



McGirr Elementary



Phone: 250-758-8946

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

Email: info.mg@sd68.bc.ca

Principal: Mr. R. Dhillon

Vice-Principal: Ms. J. Robinson

Secretaries: Ms. S. Fox and TBD

September 3, 2021

Newsletter # 1

On Tuesday students in Grades 1-7 attend school from 11 AM to 12 PM. Students will go to “last year’s room”. All new students (Grades 1-7) will go to the gym. Kindergarten students have a gradual entry into their classes and follow the schedule they were provided in June or recently for our new registrations.

WELCOME BACK TO SCHOOL 😊

On behalf of the entire McGirr School Staff, welcome back to all of our returning families and a big welcome to McGirr to our new families. As a staff, we are delighted to be back in session and are looking forward to getting things underway. This newsletter is to provide families with some information about the first week. Our September newsletter will be sent out in the coming weeks with more details of the year.

This year there are some changes to how things were done from last year, but also some things are staying the same. Our plan is to start the year slowly with re-introducing activities we were not able to do last year. For now we will not be having whole school gatherings. With direction from the health authority and district, our hope is to move to some small group gatherings in the coming months and eventually larger ones later in the year. We will keep families posted as we are able to open things up more. Hopefully, we as a community stay safe and more FUN is coming back this school year.

My name is Robbie Dhillon and I am starting my second year as Principal to your children here at McGirr. The school phone number is 250-758-8946. Welcome to all- Our hope/mission is that your child has a wonderful educational experience here.

STARTUP & OPENING DAY

Students will NOT be placed into their permanent classes until we receive approval from the Board Office to set our classes. Until then, students will learn in grade groupings for the first week. If your child was not here in June (ie does not have “last year’s room” to go to, please go to the gym for 11 AM. There Ms. Peace, Ms. Carlson and other staff will greet you. If your child was in Grade 6 in Ms. Carlson’s class last year those students will go to Ms. McDonald’s outside door for 11 AM. In “last year’s class” staff will reconnect with kids, there will be a short “teams” assembly and students will be told what door to report to daily (and be dismissed from) until classes are formed (more information about this below)

Teachers will be team teaching all of the students in their grade level groups 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 2:10 PM.

Along with this newsletter there is a sheet/attachment that will let parents know what outside door their child is to be at daily (and dismiss from) **starting Wednesday morning**. This will be a separate attachment and is not included in this newsletter.

When we get the go ahead to organize, your child will be notified. The goal would be to have this done early in the first full week, but as indicated above it is after approval and all of our numbers have settled somewhat. 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!

SAFETY GUIDELINES

You will have already received some information regarding safety measures in place for this year. A few key reminders are:

- Students in grades 4-7 will be required to wear a face mask while indoors. It is **highly recommended** students in K-3 wear a mask.
- Complete a daily health check for your child before sending them to school. This can be done using the provincial [K-12 Health Check app](#) for daily assessment of symptoms.
- Practice hand hygiene regularly.
- Practice respecting each others physical space.
- Coughing/sneezing into their arm.
- Visitors/Parents are now permitted to be in the school, **but they must have a pre-booked appointment.** Visitors will need to sign in at the office and must wear a mask at all times.

PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

We have been confirmed for 19 divisions (at this point) for classes in the 2021-2022 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 from back in May are considered but may not be granted.** Thank you to all McGirr families, staff and students for what we anticipate will be another positive and smooth start up to the 2021-2022 school year. Welcome back to another year of growing and learning. Here are some factors that are considered when we put classes together:

- 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.

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> .

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, Here are the other newest members of our McGirr educational team (*teaching assignments are subject to change*):

- Ms. EJ Boyd (Inclusion Support Teacher/ELL), formerly known as Student Support Teacher
- Ms. Emily McCart- IST/ELL teacher (it was announced in June she was leaving, but in fact she is staying, great news for us!)
- Ms. Trina Praud (CFSW—temporary for the school year) takes over for Mr. William Watt who has just accepted a temporary job with Learning Alternatives for the school year
- Mr. Paul Mitchell (he recently—September 2nd—returned to McGirr—so he never really left which is also great news for us!)
- We have one posting (3 day a week secretary) that should be filled by the end of the first week

2021 DATES TO REMEMBER

First day of class, Grades 1-7 (11 AM to 12 PM)	Tues Sept 7
PAC (6:30 PM).....	Mon Sept 20
Terry Fox Run	Fri Sept 24
Photo Day	Wed Sept 29
Truth and Reconciliation Stat (school closed)	Thurs Sept 30
Thanksgiving (students do not attend)	Mon. Oct 11
Early Dismissal (1:00 PM)	Wed Oct 20
Assessment Conferences (1:15-2:45 PM) Tentative	Wed Oct 20
Assessment Conferences (5:30-7:00 PM) Tentative	Wed Oct 20
Early Dismissal (1:00 PM)	Thurs Oct 21
Pro-D [province wide] (students do not attend)	Fri. Oct 22
Pro-D (school based) (students do not attend)	Mon Oct 25
Photo Retakes	Wed Oct 27
Remembrance Day (students do not attend).....	Thurs Nov 11
Last Day before Holiday	Fri. Dec 17
First Day back	Tues Jan 4

****Please note our dismissal times for October 18, 19, 20, 21 might change, we hope to have this in place and out to families by mid September as we work with our COVID guidelines to see how we might be able to work our original plans****

IMPORTANT STUDENT INFORMATION CONSENT/EMERGENCY RELEASE

Parents and guardians will be receiving **important forms** to sign in the first two weeks of school (after kids are in their assigned classes).

- **One form** is called Consent to Use Cloud Technologies (Google Classroom, Google Suite).
- **Another form** that provides informed consent for a number of items regarding your child(ren). Please sign this form in the appropriate areas.
- **Another form** involves parents and guardians confirming all of the important emergency and pick up contact information we have in our computer is in fact accurate and up to date. This form ought to be updated during the year when there are changes on your end (including phone numbers, addresses, alternate pick up people, medical concerns etc...). **It is very important this form is signed on the back (at the bottom)**

Please complete these forms immediately and return them to the school the next day.

SCHOOL BELL SCHEDULE/SUPERVISION

This year our bell schedule is the same all five days (just like last year), 8:30-2:10 Monday to Friday. 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. **Note: We do have 4, early dismissal days (1:00 PM) and those days will be listed in our newsletters. These early dismissal days are tied to formative assessment conferences should be finalized by mid September as we look to see how we will do this within our COVID guidelines**

EARLY DETECTION - PHONING IN ABSENCES

The early detection system is for the safety of all students at McGirr. A convenient way for parents to report an absence is through email: info.mg@sd68.bc.ca (this email gets forwarded to your child's classroom teacher as well). Please indicate your child's first and last name and their classroom teacher. We also have a 24-hr voice mail so please report students who will be absent or late as early as possible in the morning (or even the night before). This program is for the safety of your child. **All absences and lates should be emailed or called in to the office.** When leaving a message please state your child's first and last name, teacher name, division and if they are ill, at an appointment, or on vacation.

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 Switch) 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. The school cannot be held responsible for lost or damaged items.

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, at recess times, 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 MEETING WITH 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 please send an email to info.mg@sd68.bc.ca and someone from the office will get the message to your child. If it is something you are dropping off, just call us when you get to the front door and we will either meet you outside or invite you in to give to us in the office. After checking and signing in with the office, please do not disturb other classes while classes are in session (unless you are expected by the teacher as a volunteer etc.). We will make sure that your child receives the items/message. (**Note, we will need to follow all COVID protocols with respect to this piece**)

If you need to talk to your child’s teacher please call/email ahead, write in the planner, and arrange 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**. This information was sent out in June/July and early September to all families.

Volunteering in classrooms won’t start right away, it is hoped this is something we transition into during the school year....but please complete the CRC now so you are not disappointed down the road

ERASE BULLYING WEBSITE

If you have not already checked it out, there is a great website that provides lots of information regarding bullying/cyber safety/mental health. The information is for parents, youth etc. The website link is:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/erase>



PLEASE DO NOT PARK IN THE DROP OFF/PICK UP ZONE

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**. **Please wait in your car (at pick up time), park close to the curb and pull forward as best as possible.**

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/pick up 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/pick up 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/EMAILS

If you are **not** receiving school emails please check your junk or spam filter and mark our email address as safe. If you find the emails are not there, please contact the office so our secretary can confirm the email address we have on file for you. (info.mg@sd68.bc.ca)

We will see you on Tuesday. 😊

