



THE DIEFENBAKER REPORT



WEBSITE: <http://diefenbaker.sd38.bc.ca/>
PAC website: <http://diefenbaker.sd38.bc.ca/parents>

September 6, 2016

Message from the Administrative Team

Happy September! Welcome to our new Diefenbaker families, and welcome back to those of you who were with us last year. We hope that you had a wonderful summer and we look forward to hearing all about it!

The start of a school year brings excitement...old and new friends, teachers, classrooms, back to school clothes and school items...and perhaps a little bit of worry, which is completely expected. New situations have that effect on all of us! We hope to settle into our school routines quickly, which should help ease fears that come with a new year. Diefenbaker is an incredible community, full of friendly faces and helpful hands. It's a great place to be!

This is a short newsletter to let you know our initial plans for the week. You will receive a more detailed newsletter later in the month.

Mrs. E. Stapleton
Principal

Mr. T. Shuto
Vice Principal

We're Going Back To School



September 7th, 8th and 9th

All students in **Grades 1-7** start regular school hours (8:45AM - 2:38PM daily). Please be sure to send a snack and a lunch with your child every day.

Kindergarten students follow the gradual entry schedule (this has been mailed to you) from September 6th-14th. Please follow the snack schedule on the gradual entry schedule.

Once we confirm attendance and the number of classes we will have this year, students will move to their new classrooms. **Until then, students will be returning to last year's class and teacher, with the following exceptions:**

- Div. 11 (Mrs. Radford/Regan) with Mrs. Choinski in Rm. 104
- Div. 5 (Mrs. Choinski) with Mrs. Anderson in Rm. 118
- Div. 1 and 2 (Mr. Cho/Mrs. Anderson) with Mr. Cho in Rm. 113

French Immersion Students will remain in the classes they attended on Sept. 6th.

School Forms

Once students are in their classes for this year, we will be sending home verification, school supply/agenda and walking field trip forms, to name a few! While the choice is yours, we would appreciate you accepting email communication from the school (on the Use of Personal Information Form). This way, you will be sure to receive newsletters and important email reminders, as notices often don't make it home when sent with students. We will begin to collect forms and payments during the second week of school. We appreciate you returning the requested information in a timely manner.

The following information was sent home in May, but it is important to remember as we begin a new school year:

Understanding Combined Classes

We often find that the philosophy behind combined classes is unfamiliar to parents. Children who are placed in the upper grade of a combined class are not placed there because they struggle in school. For example, in a combined Gr. 4/5 class, we do our very best to ensure that for each grade, we have students who encompass a range of learning styles and abilities. We do not place all of our strongest Gr. 5 learners in a Gr. 5/6 when a Grade 4/5 classroom is also available.

Teachers are trained to provide instruction to diverse classes of students, looking at children as individuals, and providing for individual education plans, where warranted, for students who are faster or slower to develop. In this student-centered approach to teaching and learning, we recognize that not all students learn at the same rate and at the same time. Common topics explored in classrooms allow for a diverse range of students to learn at their own pace, while working toward learning outcomes specific for their grade.

Combined classes offer enhanced opportunities for all students to demonstrate confidence, positive self-concept, and a strong sense of belonging. Combined classes can help students form broader and more varied friendships, as older students provide role models for younger students. Sometimes the teacher/student relationship can be enhanced if the same teacher teaches a student for more than one year, leading to increased feelings of security for returning students and a smoother transition in September because the teacher already knows their learning styles and needs well. Teachers in combined classes, like those in straight grades, follow the curriculum requirements defined by the Ministry of Education.

You will find that over the course of your child's schooling, there are years that he/she will be in the lower grade of a combined class and other years when he/she will be in the higher grade of a combined class. These are both valuable learning experiences and will benefit your child's development academically, emotionally and socially.

Class Placements

Each year, the school makes organization plans based on the number of returning students and new registrations. Your child's classroom teacher, resource staff, educational assistants and administrators work together to place students for the upcoming school year. These plans are tentative until the end of the first week when final student numbers are known. During the first week, all staff meet to confirm teaching assignments and to review student placements.

In organizational meetings, many factors are considered when placing students. These considerations include:

- * Learning styles and strengths
- * Social/personal characteristics
- * Special needs
- * ELL levels
- * Work Habits
- * Male/female balance
- * Friendship groups
- * Age and physical maturity
- * Contractual obligations

As you can see, this is a complicated process, and this list is by no means exclusive, as there are many factors unique to a situation that must be taken into account.

Please be aware that teacher requests are not the basis for class placements and that the final decision regarding placement is a school-based decision. Our staff approaches class placements thoughtfully and carefully and has the best interest of all students in mind.

Be sure to read your newsletters to keep up-to-date, and refer to our school website, where we will post additional information.

Please call our Early Warning Line (604-718-4094) to report students late or absent.

Daily Schedule

8:30	Doors open
8:40	First Bell
8:45	Classes begin
10:30-10:45	Recess
12:25-1:10	Lunch
2:38	Dismissal