

# Welcome Back to School



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August 21<sup>st</sup>, 2024

Dear Students and Families:

I hope you have enjoyed a relaxing, rejuvenating summer and that you are looking forward to the start of a new school year at WGSS!

When you arrive at WGSS, you will notice that our custodial staff has worked tirelessly to prepare the school for September. Thank you to our entire custodial team! The school looks fantastic.

The office will be open from 9:00am – 2:30pm from August 21 – 30 and then return to regular office hours, 8:00am – 3:30pm, starting the week of September 3.

Student timetables will be published to MyEdBC on **Friday, August 23** after 3:00pm. Students can view them under Published Reports when they login to [MyEdBC](#). As there may still be timetable changes after this date, students are encouraged to view their amended timetable by clicking My Info (top tab) and Schedule (side tab) and then enter their courses into the My School Day app before they come to the first day.

## **New Students**

Our first day of school for Grade 8 and all other new students in Grade 9 - 12, will be Tuesday, September 3.

Grade 8 students will be at school from 8:30am – 11:30am;  
New Grades 9-12 will be at school from 8:45am – 10:30am.

## **New & Returning Students**

**ALL** students will attend on Wednesday, September 4 which will be a full day (Day 1: Block A (Homeroom) – ABCD) from 8:45am – 2:55pm.

As a school community, we will continue our focus on cultivating a positive, inclusive culture for all learners. Students and staff are already planning some exciting events and activities to encourage all members of the WGSS community to engage in their school community. I also encourage parents to stay as actively involved and engaged in the school community as they can. Attending PAC meetings, attending parent-teacher interviews, parent nights, information evenings and extra-curricular activities are all great ways to stay connected to the school. Also, please stay connected with your child's teachers. The more regular the communication is between parents, students and teachers the more all parties will be able to support students on their path to success.

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I would also like to introduce our PAC Executive for the 2024 – 2025 school year:

- President: Anushka Brhelle
- Vice President: Steven Northrup
- Treasurer: Julie Croft
- Secretary: Karen Roeck
- DPAC Rep: currently vacant, will look to fill in September 2024

We are very appreciative of our PAC and the Executive for the support that they provide for our students and our school! The first PAC meeting of the year is on September 10 at 7:00pm in the WGSS Library/Learning Commons. Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month at 7:00 pm in the WGSS library, with a few exceptions. There is no PAC Meeting in December or March. Here are the dates for PAC Meetings for the 2024 – 2025 school year.

- September 10<sup>th</sup>
- October 8<sup>th</sup>
- November 12<sup>th</sup>
- December – no meeting
- January 14<sup>th</sup>
- February 11<sup>th</sup>
- March – no meeting
- April 8<sup>th</sup>
- May 13<sup>th</sup>
- June 10<sup>th</sup> (Regular PAC Meeting and Annual General Meeting)

Last year we said goodbye to several WGSS staff members as they moved on to retirement or other positions in the District. We are thankful to all of them for their dedication to our students and their commitment to WGSS. We wish them well on their next adventures!

We welcome the following new (and some returning) WGSS staff for the 2024 – 2025 school year:

- Ms. Rena Arnaout – SEA: Learning Support
- Ms. Leila Avdic – Teacher: English
- Ms. Lori Balkovec – Teacher: Math, Science
- Ms. Breanne Black – Teacher: Learning Support
- Ms. Krystal Charlston – Teacher: Art, English, Photography
- Ms. Dee Damavandi – Teacher: Learning Support
- Ms. Mary Ekici – Library Tech
- Ms. Siobhan Fee – SEA: Learning Support
- Mr. Wade Findlay – Teacher: Careers, English, Yearbook

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- Ms. Pawanit Gill – Teacher: Science
- Mr. Andrew Goertzen – Teacher: English, Socials, Science, PHE
- Ms. Gunita Gupta – Teacher: English, Home Economics
- Ms. Meg Harradine – Vice Principal
- Ms. Maninder Heer – Teacher: English
- Ms. Belle Hernberg-Johnson – Teacher: Drama, Social Studies
- Mr. Christoph Hofmeister – Teacher: Learning Support
- Ms. Jessica Hyde – Teacher: English, French Immersion, Languages, ISP
- Ms. Taegen Jacob – Teacher: Science
- Ms. Katie Jamieson – Teacher: ISP, Psychology, Social Studies
- Ms. Mandeep Kaur – Teacher: Math, Science
- Ms. Tanya Kerr – Teacher: Learning Support
- Ms. Mary Lou Layton – Teacher: Learning Support
- Mr. Tyler Loo – Teacher: Athletic Director, ELL, PHE, Social Studies
- Mr. Lucas Mata – Teacher: Careers, Learning Support, Math, PHE
- Ms. Elizabeth McIlffaterick – Teacher: Social Studies, Spanish
- Mr. Mike Miller – Teacher: Technology Education
- Ms. Chandra Micom – SEA: Learning Support
- Ms. Ashraf Montaseri – SEA: Learning Support
- Ms. Mikaela Ramdial – Teacher: French Immersion, Languages, Social Studies
- Mr. Craig Rogers – Teacher: Careers, ELL, Music
- Ms. Gulnisha Sidhu – Teacher: English
- Ms. Rochelle Smith – Teacher: English, PHE, Social Studies
- Ms. Sarah Sommer – Teacher: ELL, ISP
- Ms. Jill Tanna – SEA: Learning Support
- Mr. Brendan Visser – Teacher: English, ELL, PHE, Science
- Ms. Masako Yabuta – ISP EA

We are still filling positions for the upcoming school year and we will certainly be welcoming more folks to WGSS in the coming days and weeks.

I hope you enjoy the last few days of summer! Looking forward to another fabulous year at WGSS!

Sincerely,  
Mr. J. Lyndon  
Proud Principal

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## **First Day of School – Tuesday, September 3 - “Becoming One of Us”**

The first day of school is only for **Grade 8s** and any other **new** Grade 9 – 12 students to the school. This gives our new Gators a chance to find out about the Gator Way and get to know the school before all of our other students arrive on Wednesday, September 4.

**Grade 8s** should arrive at school between 8:30am - 8:45am and pick up a **GREEN** copy of their timetable in the front foyer and then proceed to their Day 1 Block A. GQs (student ambassadors) will be in the foyer to hand out their timetables.

**New** students in **Grades 9 - 12** should arrive at the school between 8:45am – 9:00am and will get their **GREEN** timetable in the assigned room below:

|                     |          |
|---------------------|----------|
| Grade 9             | Room 106 |
| Grade 10            | Room 149 |
| Grade 11            | Room 181 |
| Grade 12            | Room 151 |
| Grade 10-12 ELL/ISP | Room 121 |

Grade 8s attend until approximately 11:30am

New Grades 9-12 students attend until approximately 10:30am

## **All Students Attend – Wednesday, September 4**

All students attend school on Wednesday, September 4 (8:45am – 2:55pm) and will go to their Day 1 Block A homeroom for attendance from 8:45am – 9:00am. All returning students are expected to check their timetables on their **MyEd** account: <https://www.sd35.bc.ca/students-parents/myedbc-family-portal-help/>

## **Homeroom for the First Five Days at WGSS**

It is vitally important that all students attend their Homeroom Day 1 Block A class from **Wednesday, September 4 to Tuesday, September 10 for the first 10 minutes (please do not be late)**. They must keep attending their original Day 1 Block A homeroom as this functions as your child's homeroom until September 10. We track whether the student is in attendance based on this information. Missing these homerooms may result in the student being de-registered from the school. See below schedule:

| <b>WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 4 - DAY 1</b> |         | <b>THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 5 - DAY 2</b> |                     |
|---------------------------------------|---------|--------------------------------------|---------------------|
| 8:45 – 10:35                          | Block A | 8:45 – 8:55                          | Homeroom – Block 1A |
| 10:40 – 11:50                         | Block B | 9:00 – 10:35                         | Block C             |
| 11:50 – 12:25                         | Lunch   | 10:40 – 11:50                        | Block D             |
| 12:30 – 1:40                          | Block C | 11:50 – 12:25                        | Lunch               |
| 1:45 – 2:55                           | Block D | 12:30 – 1:40                         | Block A             |
|                                       |         | 1:45 – 2:55                          | Block B             |

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|--|--|
| <b>FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 6 - DAY 1</b><br>8:45 – 8:55 Homeroom – Block 1A<br>9:00 – 10:35 Block D<br>10:40 – 11:50 Block C<br>11:50 – 12:25 Lunch<br>12:30 – 1:40 Block B<br>1:45 – 2:55 Block A                           | <b>MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 9 - DAY 2</b><br>8:45 – 8:55 Homeroom – Block 1A<br>8:55 – 9:55 Block A<br>9:55 – 10:35 REP Time<br>10:40 – 11:50 Block B<br>11:50 – 12:25 Lunch<br>12:30 – 1:40 Block C<br>1:45 – 2:55 Block D |
| <b>TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10 - DAY 1</b><br>8:45 – 8:55 Homeroom – Block 1A<br>9:00 – 9:55 Block B<br>9:55 – 10:35 REP Time<br>10:40 – 11:50 Block A<br>11:50 – 12:25 Lunch<br>12:30 – 1:40 Block D<br>1:45 – 2:55 Block C | <b>WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 11 - DAY 2</b><br>Regular Day<br>8:45 – 9:55 Block B<br>9:55 – 10:35 REP Time<br>10:40 – 11:50 Block A<br>11:50 – 12:25 Lunch<br>12:30 – 1:40 Block D<br>1:45 – 2:55 Block C                 |

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## Course Changes

The WGSS timetable is built from the original course requests students selected in February and then courses students verified again in May. We are very full this year; as such, many courses are also full which will make our ability to accommodate course change requests difficult and in many cases unlikely. In addition, when a student has selected a specific program or has specialized courses, this further significantly reduces the flexibility for changes to students' timetables. The last day to submit a Change Request is **Wednesday, September 11**. Students need to be attending the courses on their timetable until a change has been made. Changes can be viewed through MyEdBC once the timetables have been posted.



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## **Communication with Parents at WGSS**

All our communication with parents is done through email. To stay informed about school events, please be sure the school has your most updated email address. Visit our social media frequently for updates on news and events in our school community. A bi-weekly newsletter is e-mailed home every other Friday afternoon as well as posted on our website under [Gator News](#) - so please look for it! If you need to update your email, please contact the main office at 604-882-0220.

## **School Website and Social Media**

Please check our website at [www.wgss.ca](http://www.wgss.ca) for updates and information and for those of you on Instagram, you can get a glimpse of Gator Nation or our account [@walnutgrovesecondary](#) or on Twitter, you can follow what's happening [@sd35wgss](#)

## **Student Fees**

The Langley School District has moved to an online payment system that allows parents to pay for most school related items online. We are asking all WGSS families to pay their school fees using our online KEV payment system (<https://sd35.schoolcashonline.com/>). Please see the [handout](#) for more information on how to pay student fees at Walnut Grove this year.

## **Locker Distribution**

Grade 8 students will be assigned their lockers during homeroom on Tuesday, September 3.

## **Locker Selection:**

**NOTE: Grade 9-12 students will select their lockers using our online locker management system:**  
<http://wgss.lockerassignment.com/>

User ID = WGSS Student Number

Password = Initials followed by student number (ie. John Smith would be JS12345).

Our online locker management system will allow students to first login according to the following schedule. Once a student chooses their locker, they will not be able to change it. **Lockers are optional, if your student doesn't want a locker, do not select one.**

|                            |           |                        |
|----------------------------|-----------|------------------------|
| Friday, Aug. 30 @ 8:00am   | Grade 12s | full and top lockers   |
| Saturday, Aug. 31 @ 8:00am | Grade 11s | full and top lockers   |
| Sunday, Sept. 1 @ 8:00am   | Grade 10s | top and bottom lockers |
| Monday, Sept. 2 @ 8:00am   | Grade 9s  | top and bottom lockers |

**Note:** If you have outstanding library/textbooks or fees from previous school years, you must

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have this cleared before you will be able to select a locker. To check if a student has outstanding fees from previous year(s), please sign-in to your [School Cash online](#) account.

## **School Messenger Attendance Calls**

The school uses an automated absence reporting system called [SafeArrival](#), offered through SchoolMessenger. With SafeArrival, you are asked to report your child's absence in advance using any of these three convenient methods:

1. SchoolMessenger App – Using your mobile device, download and install the SchoolMessenger app from the Apple App Store or the Google Play Store. The first time you use the app, select Sign Up to create your account. You must use the same email address and phone number that is on file at the school. Select Attendance then Report an Absence.
2. SafeArrival Website – Use the SafeArrival website, <https://go.schoolmessenger.ca>. The first time you use the website, select Sign Up to create your account. You must use the same email address and phone number that is on file at the school. Select Attendance then Report an Absence.
3. Toll-Free Phone – Call the toll-free number 1-833-294-4837 to report an absence using the automated phone system. If you are calling the toll-free number, you must call from the parent/guardian phone number on file with the school.

These options are available 24 hours/day, 7 days a week. We ask that daily absences are reported as soon as possible and before 3:00pm on the day of the absence. This includes late arrivals and early departures. Future absences can be reported at any time. If absences are not reported before the cut-off time of 3:00pm, the parent/guardian may still receive an automatic notification in the evening to inform them of an absence. Absences are only to be reported by parents/guardians on file with the school. Students are NOT to report their own absences.

Please report absences using [SafeArrival](#) instead of sending notes, calling, or emailing the school. In the morning, the school may receive a high volume of calls. Please use the three options above to report absences. The school office will no longer accept calls regarding attendance. Parents / guardians will need to report via the app, website, or toll-free number in a timely manner.

If families have children attending other schools, please continue to report absences using the existing procedures for those schools.

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## **My School Day – Agenda App for Students/Parents**

Students have access to the electronic agenda called [My School Day](#). This is a free scheduling app and is designed to allow students to put their courses into our timetable so they'll always know their schedule while at school or home. It includes all of our 2024/25 calendar information including holidays and professional days. The app also enables notes to be put in for each block so it can act as an agenda to keep track of homework, create to do lists, and set reminders for particular classes. Additionally, we use this app to push out schoolwide messages as well such as school closures, bell changes, event reminders etc. Parents are also welcome to download the app so they can keep track of what class their child is in during the day.

## **Medical Alert – Life Threatening**

We want to ensure the school is up to date for any student with a **life-threatening** condition. If your child has a new or updated life-threatening condition, please request or complete a [Medical Alert form](#) and provide to Ms. Sargeant ([asargeant@sd35.bc.ca](mailto:asargeant@sd35.bc.ca)) in the office.

## **Parent Consents**

This year, we will be collecting parent consents through an online form rather than on paper. At the beginning of the school year, an email with instructions will be included in that email to the primary guardian of each child as indicated in MyEdBC.

## **Self-Identification of Aboriginal Ancestry - (First Nations, Metis Or Inuit)**

Aboriginal Ancestry is determined voluntarily through self-identification. This includes First Nations (Status or Non-Status), Metis or Inuit Ancestry. Please see the [form](#) in this package for details. **\*\*Please fill out only if student has Aboriginal ancestry – one form per child\*\***

## **French Immersion, Gator Pod and BYOL for Grade 8s & 9s**

This is a reminder to parents of our Grade 8 students in Gator Pod or French Immersion and for Grade 9 and 10s in French Immersion or Grade 9s that chose BYOL English/Social Studies combination. All of these students will need to have laptops for their classes this year. These programs provide students with the opportunity, at the teacher's discretion, and with parent support, to use personal laptop computers to support learning in the classroom. We believe that the use of digital technologies to enhance student learning is a key part of preparing students for lifelong learning. The teachers of this program work cooperatively to plan, organize, and teach our students. The technology will be integrated into the classroom to help bring real-world experiences into the classroom.

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## RECOMMENDED SPECS FOR STUDENT BYOL DEVICES

### Supported Hardware:

- Min screen size: 9.8" and up
- Hard drive size: 128 GB
- Keyboard
- Wi-Fi: 802.11 n/ac and up

### Supported Operating Systems:

- Windows 10 version 1903 and up
- OSX 10.13 and up
- IOS 11 and up

We do not want any students excluded from opportunities at Walnut Grove. If a family is not able to provide their own laptop, please contact Meg Harradine, WGSS Vice-Principal at [mharradine@sd35.bc.ca](mailto:mharradine@sd35.bc.ca) to arrange for an alternative.



ABORIGINAL PROGRAM  
Langley School District #35  
4875-222<sup>nd</sup> Street, Langley, B.C. V3A 3Z7



## Self-Identification of Aboriginal Ancestry (First Nations, Metis or Inuit)

**\*\*Please fill out only if student has Aboriginal ancestry - one form per child\*\***

*Aboriginal Ancestry is determined on a voluntary basis through self-identification. This includes First Nations (Status or Non-Status), Metis or Inuit Ancestry. **No documentation other than this self-identification is required and the ancestry can go back several generations.***

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Aboriginal Ancestry: \_\_\_\_Yes

Specify Ancestry if known: \_\_\_\_\_ (e.g. Sto:lo, Cree, Inuit, Metis, etc.)

School Attending: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Birth Date: \_\_\_\_\_ (month/day/year) Male: \_\_\_\_\_ Female: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell #: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Siblings: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_  
(with ancestry)

**\*By signing below I acknowledge that my son/daughter is of Aboriginal Ancestry (First Nations, Metis or Inuit)**

### Parent/Guardian Consultation and Consent to Service

#### Aboriginal Education Programs/Services

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| • Academic and Personal Support                          | • Early Literacy/Numeracy Intervention        |
| • Home-School communication (letters, phone calls, etc.) | • PALS Program                                |
| • Monitoring of academic progress and attendance         | • Newsletter                                  |
| • Cultural enrichment                                    | • In-class Cultural Presentations/Events      |
| • Graduation/Scholarship/Bursary/Post-Secondary Info     | • Leadership Conference/Transition Conference |

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\*I give consent for my child to access the programs and services available through the Aboriginal Program.

\*This signature is considered consent for the duration of the student's enrollment in their current school.

\*Consent can also be given verbally by phone or by email to your Aboriginal Support Worker. \*To revoke this consent you must contact the Aboriginal Program office at 604-888-4819.

\*I give permission for my son/daughter's picture to be used in newsletters, webpage, etc. \_\_\_\_Yes\_\_\_\_No

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Parent/Guardian Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date Signed)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Print Parent/Guardian Name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Address - if changed)

**\*Please return this form to your child's school ASAP. If you have any questions, please call 604-888-4819.**