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WELCOME to SMITHERS SECONDARY SCHOOL

Information about GRADE 8 for September 2026 Students & Parents

Welcome!

We are looking forward to having our new Grade 8's join us in September 2026. The transition from elementary school to secondary school is an exciting time for students and their parents/guardians. Students, typically, look forward to a new school, new friends, and new opportunities, and are quite hopeful and confident in their abilities to cope with the changes that a new school brings. While most students' perceptions of this life transition are positive, it is also quite normal for students and/or parents/guardians to experience some unease and/or worries about this transition.

The purpose of this newsletter is to provide students and their parents/guardians with information and resources that will help ease the transition from elementary to secondary school.

We look forward to working with you and your children in this next stage of their lives.

About SSS

Smithers Secondary School is a school of approximately 650 students with a teaching staff of around 70 teachers and support workers. We are a vibrant, diverse learning community which supports and encourages excellence in all aspects of school life. At SSS, we:

- honour diversity.
- welcome family and community involvement.
- provide a broad range of educational programs.
- excel in the arts and in sports.
- provide flexible program delivery.
- value our relationships with Indigenous community members and elders.
- provide a respectful, high-achieving environment.
- encourage students to demonstrate leadership through active involvement in school life.
- are inclusive and strive to meet the unique needs of all of our learners.
- value parents and co-educators.

EXAMPLE TIMETABLE

Grade 8 Classes

1. English
2. Social Studies
3. Math
4. Science
5. Physical Education
6. Language & Career Education
7. Two Elective Courses

Grade 8 Elective Options:

Concert Band, Concert Choir, Drama, ADST -Art & Design in Action, ADST -Build, Design & Explore, ADST-Outdoor Pursuits, ADST-Props, Effects and Costumes, ADST - Textiles

Students will need to list them in order of preference on the course selection sheet.

The Grade 8 timetable is a partial linear system. This means that Science/Math and English/Social Studies, Grade 8 courses run for the entire school year. In a given day, each class is approximately 76 minutes long. Grade 8 students have one teacher for English and Socials and one teacher for Math and Science. A typical Grade 8 schedule looks something like this:

Daily Schedule

P1: Humanities

(English/Socials))

P2: PE 8

Break

P3: Elective 1

Lunch

P4: Math/Science

EXTRACURRICULAR

Joining an extracurricular club, team or group is a great way to have fun, meet new people, and gain and improve skills. Students who are involved in activities do better academically and have reported that they enjoy high school more. At SSS, students have the opportunity to choose from a variety of sports and activities.

Options range from arts programs such as theatre design to sports teams such as basketball, soccer, volleyball, ski & snowboard, cross-country running, golf and track and field as well as clubs like SSS Sustainable Student Society.



FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL DETAILS

On the first day of school, grade 8's will arrive at the start of the school day and stay until lunch (buses will run after lunch). Grade 8's are the only students at school on this first morning.

When students arrive, they will find their homeroom listed on the entrance doors.

Grade 8's will spend this first "half day" with their homeroom (period one) class and teacher getting oriented to SSS.

Homeroom orientation activities will include receiving and learning how to read a class timetable, figuring out the order and locations of other Grade 8 classes, practice with combination locks, receiving locker assignments and reviewing the important school information.

Students will need a binder, lined paper, a pen or pencil and snacks on the first day.

LOCKERS

All students are assigned a locker and school lock for their own use. Locks cost **\$10** and need to be paid as part of their student fees during the first week of school in class or at the front office. Students keep their lock and use it throughout their years at SSS.

It is important that students keep their lock combination private! There will be time to practice your locker combination with help from staff on the first day of school!

TEXTBOOK and ACTIVITY FEES

All new students are required to pay a one-time **\$85** textbook/ technology fee and a **\$5 Gryphon Spirit Activity Fee** to help support all the awesome activities provided by Student Leadership throughout their time at SSS. Cheques can be made out to Smithers Secondary School. Families can also pay with debit/credit or cash in the front office.

LUNCH HOUR

SSS students have a few different options for lunch. We encourage students to bring some foods/snacks to have during the lunch break. All students are also welcome to the food provided by the SSS Gryphon Grub Hub on Tuesday, Wednesdays and Fridays. On Mondays and Thursdays, students can purchase pizza for \$3 a slice.

The SSS round room, hallways, and outside areas are places to be at lunch time. There are also many activities happening at lunch. We encourage all students to get involved and join an extracurricular activity.

SCHOOL SUPPLIES

Basic Supplies: Please Bring

- ✓ 3-ring binder with lined paper
- ✓ Dividers
- ✓ Pens, pencils & eraser
- ✓ Ruler & calculator

Individual teachers will let students know during the first week if additional supplies are needed.

PE Supplies: Students need two pairs of running shoes: one for indoor use and one for outdoor use. Students also need to bring comfortable clothing for exercising in the gym and outdoors.

ABSENCES

Try out the new "School Messenger/Safe Arrival" option where you can enter your students' absences. Go to the Smithers Secondary School website and click About: Office: Attendance. You can also email or call the school.

SSS Office Email: sssoffice@sd54.bc.ca

If your student needs to be away for an extended period, please contact their teachers via email in addition to informing school.

KNOW YOUR SUPPORT TEAMS

LEARNER SUPPORT SERVICES

Elementary and SSS Learner Support teams are currently working hard behind the scenes to support smooth transitions for grade 7 students who have IEP's. Your child's elementary IEP case manager and Grade 7 teacher will be meeting with the SSS Grade 8 transition team.

The SSS team will be sharing information about supports currently being implemented in Grade 7 classes with next year's Grade 8 teachers. This "ahead of time" sharing enables SSS Grade 8 teachers to implement supports that align with "what's currently working" well for Grade 7's.

In September 2026, all Grade 8 SSS students with IEP's will be assigned an SSS case manager. If your student has an IEP you can expect to be contacted by an SSS Learner Support Teacher by mid-September 2026.

SCHOOL COUNSELLING SERVICES

At SSS, our Grade 8 Student Advisor is the first point of contact for new students and students who are struggling academically or socially. Ms. White is well connected with community and school resources and can make recommendations about referrals. Students or parents may make an appointment with the school counsellor by dropping by the counselling office, sending an email or calling the school.

Shirley White - can be reached via email at swhite@sd54.bc.ca

ABORIGINAL STUDENT SERVICES

Smithers Secondary Aboriginal Support Workers provide support to the Aboriginal students and families of SSS.

Support Workers facilitate cross-cultural communications between students, teachers and parents of all cultures. Support Workers also support students' social, emotional, academic goals and monitor student attendance.

PREVENTION SERVICES

SSS has a drug and alcohol prevention worker who provides support to students who are experimenting with substances and/or have addiction issues. The D&A worker also provides support to teachers and staff by making classroom presentations on substance related issues. Students can self-refer; parents can also call the school to make an appointment on their behalf.

ADMINISTRATION TEAM

The Principal and Vice Principal provide educational leadership and facilitate parent meetings when issues arise.

TIPS FOR PARENTS

- o Set a regular time and place for homework to be done. Give and reinforce clear expectations.
- o Work together with the school. If you have questions or concerns about a class, call or email the teacher.
- o A list of teacher email addresses is available on the SSS website under the "Office" tab within the about tab <https://sss.sd54.bc.ca/>
- o For other concerns, contact your students' school counsellor or school administration.
- o Monitor your child's social media use and encourage healthy sleep, exercise and eating habits. These are key aspects of positive mental health & positive high school experiences.

STAY CONNECTED

SSS Website:

<https://sss.sd54.bc.ca/>

→ Staff email directory, school bell schedule, course selection handbook, MyEd parent portal

Follow us on Facebook: Smithers Secondary School

Follow us on Instagram: Smithers Secondary School

TIPS FOR STUDENTS FROM STUDENTS

- o Join school clubs and teams to meet people & make friends.
- o Ask questions.
- o Do your homework & study for tests.
- o Be prepared for class.
- o Bring I-pads and other electronics for research only.
- o Skipping out is not cool.
- o Do not be late.
- o Don't blow off studying – It will catch up with you!
- o Don't worry about the older kids... they are mostly concerned with their own schoolwork & friend groups.

FURTHER QUESTIONS

- Please plan to attend the **Grade 7 Parent** Information Meeting at SSS in the Learning Commons (Library) **Thursday, May 28th 2026 @ 7:00 PM**