

Southlands Family Handbook 2020-2021

Welcome to the Southlands community! This guide is a collaboration by Southlands staff and the Parent Advisory Committee (PAC), to help all Southlands parents and guardians (new and returning) to navigate the start of the school year. We will answer common questions and outline some of the school's key programs, guidelines and events.



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ):

Who are the staff members at Southlands?

Principal: Margaret Paxton

Office Administrative Assistant: Teresa Sutter

Gr 6/7 - Div. 1: Chris Lee

Gr 6/7 - Div. 2: Alexandra de Montigny

Gr 5/6 - Div. 3: Maddi Malone and Vicki Mitsiadis (on leave)

Gr 4/5 - Div. 4: Emily Niblock

Gr 4/5 - Div. 5: Wendy Phung

Gr 2/3 - Div. 6: Marianne Prins

Gr 2/3 - Div. 7: Daphne Beck

Gr 2/3 - Div. 8: Tamara Shand

Gr 1 - Div. 9: Michelle Kim

Gr 1 - Div. 10: Sanjini Mudaliar

Kindergarten - Div. 11: Nurit Katz

Kindergarten - Div. 12: Hannah Zallen

Teacher Librarian: Michael Jung

Resource: John Dyer, Karolina Kapusta, Kathie Cronk, Kelly Boechler

French Prep: Simon Hansed, Molly Sigalet

IB Coordinator: Joanna Wood

Aboriginal Enhancement: Judy Ronnenberg

Support Staff: Kimberly Barnes, Zoe Boulton, Diana De Re, Maria Dy, Alice Hong, Noah Jobson, Virginia Quinn, Brianna Sparrow, Kendra Thomas, Diana Wenzel, Jody Yau

Supervision Aides: Nadine Harding (on leave), Heidi MacLean, Zahra Sato

Building Engineers: Moe Khan, Rajnel Prasad

What are divisions? A division number is assigned to each class. It identifies one class with their teacher. Many classes have two grades combined. In recent years Southlands has had 11 or 12 divisions, but the number changes each year depending on enrollment, funding and other factors as determined by the school board. It is important to know your child's division number; you will usually be asked for it when you contact the school and when you fill out school forms.

Why do some classes have combined grades? Most public schools in Canada have classes with two combined grades. In many small, rural schools there are students in more than two grades in a class. Combining grades allows teachers more flexibility in creating learning groups and teaching students where they are as opposed to their year of birth. Classes with combined grades allow for many kinds of leadership, collaboration and the development of core competencies: Communication, Creative and Critical Thinking and Personal and Social Responsibility.

How many students attend Southlands Elementary School? Approximately 230 students.

How do staff decide which students are in which class? Staff put many hours of thought and much care into creating balanced classes. We consider students' temperaments most importantly. We do not put students who are academically stronger in a class with an older grade or vice versa. Teachers teach students where the students are, not by the year of their birth. Teachers teach the class as one unit and teach aspects of both curricula, depending on student interest and IB themes.

Arrival and Departure Routines:

As a parent/guardian, do I need to sign in at the office? This year, parents may enter the school by appointment only. Please contact Teresa in the Southlands office to schedule a visit at either tsutter@vsb.bc.ca or 604-713-5414.

Where do I drop off and pick my child up after school? Students whose class is located on the ground floor enter the school through the lower front door by the parking lot. Students on the upper floor enter the school through the upper main door by the salmon mural. Each primary (grade K-3) class will have a designated dismissal area. Your child's teacher will let you know where that is. Students taking the Musqueam bus will wait with staff at the gate near the north end of the school.

What are school hours? Students can begin entering the school at **8:55 am**. Staff will be at the two front doors welcoming students and directing them straight to classrooms to wash hands. Instruction begins at **9:00 am**. Recess is **10:50-11:05 am**; lunch break is **12:00-12:47 p.m.** The school day ends at **3:00 pm**. The school provides supervision 20 minutes before and 20 minutes after school. Students should not be on school grounds outside those hours unless attending a program or being supervised by their teacher, a staff member, their parent or a parent-approved supervisor.

Do I need to notify the school if my child will be absent? Yes, you must inform the office even if you have let your classroom teacher know about an absence. Please email souattendance@vsb.bc.ca OR call the Safe Arrival phone line at 604-713-5159 using school code 79# by 9:00 am on the day of the absence. Important information to include: child's first and last name, division or teacher name, reason for absence and date(s) your child will be away. If you are unsure if your child will be away multiple days, then a call/email will be required every morning.

What do I do if my child is late for school? If your child is late for school, please bring them to the upper main door by the salmon mural. The front door will be locked, so a phone call to the office might be necessary to let staff know to come and collect them.

Do I need to sign my child out if I am picking her/him up for an appointment? Yes, please call the school office to arrange early dismissal. This is a safety requirement, especially in case of a school emergency. During the Covid-19 period, students should **not** leave and return during the school day.

Are there parking restrictions around the school during pick up and drop off? The parking lot at the school is for staff only, and there are other parking restrictions around the school. **Stopping or parking directly in front of the school is not allowed.** Please park only in designated areas and follow all posted restrictions.

How do I find out about school closure dates? School is not in session on statutory holidays and professional development/non- instructional days. To find these dates, see the VSB Southlands calendar, link below:

<https://www.vsb.bc.ca/schools/southlands/About-Us/Calendar>

Further Information:

What educational resources are available at Southlands? In addition to the Teachers, Principal and Secretary who support the students on a daily basis, there are Resource Teachers, Student Support Assistants (SSAs) and an Aboriginal Education Enhancement Worker who support our school. We also have a speech and language consultant and a school counsellor associated with the school. Vancouver Coastal Health provides us with a school nurse and physiotherapist for consultation and training. Contact your child's classroom teacher or the principal for more information.

Where can I find more information about the IB-Program? Southlands Elementary is an [International Baccalaureate \(IB\) Primary Years Program World School](#). We organize regular information sessions for parents/guardians to develop a better understanding of the Primary Years Program (PYP) at Southlands and how you can support your child's learning at home. Our IB Coordinator also maintains a blog about the Southlands PYP program, which is an excellent way to stay informed about all things IB at Southlands - <https://southlandspyp.wordpress.com/>

What sports and extra-curricular clubs are offered at Southlands? Southlands, like other VSB schools, usually offers a variety of lunchtime and afterschool clubs and activities for students including basketball, volleyball and track and field for students in grades 6 and 7 and cross country running for grades K-7. Due to Covid-19, these extra-curricular sports are on hold.

In past years, the PAC has organized other opportunities such as choir, flute, Destination Imagination, art and other STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math) clubs. Information about the activities, sports and clubs available to your child is shared in the weekly PAC newsletter or by the school. This year all clubs and activities are currently suspended, but the PAC is working on creative ways of offering certain activities, in compliance with Covid-19 safety guidelines. Details will be shared in the PAC newsletter when they are available.

What are the playground rules at Southlands? At this time, students have been asked to play in specific zones around the school to reduce contact with other learning groups. Students are reminded not to touch other students: Hands to self! As always, students are encouraged to play in a way that is safe for themselves and others. Students requiring assistance should look for the adult supervisors wearing high-viz vests: Miss Heidi and Miss Nadine, or any staff member.

Does the Vancouver School Board (VSB) offer student insurance and is it mandatory? The VSB does offer *Kids Plus Accident Insurance*. Though not mandatory, it may be of interest to families who do not have medical/dental plans or to supplement limited plans. For more information visit kidsplus.ca

How do I pay school fees? All school fees can be paid using either a credit card or chequing account via School Cash Online at the following link: <https://vsb.schoolcashonline.com/>

If you are unable to use a credit card or chequing account or if you require assistance setting up an account or using School Cash Online, please contact Teresa in the office at tsutter@vsb.bc.ca 604-713-5414.

How do I stay connected to what is going on at school? Connect with your child's teacher via email. All VSB emails are first initial followed by surname @vsb.bc.ca. Teachers will set up a Classroom Team on Microsoft Teams. To log in go to [www.Office.com](https://www.office.com) and sign in with your child's VSB email address. This email address is their [student number]@learn.vsb.bc.ca (e.g. 1234567@learn.vsb.bc.ca). Enter your child's VSB password. **Note:** If you do not know your child's student number or password, email the Southlands office at southlands@vsb.bc.ca or call 604-713-5414. Please provide the student's first and last name and their date of birth.

You can also check out our website at:

<https://www.vsb.bc.ca/schools/southlands/Pages/default.aspx> and follow us on Twitter or Instagram @southlandsIB.

A Southlands Elementary School newsletter will be emailed home on a regular basis. **Check your child's backpack often.** Some forms and notices are sent home from the school in hard copy.

Where are the washrooms in the school? The boys' washroom is on the ground floor and the girls' on the upper floor. Both are for student-use only. We also have a gender neutral washroom on the upper floor.

Does the school have a lost & found? The lost and found is outside the library. Students should be looking there for lost items. **Please label your child's jacket, hoodie, lunch kit and water bottle so we can help to reunite them!** Items are donated by the school to a charity at the end of the school year if not claimed.

What is the PAC?

The Parent Advisory Council (PAC) is the collective voice of the school's parents. All Southlands parents and guardians are automatically members of the PAC and are encouraged to attend meetings. The PAC, through its elected officers, may advise the school respecting any matter relating to the education of the students and the school. The PAC Executive is composed of the elected executive officers (Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, Fundraising Chairperson and DPAC Representative) and supporting executives who coordinate communications, fundraising, inclusivity, parent education and volunteers. More informally, the PAC is a community of parents and guardians who support the school's teachers, administration and students through funding and events. The aim of our PAC is to facilitate communication to support each other and to enrich the students' learning environment. For more information about PACs, see bccpac.bc.ca or vancouverdpac.org.

Can I volunteer with the PAC? Absolutely! Our school offers some wonderful programs and events for both students and parents. There are many ways for parents to get involved, either with ongoing commitments or one-time help. Volunteer opportunities are advertised in the weekly newsletter and are posted in our online sign-up site:

<https://signup.com/group/7747186640120> If you are interested in joining the PAC Executive, elections are held at the May PAC meeting.

PAC Communication: Please sign up [here](#) to receive weekly email updates from the PAC (we do not receive contact details from the school office). Please also visit: <https://southlands-pac.blogspot.com/> Check your child's backpack often. Forms are sent home in hard copy. Most can also be found on the [blog](#) in case you need an extra copy.

What type of events does the PAC host?

Normally the PAC is involved in hosting various events throughout the year, such as a potluck in the Fall, Winter Social, Spring Fling, Summer Garden Concert, Book Fair and events at Sports Day. This year, the PAC plans to host online social events and Q&A sessions, so please keep an eye on the newsletter for details.

Do parent volunteers require a background check? Parents who volunteer to drive or accompany children on a field trip will be asked to complete a background check form. If this is required, the school will provide more information.

Does the PAC offer hot lunch? Typically, Southlands PAC offers a variety of lunch options to its students that are also important fundraising programs for the school. This has included Subway lunches on the last Monday of the month and our successful Hot Dog & Pizza program which has been running every Friday. But due to the current covid-19 pandemic hot lunch programs have been put on hold in all Vancouver schools, and VSB is looking into options to allow schools to provide hot lunches safely. Please look out for news about hot lunch in our weekly e-newsletter, which you can subscribe to here: https://mailchi.mp/5aeb3e7c025/southlands_pac

What is the best way to ask questions and connect with other parents? Attend a PAC meeting or event, join the PAC’s active Facebook community (<https://www.facebook.com/southlandselementarypac/>), or reach out to the PAC Chair: southlands.elementary@gmail.com.

When are PAC meetings held and what topics are covered? Southlands PAC meetings are usually held on the second Wednesday each month 6:15-7:45 pm (with some exceptions) throughout the school year. This year PAC meetings will be held online, via Zoom, indefinitely. 2020-2021 PAC meeting dates will be posted in September in the newsletter and on our site <https://southlands-pac.blogspot.com/> At every meeting we hear from our Principal about what is going on at the school and parent questions are answered. We discuss PAC initiatives and parent issues to support our school and community. We vote on how to spend PAC money. Recent PAC-funded initiatives have included installing an outdoor classroom and garden program, funding Artist in Residence, Body Science Programs, funding field trips, investing in school sports jerseys and T-shirts, and hosting community events.

What does the calendar of events typically look like at Southlands?

September/October	November/December	January/February
Back to School Family Potluck – on hold	November PAC Meeting	January PAC Meeting
Meet the Teacher – will be virtual this year	Read-A-Thon	February PAC Meeting
Launch Direct Donation Campaign	Purdy’s Fundraiser	Term 1 Report Cards
September PAC Meeting	December PAC Meeting	
Parent Teacher Conferences – likely virtual	Winter Music Social and Bake Sale – on hold	
October PAC Meeting	Winter Break (2 weeks)	
Student Photo Day – on hold		

March/April	May/June
March PAC Meeting	May PAC Meeting & Elections
PYP Exhibition – TBD	Teacher Appreciation Lunch - TBD
Spring Break (2 weeks)	June PAC Meeting
April PAC Meeting	Sports Day – TBD
Parent Teacher Conferences – method TBD	Garden Music Concert - TBD
Spring Fling - TBD	Grade 7 Graduation Events - TBD
	Yearbook
	Term 2 Report Cards

This year the calendar may change at different times throughout the year, so please read all communication from the school and your child’s teacher carefully, check the school calendar online and subscribe to the weekly PAC newsletter.

At Southlands we:

Care about ourselves
Care about each other
Care about this place

Welcome to the family!



Together we are [#sockeystrong](#)