



ÉCOLE SECONDAIRE
HANDSWORTH
SECONDARY SCHOOL



September 4th, 2020

Dear Handsworth Families:

Bienvenue, Tl'iknumut, Welcome! I am excited to be welcoming **staff and students** back to Handsworth for the new school year! The office, custodial and teaching staff at Handsworth have been busy preparing for opening day and we are extremely grateful for everyone's patience and understanding as we prepare for a 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 including details on next week's student orientations.

Handsworth will look, and feel, different this year and the measures that are taken are for the safety of our entire school community. In his correspondence to families Superintendent Pearmain communicated a number of health & safety measures have been implemented to support safe learning environments and to minimize the risk of COVID-19 transmission in schools. In addition to signage throughout the school to manage traffic flow and provide reminders of health and safety protocols, we have cohorted students in smaller learning groups and enhanced cleaning protocols. We are managing movement in the school by creating learning zones and will assign designated entrances/exits for these zones. All staff and students **will be required to wear masks while in common areas of school property** and staff and students are welcome to wear masks or PPE while in their learning cohorts. I am requesting that families support our school community by reminding their child(ren) of the importance of using the designated entrances and exits and also ensuring that any child who is sick does not report to school.

It is also important to note that the food service operations at Handsworth have been suspended – the school cafeteria, the athletic hot lunch program and vending machines will not be available until further notice. We encourage students to pack a lunch and a water bottle and keep a few extra snacks such as a piece of fruit or granola bar available in their backpack. Handsworth students will not be assigned lockers this year, students will be asked to keep their belongings with them throughout the school day.

Staff will be in school on Tuesday and Wednesday next week receiving Health & Safety training, instruction on new routines and COVID-19 protocols, guidance for incorporating Social Emotional Learning approaches into their instruction to support student mental health, and refreshing skills on technical tools such as the MS Teams platform which will be used district-wide throughout the year. Parents are asked to familiarize themselves with the **MS Teams platform** as this will be how teachers will communicate directly with families and students, and will be the instructional delivery platform if the provincial COVID-19 response requires schools to move to either Stage 3 or 4 of [B.C.'s Five Stage Framework for K-12 Education](#). Information regarding MS Teams can be found here: [MS Teams Information](#)

On Thursday and Friday, we will be inviting all students in Grades 8 -12 into the building for student orientations (see details below). I would like to extend a special welcome to all our new students, and families, including our 2025 Graduates! We have a special orientation schedule for Grade 8's and a special message from our student leaders!

Welcome Grade 8s: A message from your Grade 8 Retreat Leaders

This is a full circle moment for us. Five years ago this month our first Grade 8 Retreat took place and 300 students were welcomed to the Handsworth community by their student leaders. Many of us are now entering grade 12 and we still remember that first retreat and how nervous and excited we were to we were to enter high school, meet new friends and officially become "Royals". Like many things this year, we have had to work hard to re-imagine how we would do things differently in order to keep everyone safe. Even though things will not be the same, we are committed to making your transition to high school as smooth as it can be. We want you to know that we will be working with you in your grade 8 cohort. Five leaders have been assigned to each cohort class and while we will have to do much of our team building virtually, we are looking forward to getting to know all of you and helping you navigate school life. Just to show you how much we care, we made you a Welcome Video! You can view it on the Handsworth Instagram page, <https://www.instagram.com/p/CEkbV-TnRa9/>. As we said in the video, "Welcome Royal, you belong!"



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For our students in **Grades 8 -12** the OHS Orientation, timetable distribution and photos will be conducted in individual grade groups to maximize our ability to socially distance students and staff throughout the process.

Grade 8 - Thursday September 10th from 9:30am – 11:30am **AND** Friday September 11th from 1:00 pm – 2:30pm

Grade 9 - Thursday September 10th @ 12:00pm

Grade 10 - Thursday September 10th @ 1:30pm

Grade 11 - Friday September 11th @ 9:30am

Grade 12 - Friday September 11th @ 11:00am

For **ALL students**, please arrive outside the **large gym** wearing your mask and dressed for photos no earlier than 15 minutes before your scheduled time. Staff members will be in the gym to direct you and distribute timetables. Once you have your timetable, please proceed directly to your Period 1 class, this will be your learning cohort for the first quarter. If you do not have a Period 1 class, please report to the Library Learning Commons (Mr. Forsyth). Your Period 1 teacher will conduct the orientation with regards to COVID safety protocols, schedule items and coordinate student photos. When your orientation period is complete, approximately one hour, and you are released by your Period 1 teacher, please proceed home and we will see you on Monday September 14th for the first day of instruction! Secondary schools are still finalizing the details of the school day and the schedule as well as the details on the model of delivery will be emailed to all families early next week. All information will also be posted on the Handsworth website.

Our returning families will notice that we have had a few teaching and support staff changes as a result of retirements, leaves and transfers. **New** to Handsworth we have Mr. Scott Bennett (Math/Science), Ms. Kelly D' Oust (Learning Services), Ms. Samantha Lo (Science) and Ms. Julia Wong (Counselling) – I am thrilled to have them join our amazing school community. We are still in the process of filling a few more vacancies and we will be updating our [Handsworth Staff Directory](#) as we fill these positions.

The theme we will be focusing on at Handsworth for the 2020/21 school year is "**Resiliency and Gratitude**"- this theme is an extension of the 2019/20 school theme "**Wellness and Resiliency**"- it was chosen as a result of student and staff feedback. We hope that a focus on **resiliency and gratitude** will help support our entire school community as we navigate a new and different school year. We will have a number of targeted initiatives and virtual events to support this year's theme for the entire school community (staff, students and families).

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!

Sincerely,

Rupri Samra-Gynane, Principal

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