



SUTHERLAND SECONDARY SCHOOL

1860 Sutherland Avenue, North Vancouver, BC V7L 4C2 Telephone: 604-903-3500



October 30, 2023

Dear Sutherland Families,

Autumn is clearly upon us, with a noticeable chill in the air and a marked difference from just a few weeks ago when we were enjoying warmer weather. With the slide into darker days and rainy weather, it is timely to remind the school community about keeping safety top of mind. Please be mindful of driving within the posted speed limits in school zones. Halloween tomorrow evening will bring children of all ages into the streets to trick-or-treat, and we want to ensure that all our students arrive home safely from an evening of fun with friends and family.

On a related note, Halloween is sometimes celebrated by families using fireworks in a responsible manner within the borders of the *District* of North Vancouver. A reminder that in the City of North Vancouver, where Sutherland is situated, that the use of both [firecrackers and fireworks is prohibited](#) under bylaw 7677. Fireworks are not permitted on school property, and we appreciate the community's assistance in encouraging responsible behaviour on an evening that has, unfortunately, in some years been marred by litter, vandalism, and even injury. Sutherland is fortunate to have amazing facilities, both inside and outside of the building, and we want to keep them in wonderful condition for many years to come.

On October 3rd, in coordination with our RCMP partners, Sutherland held its annual lockdown drill. These events are an important element of preparedness for our school community should an emergent circumstance arise that requires the school population to hold safely in place. Everyone did an exemplary job and the RCMP were complimentary of the speed and seriousness with which our drill ran. A reminder to families that if a real-world lockdown occurs, that cell phone use in the building is prohibited as it poses a potential risk to safety by revealing the secure locations where students and staff are holding in place.

Thank you to all who attended our Parent-Teacher Conferences on October 12th. It was a wonderful opportunity to connect with staff and reflect on our students' learning and achievements through the first five weeks of semester 1. Our teaching staff have been working exceptionally hard to support learning in the classroom, both in regularly scheduled classes and during daily tutorial times. Most full-time teachers are available each morning for tutorial time between 8:30am and 9:12am, and by appointment on some Mondays. Part-Time teachers have been asked to communicate individually with their classes any nuances in their tutorial time support being offered. One topic raised in a few of the conferences was family travel plans on the horizon and how that may impact student learning and attendance. While we recognize the value of travel experience and taking advantage of opportunities to reconnect, post-pandemic, with family abroad, please note that teachers are typically not able to provide individualized student support because of travel plans. Whenever possible, we ask families to consider traveling during our scheduled holiday breaks, so as not to adversely impact student learning.

This Thursday and Friday, a reminder to families that Sutherland will be having an extended block schedule to help accommodate the writing of [Literacy and Numeracy Assessments](#) for many of our Grade 10 and 12

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students. These specialized longer blocks are also providing an opportunity for many classes to engage in activities that may otherwise be more difficult to run in a typical 70-minute class.

Thursday, Nov. 2, 2023

8:30-9:15 – Tutorial

9:15-11:45 - Period 1

11:45-12:30 – Lunch

12:30-3:00 - Period 2

Friday, Nov. 3, 2023

8:30-9:15 - Tutorial

9:15-11:45 - Period 3

11:45-12:30 - Lunch

12:30-3:00 - Period 4

As we look ahead to November, staff will be busy preparing for our first communication of student learning, or report cards. This will be the first time student learning will be shared using the new reporting order language and, specifically for grades 8 and 9, you will see learning communicated using the provincial proficiency scale. Students in grades 10 to 12 will continue to receive percentages. As previously shared by Superintendent Ryan, the [Reporting on student Learning brochure](#), prepared by the Ministry of Education and Child Care, provides helpful information on what is changing, what will remain the same, and the benefits to these changes.

Finally, I'd like to touch on the devastating events in the Middle East, the tragic loss of life happening there, and to acknowledge the impact these events may have on students, families, and colleagues. At Sutherland we have people with ties to the Middle East, whether they have emigrated from the region or have family or friends there. We also have refugee/immigrant students and families, some of whom may have experienced war and conflict firsthand, and the events unfolding may be incredibly triggering for them. If students are struggling, please connect with our team of grade counselors who can offer support. In classes where discussions on the Middle East have occurred, teaching staff have done a great job of maintaining respectful discourse, and an open-door policy for students who may need to step out to check in with a counselor. We know that every student who sets foot in our school carries with them the stresses and anxiousness of circumstances beyond their control – from home, from family, and beyond. And we again invite any student who is struggling to deal with processing trauma to meet with our school counselors. We are here to support you.

I am impressed daily by the care and compassion our students and staff demonstrate for each other at Sutherland. It is with great **pride** we all serve a school community that **passionately** values providing a sense of **place** for each student, every day.

Sincerely,

Mark Barrett
Principal
Sutherland Secondary

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