, I would like to wish a healthy and happy retirement to **Mrs. Vicki Hiltz**, our long-time secretary at McGirr and in SD 68. Here are the other newest members of our McGirr educational team (*teaching assignments are subject to change*):

Mrs. Beverly Lundine- secretary

Mr. Kurt Feschuck- Grade 6/7

Ms. Emily Rowbotham- Grade 2- Fridays and Fine Arts- Thursdays

Mrs. Andrea Doak- Student Support & English Language Learner teacher

Ms. Paula Kuffler- counsellor

Mrs. Cathy Aniceto- Education Assistant

Mrs. Reagan Brown- Educational Assistant

Ms. Tara Cleveland- Educational Assistant

Ms. Stephanie Jory- Educational Assistant

2019 DATES TO REMEMBER

September 3	First day of School, Students attend from 11 -12 noon
September 4	First full day of classes for Gr.1-7 - School Starts at 8:30 - Dismissal - 2:22
September 9	First day for Strong Start (8:45-11:45) in room 137
September 12	First full day for all kindergarten students
September 16	NETPEA Touch Football starts
September 16	PAC meeting 6:30p.m.
September 19	Lifetouch Picture Day
September 20	Terry Fox Run
Sept. 23 -26	Scholastic Book Fair
September 26	Open House; Meet the Teacher Night, 6 - 7 pm
September 30	Orange T-Shirt Day
October 11	Non-Instructional Day (Curriculum In-Service Day)
October 25	Non-Instructional Day (Provincial PSA)
October 14	Thanksgiving Holiday
October 21	PAC Meeting - 6:30 pm - In the Library
October 17	Great BC Shakeout!
Oct. 21-24	Parent - Teacher Formative Assessment Conferences (Early Dismissal)
October 21	Federal Election Voting Day (in McGirr gym)
October 30	Cross-country meet- North Zone (pm)
October 31	Halloween Costume Parade- 8:45
November 1	Photo Retake Day
November 5	District Cross Country Meet (am)
November 5-8	IEP Reviews
November 8	Remembrance Assembly - 9:00 am
November 11	Remembrance Day Observed
November 18	PAC 6:30
November 18	NETPEA Triple ball Begins
December 6	Performance: Blues Berries-10:55 a.m.
December 16	PAC 6:30
December 19	Christmas Concert (afternoon & evening performances)
December 20	Last day of classes before - Winter Holidays
January 6 2020	School back in

McGirr SCHOOL HOURS

Monday

8:28	Welcome Bell
8:30	School starts
10 - 10:15	Recess
11:45 - 12:21	Big Recess
1:22	Dismissal (Professional Learning Community)

Tuesday - Friday

8:28	Welcome Bell
8:30	School starts
10 - 10:15	Recess
11:45 - 12:21	Big Recess
2:22	Dismissal

CLASSROOM PLACEMENTS

Elementary Schools in Nanaimo Ladysmith Public Schools do not place students in permanent classes during the first week of school. This process involves reviewing first week attendance, waitlisted registrations, and new families who have recently moved into our catchment over the summer. Carefully working through this process ensures that there is as little upheaval as possible once classes are set. It is

our sincere hope that we can establish permanent classes by Monday September 9th. Students will be in rotating grade-level groupings during the first week of school (September 4-6). This allows them to meet other students in their grade/of similar age, and to interact with teachers at their grade level. We recognize the value of social-emotional growth and development during the initial days of a new school year. Thank you in advance for your patience and understanding as we work to welcome all students and place them in a new learning community. Finally, please keep the bulk of the school supplies home until Monday, September 9th.

SEPTEMBER 2019 CLASSES

Educational Criteria for Assigning Students to Classes- A thorough process takes place when considering placing students into classes for the year, the following criteria are followed:

We have been confirmed for 19 divisions for classes in the 2019-2020 school year (The number may change). The placement of students is determined by the school team of sending teachers, administration and professional staff and is based on the best educational fit for the student, the class and for the school. Our teachers work together with the Principal and Vice Principal, student support teachers and the counselor to put classes together using the above criteria. While not perfect, we appreciate parents for trusting staff and the integrity of the process used to create divisions at McGirr while accommodating new students at the same time. Parents must recognize that their letters of student placement request are considered but may not be granted.

- Instructional groupings that are best suited to the learning needs of all students.
- NLPS Inclusion Policies and Procedures
- Provincial and local Collective Agreement language re: class size and composition
- Social and cultural issues including student independence, interactions with other students, leadership opportunities.
- Social-emotional and behavioral considerations.
- Groupings from previous years (e.g., frequency of blended classes over time).
- Dominant grade composition.
- Physical and social maturation.
- Learning strengths & needs balanced with teaching strategies and styles.
- Social groupings.



Watch for immunization consent packages for grade 6 students that will be sent home early in September. Students in grade 6 will be offered routine vaccines for Hepatitis B, Varicella and Human Papilloma in school-based clinics with the consent of a parent(s) or a representative. Kindergarten students will receive vision, dental and hearing screenings in early October. **Screening is not diagnostic but rather a tool to identify children requiring further testing or follow up.** Please contact the local Health Unit at 250-755-3388 and ask to speak with a Public Health Nurse if you have any questions, or visit www.immunizebc.ca. Screening dates at McGirr are Kindergarten: **Thursday January 30, 2020 9:00 a.m.** and Grade 6 Immunization: **Monday November 25, 2019 9:00 a.m.**

Public Health Activities 2019-2020 from Dr. Paul Hasselback (Medical Health Officer)

Vaccine Status Reporting Regulation of the Public Health Act

http://www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/146_2019. Throughout the 2019-2020 school year, the main emphasis will be on obtaining and documenting vaccine records for all students. In subsequent years, this would be for new students entering the school system.

PAC Sponsored After School Clubs

McGirr is an active school community and PAC works hard to both fundraise and support extracurricular learning for our students. The following message on these after school opportunities is from our Pac president Eden Wood.

We will again continue with **Yoga Club** on Tuesdays with Sarah Smith.

Science Club will be on Wednesdays; we have some very exciting new topics for the kids to learn.

Mr. Green will be sponsoring a Sphero club.

Lost Arts Club has agreed to put together an after school craft program for students on Thursdays. They participated in our June *Fun Fair* and were a huge hit. This is a link to their website. <https://www.lostartclub.org/> Pac is hoping to do a 4-week trial and see how students and parents receive it. They have created projects that are age appropriate and with no significant safety concerns. After the 4 weeks, we would like to reassess and hopefully continue with the club.

Registration details and dates will be sent out in the coming weeks.

Important Student Information Consent and Emergency Release Forms

Parents and guardians will be receiving two important forms to sign in the first two weeks of school. The first is a double-sided document on white paper that provides informed consent for a number of items regarding your child(ren) including media releases, volunteering (driving), technology & internet use, Google suite for education and communications from the school. The second form involves parents completing an emergency release consent form. This will be on **yellow paper** and lists trusted relatives and guardians that parents permit to pick up their child (ren) from McGirr in the case of an emergency or evacuation. Please complete these forms immediately and return them to the school the next day. Thank you!

MONDAY are EARLY DISMISSAL Days - 1:22 pm

For all of our families at McGirr, please note that on ***Mondays students are dismissed at 1:22 pm.** We also encourage students to leave the school through their classroom door *not the front door*, leaving that area open and available for special needs students, parents and visiting adults. A friendly reminder that supervision begins 15 minutes before each morning bell, and ends 15 minutes after the dismissal bells daily. Students should not be left unsupervised by a parent or guardian outside of these times. Students should *not* arrive at school before the official supervision begins for safety reasons unless they have a practice or rehearsal in the morning.

EARLY DETECTION - PHONING IN ABSENCES

The early detection system is for the safety of all students at McGirr. The answering machine is turned on each evening so parents can call before 8 am to report students who will be absent or late. This program is for the safety of your child. **All absences and lates should be called in.** When leaving a message please state your child's name, division and if they are ill, at an appointment, or on vacation.

From the Library

Welcome from the McGirr Elementary Library!

In case you have not heard, we are open after school most days. We invite parents to the library to sign out books to read to their young children. There is no time limit or restriction on the number of books you may wish to sign out. Come in!

Second, we are looking for parents, grandparents, community adults to volunteer in the library. We need help with keeping the stacks tidy, and books shelved, daily and weekly. If you have an hour and can help out, come into the library and talk to me. We can find a time that is best suited to your schedule.

Thank you

Donna McDaniel
Teacher-Librarian

VALUABLE ITEMS

Please leave any valuable possessions at home. If we notice items that do not have an educational purpose during school hours, they will be held in the office for safekeeping until such a time that a parent can attend the School to claim the item(s). Parents are encouraged to **label** all clothing and personal items for their child (ren) before the start of the school year.

CELL PHONES/CAMERAS, ELECTRONICS

Cameras, cell phones and handheld video game units (such as a Nintendo DS) are not part of an educational program. As such, they are not to be present at McGirr. This includes housing an electronic item in a backpack during the school day. These devices are prohibited, unless a teacher has expressly asked that they be brought to school for a learning activity, or a performance, such as a class dance. If

electronic items are on the school site, they may be confiscated. Items will be returned when parents or guardians and the student make an appointment and meet with a school administrator.

As a school staff, we understand the importance of phone communication between parents and students before and after school. We have a "bell-to-bell" policy for cell phones. Cell phones brought to school must be turned off and stored in a backpack, prior to entering the building. Cell phones must be stored in backpacks and are not permitted to be brought out at any point during the school day-unless specifically asked to by their teacher for educational purposes. This is the responsibility of the student possessing the phone. After school, phones may be turned on and used outside of the school building. Cell phones are not to be removed from backpacks or used in hallways, classrooms, foyers or anywhere within the school building.

We understand that there may be times when parents need to immediately contact their children. At McGirr, it is always possible for parents to communicate with their children in an emergency, via the main office.

VISITING A CLASSROOM or Talking to Teachers

At McGirr, we want to assure that classrooms function to their capacity as a learning environment. We also must ensure the safety of students at school during school hours. We also like to make sure that we have good communication with all of our parents. If you have a message to give your child or are dropping off items such as homework or lunches, please check in at the office first. Please give messages/lunches to our secretary rather than disturb the classrooms. We will make sure that your child receives the items.

If you need to talk to your child's teacher please call ahead, email, write in the planner, or arrange with our secretary to make an appointment. Teachers are busy and instruction begins when the bell goes. If you make an appointment you can be assured that you and the teacher will have time to have a meaningful discussion.

If you are visiting/volunteering in a class, please follow this routine:

1. Check in at the office, always - **sign the sign-in sheet** and be sure to include all information.
2. If you are staying to assist in a class, you will be given a **Visitors** nametag (wearing this quickly identifies you as someone who belongs in our school).
3. When your visit is complete, please return your tag, and sign out on the sign-in sheet.
4. *All volunteers in schools must complete a **Criminal Record Check**. CRC forms are available at the district's website under www.sd68.bc.ca. They are valid for 5 years.

***IMPORTANT Health & Safety REMINDER* – McGirr IS A FRAGRANCE FREE SCHOOL!**

At McGirr, we welcome many new people to our staff and to our community. We need to remind our community that we will continue to implement a **Fragrance - Free** environment here at McGirr. Scented products can aggravate extreme allergic reactions and health problems for people with asthma, allergies and other medical conditions. It can become impossible for a person with extreme allergies to breathe if even one child in the room is wearing clothes that have been laundered with scented fabric sheets or soap. We are asking our staff, students and parents to avoid the use of scent in products such as cologne, perfume, hair spray, shampoo, laundry soap and fabric softener sheets as well as many other products.

We all **share** the same air, so please take **care** what you wear. ☺

Please refrain from using any perfume or fragranced products of any kind. Of real concern are scented laundry products such as dryer sheets and detergents that contain many harmful chemicals. Thank - you for your cooperation ☺

PARKING – PLEASE DO NOT PARK IN THE DROP OFF ZONE IN FRONT OF THE SCHOOL!

Please remember that there is **no parking in front of the school**. If you are leaving your vehicle to come to the school to pick up your child or if you are waiting for someone you **must park in the parking lot**. **The Drop off area is a designated area for the School Bus, Emergency Vehicles and School District vehicles only**. We are very grateful to our traffic volunteer, **Wendy Grubac**, who keeps traffic moving smoothly and safely for our children. Thank you for being considerate and respectful with Wendy while keeping our students safe.

TRAFFIC REMINDERS



We are reminding all parents of our parking lot traffic patterns designed to help keep our students safe as they come to and leave our school grounds. **The area in front of the school is clearly marked no parking and no stopping. It is a drop off area only. This implies that you must stay in the driver's seat of your car. If you choose to leave your car or go into the school, for any reason, you must move your car to a designated parking spot. We are also reminding everyone to please slow down as we enter and exit the school zone!**

School District vehicles, Emergency vehicles and School Busses take priority in the drop off zone in front of the school at all times.

We need to remind parents and drivers that if we have a bus arriving at the school for or from a field trip, that the bus takes priority in the drop off zone. On field trip/bussing days, our volunteer **Wendy**, or our staff will use cones to redirect traffic into the parking lot and out of the drop off zone.

We appreciate your understanding and cooperation in keeping the front area of the school safe for our students. Please respect the handicapped parking spots and do not use them unless you or your child is handicapped.

SIGN UP FOR OUR LISTSERVE - to be able to receive regular updates and school newsletters via email.

Listserve updates and digital newsletters are the main mode of communication with parents. To subscribe to newsletters, please send an email to subscribe-mcgirrelementary-news@listsrv.sd68.bc.ca

Because there is often fundraising information posted, people accessing the listserve must agree to the conditions according to FOIPPA requirements prior to receiving posts.

We will see you all on Tuesday September 3rd. 😊

