



VANCOUVER COLLEGE

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Friday, August 21, 2020

Middle School Parents & Guardians,

Welcome to the 2020-2021 School Year. We hope you all had a memorable and relaxing summer. As a school, we understand that in addition to caring for your son, you have also had to intensify your role in your son's education as classes moved online last term. With that in mind, I wanted to sincerely thank all of you for the love and support you have provided daily when working with your sons. It has not been an easy road.

As all of us are aware, the paradigm of education is constantly shifting. One glance at my twitter feed demonstrates just how much educational pedagogy has changed in the last six months alone, as teachers have had to pivot to emergency online learning from the "tradition" of teaching students in person. This shift was so rapid that it became a nerve racking time for all educators, including myself. Many of us were pushed from our comfort zones, most felt a feeling of anxiety due to our brain's stress response. Shortly after the Ministry suspended in-person classes, so many common questions arose for teachers - How do I teach online? How will I teach online, while my own children are learning from home? How can I ensure that my students are developing their curricular and core competencies? And most importantly, will Covid-19 impact my family?

In the words of Abraham Maslow, a renowned American psychologist: "In any given moment we have two options: to step forward into growth or step back into safety." Although I do understand the intentions of Maslow's words, I wonder if he would agree that in today's society - "to be safe we must step forward." In the accompanying pages of this letter, you will find a host of changes to the Middle School. In order to meet the Ministry of Education's health and safety protocols, we have had to implement a variety of new changes for the 2020-21 academic year.

Often when we evolve we can lose sight of those foundational principles that differentiate us from other communities. As we enter this new year, we promise that we will be "steadfast and immovable" (1 Corinthians 15:58) from our tradition. While working with the Ministry of Education's mandated stage, we will continue to focus on faith and character development in all classes. We will commit to a relational approach with our boys, as we understand that "it is less how a boy learns, but for whom he will learn" (Michael Reichert). And we will create a classroom environment that is experiential and relevant in the lives of our boys.

Thank you for entrusting us with educating, and to a certain degree, raising your sons. It is a privilege to be charged with caring for and teaching your sons and this is something that our community would never take for granted.

If you should have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at the school.

Semper Fidelis,

Mr. JP Cavalluzzo
Middle School, Assistant Principal, Vancouver College
jcavalluzzo@mail.vc.bc.ca

1. Homeroom System and Learning Groups:

The Middle School uses a Homeroom system, in which each Homeroom stays together for the majority of their classes as one primary learning group (28 - 32 students). With this structure in place, we are well positioned to meet the Ministry of Education's Learning Group limits. Each student's Homeroom will act as their primary learning group; however, most will also be attached to another Homeroom from the same grade level. These Homerooms could join one another for additional learning activities or a larger grade level event where students will be appropriately physically distanced.

Middle School Learning Groups	
1	7-1/7-2
2	8-1/8-2
3	8-3/8-4
4	8-5/8-6
5	9-1/9-5
6	9-2
7	9-3/9-4

Middle School students will learn in their actual Homeroom classroom each academic block with their learning group and will not rotate to other classrooms during the school day (except in the cases of some language and elective classes). This will limit the amount of transition time and interaction between students in our hallways.

There are at times situations when a student may have to leave his learning group in order to take a Senior School class (typically, Math 10 or French 10) or TLC block, in these cases the students will be physically distanced from another learning group. This will be communicated to students during Middle School Orientation and throughout the school year.

2. Schedule:

The 2020-21 school year will commence using a full in-class model with students in Grades 7-9 present at school everyday.

All classes will be offered in a mini-semester rotating format ensuring progress in each subject from September to June.

Each mini-semester will last for approximately 14 school days where students take four of their eight classes. Students will then rotate through their remaining four classes in the next mini-semester. The cycle then repeats. This system will allow for students to learn alongside a smaller number of students and have less contact with other teachers and students outside of their learning group.

September 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5
6	Labour Day Campus Closed	ProD Day No Classes	ProD Day No Classes	Orientation	Orientation	12
13	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	19
20	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	26
27	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	Walkathon	2

October 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	Walkathon	
	28	29	30	1	2	3
4	EFGH	EFGH	EFGH	EFGH	EFGH	10
11	Thanksgiving Campus Closed	EFGH	EFGH	EFGH	EFGH	17
18	EFGH	EFGH	EFGH	EFGH	ProD Day No Classes	24
25	EFGH	BCDA	BCDA	BCDA	BCDA	31

We strongly encourage students and parents to consistently review our [calendar](#) found on our school's website and app (found by searching Vancouver College in the Apple and Google Play stores).

3. First Week of School:

School is set to begin on Thursday, September 10th for Middle School students. The first two days of school will act as our Middle School Orientation. These two days are devoted to community building, setting expectations and of course, learning about our new health & safety protocols.

- Thursday, September 10th (arrival time - Grade 7 - 8:15 am , Grade 8 - 8:20 am, Grade 9 - 8:25 am)
- Friday, September 11th (arrival time - Grade 7 - 8:15 am , Grade 8 - 8:20 am, Grade 9 - 8:25 am)

Middle School students are expected to enter from the south entrance of Manrell Hall (exit from the north entrance) and locate their Homeroom classroom. Faculty and staff will be available to help students find their Homeroom. Parents are asked to stay off campus entirely due to our health & safety protocols.

Students are expected to bring their lunch to school during both orientation days.

4. Daily Timetable:

The Middle School daily timetable consists of four academic blocks per day with built in transition times and a lunch period. This year we have extended the timing of our Advising block (now titled Better Man Block) and it will take place weekly on Wednesday mornings. We will no longer host four shorter advising check-ins per week.

As we have decreased our transition times, lunch period and removed advising check-ins, our school day will be shortened most days. This will give our cleaning staff time to clean our building thoroughly for the following school day.

Mon, Tues, Thurs, & Fri			Wednesday		
8:30 - 9:45	Block 1	75 min	9:30 - 10:30	Block 1	60 min
9:45 - 9:50	Transition	5 min	10:30 - 10:35	Transition	5 min
9:50 - 11:05	Block 2	75 min	10:35 - 11:05	Advising	30 min
11:05 - 11:10	Transition	5 min	11:05 - 11:10	Transition	5 min
11:10 - 12:25	Block 3	75 min	11:10 - 12:10	Block 2	60 min
12:25 - 1:00	Lunch	35 min	12:10 - 12:15	Transition	5 min
1:00 - 2:15	Block 4	75 min	12:15 - 1:15	Block 3	60 min
			1:15 - 1:45	Lunch	30 min
			1:45 - 2:45	Block 4	60 min

To ensure we can socially distance and maintain proper flow of our students, we will also institute a staggered arrival and dismissal time for Middle School students based on their grade level.

Mon, Tues, Thurs, & Fri - Arrival	Wednesday - Arrival
8:15 am - Grade 7	9:15 am - Grade 7
8:20 am - Grade 8	9:20 am - Grade 8
8:25 am - Grade 9	9:25 am - Grade 9

This means that students at each grade level are expected to arrive at school and enter the building at the above time. Students can enter the building prior to their arrival time, as long as they socially distance from students in other learning groups.

Mon, Tues, Thurs, & Fri - Dismissal	Wednesday - Dismissal
2:15 pm - Grade 7 2:20 pm - Grade 8 2:25 pm - Grade 9	2:45 pm - Grade 7 2:50 pm - Grade 8 2:55 pm - Grade 9

The above Middle School Timetable will remain in place for this academic year.

5. Rationale for Schedule/Timetable:

The Mini-Semester model/Daily Timetable offers the following:

- Close mirroring to regular school day
- Curriculum spanning the entire year in equal blocks versus a semester system
- Limited further intermixing of students, classes, and physical spaces
- Focus on course material for the approximate length of a unit
- Equal number of periods with each class
- Routine and predictability while keeping learning groups separate
- More opportunities for professional development
- Ability to promote a more in-depth advising program for students and faculty
- Opportunity for thorough cleaning of the school between mini-semesters

6. Elective Classes:

In order to limit the amount of contacts that students have with other learning groups, all students from each Homeroom will attend the same elective classes with the exception of students who have selected the Band option. Students will have to remain in their elective Homeroom rotations for the year and will be unable to switch classes after each term. With the health of our students and teachers being our number one priority, we believe this approach will help to keep all of us safe. Students will learn more about their Homeroom elective rotation during the first week of school.

A variety of precautions will be taken in our Band classes to ensure the safety of our students and faculty. Mr. Larry Olson will contact the parents of all band students personally with further details.

7. Lockers:

Students will not have access to a book locker at the beginning of this school year. These areas are high risk and impede the flow of traffic in our hallways. All students are asked to come to school with a backpack that will aid in the transport of their belongings. Students will be able to use the Physical Education (PE) lockers in the Rice Building prior to and after PE classes. Students are asked to bring a lock to school on the days they have PE.

A variety of precautions will be taken in our Locker Rooms to ensure the safety of our students and faculty.

8. Lunch:

Students will eat lunch in their Homeroom classrooms and not the cafeteria. Students are encouraged to bring their own lunch to school. At the end of lunch, students will be required to attend recess outdoors.

9. Co-Curricular Activities:

As co-curricular activities are an important part of our school's culture, we will continue to offer co-curricular activities before and after school. A list of activities are being collated by our Middle School Grade Level Coordinators and will be communicated to the boys during their Advising block and to you in the school's newsletter. Co-curricular activities will likely involve students interacting outside of their learning groups and appropriate physical distancing is required in those circumstances.

In a recent communication from BC School Sports, they have concluded that traditional interschool athletics are not permitted at this time. They have also outlined that interschool competition will be re-evaluated mid-fall. More information will be forthcoming from our Athletic Director.

Important School Startup Reminders

Timetable:

New families will receive their PowerSchool ID and password shortly in the mail. Please take time to login and complete your account and then review your son's timetable. For current families, please also login to PowerSchool to view your son's timetable to ensure there are no errors or omissions. *If the schedule does not include courses, designated learning blocks, or if you have any questions regarding your son's timetable, please contact April Deutsch directly via email (adeutsch@mail.vc.bc.ca).* A hardcopy timetable will also be distributed to each student during textbook pickup and also during Middle School Orientation.

Uniform:

Students are expected to take pride in their school community by ensuring that they wear their uniform to code. A few areas that are needing improvement from last year include:

- regular black, dress shoes, with leather uppers, cut beneath the ankle. Black running shoes cannot be substituted for dress shoes.
- dress quality, black or brown belt. Students are expected to wear a belt to school.
- school issued sweaters. This does not include Spirit Wear items, such as hoodies.

We understand that mornings can be a challenge for families and we do appreciate your support in conveying the Dress Code and above information to your son. For any other information on the Dress Code, please consult the Student or Parent Handbooks. In addition, note that Summer Dress will be in effect until Thanksgiving weekend.

Electronic Device Use & Vancouver College's Acceptable Use Policy:

Our school aims to create an environment in which students are able to be focused and present, both in class and during non-instructional time. It is clear that smart devices offer many benefits, and we believe that we can all learn how to make the best use of these tools. However, it has been shown that excessive screen time also leads to many negative emotional and social side effects and can be harmful to school culture.

In the Middle and Senior School, students may bring cellphones to school, but are expected to have them off and away during class. During social times (before school, at break, at lunch, and after school) and when in public areas with other students, students are expected to keep their devices "Off and away." Gaming, outside of a club or intramural setting, is not permitted, and students will be asked to put away devices used for this purpose or to risk having them confiscated. Repeated infractions will lead to further interventions, which may include disciplinary consequences.

Supply List & Textbook Contract:

Please review the Vancouver College website for the Middle School supply list found on page 27 of the [Middle School Manual](#). Furthermore, students and parents will need to complete and sign the [Textbook Responsibility Contract](#) prior to acquiring books from the Book Room. Textbook pickup dates are found within the above link.

Middle School Parent Orientation Evening:

All Middle School parents and guardians are encouraged to attend the Parent Orientation Evening on Wednesday, September 23rd from 6:30 to 8:00 pm. This evening will give you the opportunity to meet our Principal, Mr. Daryl Weaver; our President, Mr. Johnny Bevacqua; our Parents' Association President, Ms. Celia Courchene as well as myself and your son's Homeroom teacher. We strongly recommend that at least one parent/guardian is in attendance

This year's Orientation Evening will take place virtually. Please await more information in our school's newsletter.

Your [Parent Handbook](#) is an excellent resource for answering questions or clarifying any concerns you may have. Should you have any further questions regarding Middle School start up for the 2020-21 school year, please do not hesitate to contact the Administration Office (604 261 4285 ext 256 or 226).

Grade Level Coordinators:

These leadership roles are designed to further assist our boys in their development as a whole person, ensuring that each student is known and supported at their grade level. These faculty members coordinate various student life initiatives and grade-specific activities, provide academic support, deal with lower level discipline issues, and provide referrals when further help is needed.

I am excited to announce that Carlo Trentadue (Grade 9) and Rob Kozikowski (Grade 8) will serve in these roles.

I would request that you contact your son's Homeroom teacher should any social-emotional issue arise at school. Should any academic concern emerge at school, I would request you contact your son's

subject specific teacher to discuss the matter. Students will be referred to our Grade Level Coordinators (and me) from our Homeroom and subject specific teachers.

In addition, please know that you can always contact me to discuss your son and how to best support his needs.

Summary: A Day in the Life of a VC Middle School Student

- Students will attend school each day for regularly scheduled classes.
- Consistent contact with teachers and Homeroom (primary learning group) classmates.
- School based technology will include communication via email and Google Classroom (Learning Management System).
- Completing a medical Pre-screening Daily Check prior to arriving at school.
- Arriving at school during staggered times with controlled entrances to buildings.
- No locker access to begin the year.
- Masks to be worn in the school, hallways, shared public spaces, and classrooms.
- Follow physical distancing signage and markings as reminders.
- Physical distancing will be enforced in lines, cafeteria, classrooms, and hallways.
- Handwashing and sanitizing regularly upon entry to new areas.
- Carrying lunch, materials, clothes for each of his four daily classes in a backpack.
- Student engagement and social and emotional well-being to be prioritized in orientation, classes, and co-curricular experiences.
- Dismissal from school during staggered times with controlled exits from buildings.
- School-sanctioned activities or events will have expectations posted for distancing and hygiene.