



ÉCOLE SECONDAIRE
HANDSWORTH
SECONDARY SCHOOL



September 2nd, 2021

Dear Handsworth Families:

Bienvenue, Tl'iknumut, Welcome! I am excited to be welcoming **staff and students** to Handsworth for the 2021/22 school year! The Handsworth staff have been busy preparing for opening day and we are extremely grateful for everyone's patience and understanding as we prepare for another unique school year. This welcome letter is a little longer than usual, but I would ask that you review the entire letter as it contains important information.

Handsworth will continue to look, and feel, a little different this year. There will continue to be protocols in place for the safety of our entire school community along with some changes to the interior of the building as we continue the preparations to move into our new building in February 2022. In his correspondence to families on August 31st, Superintendent Pearmain communicated that a number of health and safety measures have been implemented across the district to support safe learning environments – *I would encourage you to review this letter*. At Handsworth, we will continue with our health and safety orientations for all members of our school community and including reviewing enhanced cleaning protocols. All staff and students **will be required to wear masks while on school property**. I am requesting that families support our school community by reminding their child(ren) of the safety protocols in place and also using the [Daily Health Check](#) ensuring that any child who is sick does not report to school.

It is also important to note the food service operations at Handsworth continue to be suspended for Semester 1 (Sept to Jan) – the school cafeteria will not be available until further notice and there are no longer vending machines on site. We are working to re-introduce the Hot Lunch program and will communicate out to all families when we have more information. We encourage students to pack a lunch, a water bottle and keep a few extra snacks such as a piece of fruit or granola bar available in their backpack. With two classes per day, Handsworth students will be asked to keep their belongings with them throughout the school day – students will not be assigned lockers by default, but lockers will be available **by request** for our student athletes, students in our music programs and other students who require a place to store belongings – information will be communicated at school assemblies. We expect most students will keep their belongings with them throughout the school day.

On Tuesday September 7th, we will be inviting all students in Grades 8 -12 into the large gym for grade wide assemblies. The assembly will cover important health and safety information as well as grade specific information from their grade administrator and grade counsellor. Students in **Grades 8 -12** are invited to the large gym at the following times for their grade assembly – grade assemblies will be approximately 30 minutes. **Students are asked to arrive to school wearing masks and seating in the large gym is arranged to be distanced.**

Grade 8 - Tuesday September 7th at 8:45am
Grade 9 - Tuesday September 7th at 10:05am
Grade 10 - Tuesday September 7th at 10:55am
Grade 11 - Tuesday September 7th at 11:45am
Grade 12 - Tuesday September 7th at 12:35pm

I would like to extend a special welcome to all our new students, and families, including our 2026 Graduates. All Grade 8 families will have already received communication from our Grade 8 administrator, Ms. Desai. To all Grade 12 families – as I move into my fifth year at Handsworth, I am extremely excited to be working with our graduating class as the grade administrator. I'd ask that you please keep an eye on your inbox as I will be sending out some important information next week with respect to Graduation 2022. If you would like to receive information from our Grad Parent Coordinators (including **parent run events** and how to volunteer) please register here [Grad Parent Event Sign-Up](#). **All school-sanctioned event information will be sent from Handsworth through school messenger.**

Course Schedules: Students in Grade 8 will receive their schedule on Tuesday September 7th following the assembly in their homeroom class – Grade 8 Homeroom teachers will escort students to their homeroom class. Students in Grade 9-12 will receive their schedule on Wednesday September 8th during homeroom. There will be signs posted throughout the school with homeroom assignments – the information will also be posted on the Handsworth website here: [Homerooms 2021-2022](#).

Our returning families will notice we have had more than a few teaching and support staff changes as a result of retirements, leaves, transfers and a growing inclusive education program. **New** to Handsworth in our Inclusive Education department we welcome the following educational assistants: Ms. Shannon Bennett, Ms. Sonja Burns, Ms. Jessica Bylholt, Ms. Karen Pereira, Ms. Hoonah Lee, Ms. Mary Saboury, Ms. Mehri Sadeghian, Mr. Damian Simon and Ms. Dianne Mund (EA/Bus Driver). We welcome (and in some cases, we welcome back) the following teachers for the 2021/22 school year: Ms. Kathy Afshin- Monfared (PHE), Ms. Jaimie Clay (LST/Math), Ms. Sandra Droulis (Dance/Drama), Ms. Molly Elliott (Choices), Ms. Tanya Ferreira (English), Ms. Sonia Gadtke (Business/PHE), Ms. Catherine Hartwell (Business/Socials/English), Ms. Kate Lane (English), Ms. Lauren McHugh (Librarian), Ms. Annick Perles-Gladman (French Immersion), Mr. Steve Sheffield (LST), Mr. Fitzgerald Villanueva (LST, Math). I am thrilled to welcome all these educators to our amazing school community. We are still in the process of filling a few more vacancies, including our Grade 9 Counsellor position, and we will be updating our [Handsworth Staff Directory](#) as we fill these positions. Please see below on who to contact for specific grade queries.



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Grade 8 – Ms. Jagruti Desai, VP and Ms. Trina Infanta, Counsellor
Grade 9 – Mr. Mark Barrett, VP and Counsellor TBD – all Grade 9 counsellor queries to handsworth@sd44.ca
Grade 10 – Ms Jagruti Desai, VP and Ms. Robyn Renwick, Counsellor
Grade 11 – Mr. Mark Barrett, VP and Ms. Stacey Schwegler, Counsellor
Grade 12 – Ms. Samra-Gynane, P and Mr. David Craik, Counsellor

The theme we will be focusing on at Handsworth for the 2021/22 school year is **Identity**. This theme has been chosen as we work toward re-establishing our **identity** as Royals. In looking forward, it is important we also reflect back on traditions and legacies both positive and negative. The Handsworth school community has a strong history of student achievement, performance, service and growth. In continuing to shape our shared identity we have a collective, and individual, responsibility to continue listening and learning from our Indigenous communities. This includes understanding truth before reconciliation, and supporting our Indigenous communities as they grieve the loss of their children. We hope a focus on **Identity** will help support our entire school community as we navigate a new and different school year and transition into our new school building in 2022.

As we approach 1500 students, and are the largest school community in the NVSD, communication is key! I encourage you to attend our virtual [HPAC](#) meetings and get involved with the Handsworth Parent Advisory Council – and stay informed with the most up to date information by visiting our [Handsworth school website](#).

On behalf of all of the staff at Handsworth, we look forward to connecting with all our returning families and welcoming all of the new families to the amazing Handsworth school community. It truly is a privilege to be a member of the Handsworth family and I wish all of you a spectacular start to the new school year!

Stay well,

Rupi Samra-Gynane, Principal

The Handsworth Community develops empowered, innovative, and compassionate learners who serve and lead with curiosity and integrity.

CONSTRUCTION NOTICE:

Traffic is limited due to ongoing construction work taking place on the roadways. There will be flagging personnel in place to direct pedestrians and traffic.

Car access and student drop off is limited on the north side of Edgewood and the south side of Handsworth until the construction work is completed.

If you are driving, please allow for extra travel time to drop your student off a couple of blocks away. Walking and alternate modes of transportation are encouraged.