

Colleen & Gordie Howe Middle School

Parent Information Booklet



[2018/19]

Welcome to Colleen & Gordie Howe Middle School

Colleen and Gordie Howe Middle School opened its doors in September 2001. The school was founded on the guiding principles of exemplary Middle Schools. The staff at our school makes every effort to support each student in achieving their academic, physical and social potential and assist them in preparing for their future. We look forward to seeing you in September; Go Bulldogs!

9 Attributes of a Howe Learner

At Howe Middle we strive to develop learners who are:

- Critical thinkers
- Collaborators
- Effective communicators
- Socially responsible
- Well- rounded
- Open-minded
- Digitally literate
- Innovative, and
- Responsible

What can I expect on the first day of school?

Tuesday, September 4 (90 Minutes)

On the first day of school, all students will be at school for 90 minutes, but at *different times*. Students will not need to bring a lunch since they will be dismissed before lunch.

Grade 7 & 8: 8:20 to 9:50 am

Grade 6: 10:15 to 11:45 am

Students will meet in the gym for a mini-assembly, then go with their teachers to their classrooms for a school wide orientation.

Wednesday, September 5 (Full Day)

On the second day, we will have all of the students at the same time, for a *full day*, 8:20 am to 2:25 pm. Students should go directly to their classrooms after the welcome bell rings at 8:20 am.

What will my child need on the first day?

A pen and some note paper will be all students need that day. During the first couple of days teachers will tell students about any additional school supplies required over and above those listed in the basic school supply list that can be found on our webpage (howemiddle.ca)

How long is the school day?

The school day begins at 8:20 a.m. and finishes at 2:25 p.m. Students start their day in main lobby of the school, and can head to their locker at 8:10 am. Unless students have a practice and are asked to come to school early, we ask you to arrive at school between 8:00 - 8:15 a.m. Students are expected to leave the school by 3:00 pm unless they are participating in a school activity, or working under the supervision of a teacher.

Bell Schedule

Warning Bell.....8:20 a.m.
Morning announcements8:25 a.m.
Nutritional Break..... 10:25 - 10:35 a.m.
Lunch Break..... 11:38 - 12:28 p.m.
Dismissal..... 2:25 p.m.

Office Hours..... 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Starting the day

A welcome bell will ring at 8:20 am. At this time, students will go to their lockers and gather study materials needed for the first 120 minutes of the day. All personal belongings such as backpacks and jackets are to be left in the locker. Students are expected to be sitting quietly at their desks by 8:25 am, ready to begin instruction.

O'Canada

Each day students are to begin the day in their classroom for attendance and announcements. Each Monday will start with the singing of our national anthem.

Do we have 'recess' at Middle School?

Students have a 10 minute Nutrition/Locker break at 10:25 a.m. This is the time to use the washroom, eat a snack and/or gather study materials needed for the next lesson from the student's locker. Students can also spend this time outside on the playground should they choose. A warning bell indicating that students should immediately proceed to their next class will ring at 10:36 a.m. Instruction resumes at 10:41 am.

What is the lunch routine?

The lunch break is 50 minutes long and includes an eating period of 15 minutes. All students will eat in their classrooms.

11:38	<i>Lunch Begins</i>
11:38 - 11:53	<i>Eating Period</i> Students eat in classrooms
11:53 – 11:58	<i>Transition Time</i> Finish eating; Find friends
11:58 - 12:21	<i>Activity Time</i> All students go outside.
12:21	<i>Warning Bell</i>
12:28	<i>Afternoon Instruction Begins</i>

What do I do if my child is going to be absent from school?

Parents or guardians are asked to call the school, as soon as possible in the morning, to report an absence or if their child(ren) will be late. Parents can also report an absent or late on the appropriate link on our webpage (howemiddle.ca)

What if my child arrives late to school?

Although there may be times where lateness is unavoidable, students are expected to arrive on time for school each day. When students are late for school, they are expected to have their planner stamped at the office prior to going to their classroom.

What if my child has an appointment during the school day?

If students need to leave early for an appointment, parents are expected to sign them out at the office and sign them back in again when they return. *Students may not leave the school grounds without parent permission.*

What if my child becomes sick while at school?

Students should inform their teacher and report to the office, where he/she will be advised about calling a parent or guardian. Students will be sent to the medical room until such time as he/she returns to class or is picked up by a parent/guardian..

Barky's Canteen

Barky's will be open during the nutrition break and lunch break for students to purchase supplements to their lunch or lunch items. Students line up single file by grade, wait for service, and should only come to the canteen if they are purchasing food items.

Closed Campus

Howe Middle has a closed campus policy. This means that only students who attend Howe Middle are to be on the school grounds during the school day. It also means that once students arrive at school they are to remain on the school grounds for the rest of the school day. Students being picked up for appointments should be met in the school office and signed out by a parent or guardian.

Visitors

All visitors are required to report to the office upon arrival to receive authorization for their presence in the school. Visitors on official business are welcome at our school. Those who arrive with no purpose are not welcome on school property. Friends and/or relatives are not permitted to visit during the school day.

Parents dropping off lunches, homework, planners, etc. for their child are asked to leave items at the office; we will page the child during a break.

School Code of Conduct

Students are ambassadors of the school while travelling to and from school, at school, (including breaks, transitions, and lunch) and while attending school functions (field trips, sporting events, dances etc.) and their behavior should recognize this.

As students mature they become positive role models in our community, they gain a deeper sense of pride and belonging to our school that will help them guide younger students in reaching their potential within a safe, caring and orderly school. Students also become more aware of their personal responsibility for how they behave and, consequently, they understand the need for increasingly serious consequences for inappropriate behavior. These consequences can range from a conversation with the Principal and/or Vice Principal to a suspension from school. We understand that a student's cognitive and emotional ability should be considered in all situations and that consequences for behaviour that does not meet expectations will be logical, realistic, and consistent, with each case of misbehaviour being dealt with on an individual basis.

In most situations of inappropriate behaviour the classroom teacher(s) will be the first to contact the home. Please be aware that communication will occur between the staff, administration, the parent, and the

student should the situation warrant. Depending on the incident, school officials may also have a responsibility to advise:

- Parents of the offender and the victim.
- School district officials as required through school district policy.
- Police and/or other agencies as required by law or when reporting are deemed important to ensure the confidence and safety of the school community.

Examples of Acceptable Conduct

While going to and from school, at school or when attending any school function students are expected to:

- Respect the right of every member of the school community to feel safe.
- Promote an environment of understanding and mutual respect.
- Respect the school property and property of others.
- Report to an adult any behaviour of bullying, harassment or intimidation without fear of retaliation.
- Wear clothing in accordance with our school dress code.
- Ensure that the educational rights of all members of the school community are respected.
- Be a positive ambassador for our school throughout the community.

Examples of Unacceptable Conduct

Any conduct that negatively impacts the school learning environment is deemed unacceptable. The list below contains examples of unacceptable behaviours but it is not all-inclusive.

Behaviours that:

- Interfere with the learning of others
- Interfere with a safe and orderly environment
- Create unsafe conditions (including play fighting)
- Use inappropriate words or phrases in any language (swearing, cursing or demeaning language)

Acts of:

- Bullying, Cyber-bullying, threats or harassment
- Physical violence
- Retribution against a person who has reported an incident
- Fighting, attending, watching or promoting a fight

- ‘Tagging’ or other forms of graffiti inside or outside the school

Illegal Acts such as:

- Theft of or damage to property
- Possession, use or distribution of illegal or restricted substances
- Possession or use of weapons
- Possession, use or distribution of firecrackers, fireworks or any other exploding devices that are dangerous or illegal to possess
- Destruction of school property

Harassment & Bullying

Harassment or Bullying is unacceptable behaviour and includes inappropriate remarks, jokes, taunting, comments, gestures, sexually suggestive comments or actions that create an uncomfortable environment.

A Bully is someone who:

- uses power to hurt others or harm their possessions.
- intentionally scares or intimidates others.
- targets the same person repeatedly.
- is sometimes supported by other people who just watch and laugh, instead of helping the person being bullied.

If you are being harassed or bullied:

- Ask the person to stop.
- Walk away and ignore the person.
- Tell a teacher or another adult with whom you feel comfortable discussing the incident(s) at school and your parent/guardian,.

The school can only deal with incidences if teachers and administrators are aware of the situation. It is important for our students to know that telling an adult is a necessary step in getting to a solution to the problem.

Restorative Action Facilitator/Trainer (RAFT)

Worker:

The staff at Howe Middle believes in solving conflict in positive ways. We have a RAFT worker (Ms. Susan Havinga) from the Abbotsford Restorative Justice and Advocacy Association in our building on a regular schedule to help us with situations that come up in the school.

Our RAFT Worker provides:

- mediation services amongst students in order to resolve conflict

- Training in Restorative Action and Conflict Management for students through class/group circles and small group conflict coaching.
- Restorative, strategic mentoring programs such as Buddy Mentoring for specific students.

Is there a Dress Code at Howe Middle?

The Abbotsford School District expects all students to adhere to standards of cleanliness and dress that allow for a clean and tasteful school environment. A student's appearance or mode of dress or cleanliness will not be permitted to disrupt the educational process or threaten health or safety.

All students are encouraged to wear "Howe Gym Strip" for all physical education classes. This is available for purchase in the office.

The following points indicate our expectations of student attire at Howe Middle. The dress code rules apply on the school grounds and at school sponsored activities either on-or-off campus:

- Dress and grooming (including cologne/perfume) may create health or safety problems for the student or others who attend/work at the school (e.g., long hair tied back in the shop)
- Clothing should be appropriate to a learning/working environment, and should not be distracting to others (e.g. beachwear, spaghetti straps, and clothing which is too revealing, is not appropriate for school).
- Clothing should effectively cover the tops of the shoulders, chest area, back and abdomen (shoulder straps should be "3 fingers" wide and shirts should overlap pants).
- The hem of skirts and dresses should be longer than your fingers, when your arms are hanging straight down at your sides with fingers extended.
- Shorts should be longer than your knuckles, when your arms are hanging straight down at your sides with your hand in a fist.
- Undergarments should not be visible at any time.
- Hats and sunglasses should not be worn inside the school.
- Jackets, backpacks, and purses should be stored in the student's locker.
- Clothes and accessories should not be distracting, offensive, unsafe, nor promote the use of tobacco, drugs, violence, sex, sexism, inappropriate language.
- Proper running shoes must be worn in gym.
- No visible tattoos or writing on exposed skin.

Students who do not meet dress code expectations may be required to replace or cover up inappropriate articles of clothing and/or may be sent home.

Hall Behaviour

Hall behaviour and language should be suitable to an institution of learning. No profanity or inappropriate remarks or touching of others. Public displays of affection in the school setting are not appropriate.

Can students chew gum at school?

No. Gum can make a terrible mess in a building and therefore students are not allowed to chew gum at Howe Middle.

What is the Learning Support Services (LSS) Team?

The LSS is a team of teachers who help our designated students. They are the teachers who help you if you need extra help with your learning, if you are on an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), or need help in making good behaviour choices.

Inclusion

Howe Middle, in keeping with the inclusionary model, integrates all students into age appropriate classes. Students' individual needs are met within the classroom environment as much as possible by classroom teachers, LSS teachers and education assistants. Students will receive help in areas of specific weakness, as well as with class work when needed.

What do students need to know about lockers?

Lockers are the property of the school and the contents are subject to school supervision. It is a privilege to have a locker and students will have their own locker. It is the students' responsibility to take care of their locker and to ensure that their lock combination is kept secret. Everything students put on the locker must be removable. All decorations must be in good taste. Students are not permitted to switch lockers without permission. Students may only go to their lockers during non-instructional times.

Locks are supplied by the school. *Only school issued locks are to be used on school lockers.* Please do not purchase a lock for your child's locker. There is a \$7 charge to replace a lock and a surcharge of \$2 to exchange a lock.

Why do we use planners?

Student planners are pre-purchased for all students at Howe Middle. The school planner has been designed

to help students manage their time and plan their day so that they can take an active part in controlling their school life. Howe Middle requires all students to keep their agenda up to date throughout the year. If your child forgets his/her planner at home, he/she may be expected to phone home and make arrangements to have it brought to school. If students lose their planner, he/she will be expected to purchase a new one.

When teachers assign homework and tests, it is expected that students record the nature of the homework or test in their planners. Students will be asked to show their teachers that this has been done. By writing down homework and tests all students will be aware of what each teacher expects and when assignments are due.

The planner will also be used to relay messages from the school to the home about routine matters such as upcoming performances, report cards, and for sending notes about absences and appointments from the home to the school. It is also encouraged that messages from home to the school be written in the planner. *Parents are expected to review and sign their child's planner on a daily basis.*

Skatepark, Bicycles, Skateboards and Scooters

We encourage students to be physically active while at school. Students wishing to use the skatepark during the lunch period **must wear a helmet**. Other safety equipment, e.g. knee, wrist and elbow pads, while not mandatory, is strongly encouraged and left to the discretion of each child's parent.

Bikes must be locked in the bike cage. Bike locks are recommended. Students are not permitted to use their bike during the school day.

Gaming devices, mp3 players, & Cell Phones

Students are strongly discouraged from bringing valuables including cell phones, iPods (mp3 players), gaming devices, expensive shoes and clothing articles to school. In particular, do not bring large sums of money to school and never leave money or valuables in the PE change rooms.

If valuables are brought to school, they must be locked in lockers, thereby minimizing the temptation for theft. Valuable items are brought to school at the owner's risk; the school is not responsible for any loss or damage.

Cell phones, gaming devices and mp3 players are to

remain in the student's locker from the welcome bell (8:15 am) until the dismissal bell (2:25 pm).

Will my child have homework?

Homework shall be monitored by individual teachers as well as teams of teachers. Work done at home is an important part of all learning. It is an expectation of all students to have homework completed and all assignments handed in on time. Most teams will have a homework club available at lunch or after school to assist students needing some extra support.

It is our expectation that students in grades 6 and 7 spend 30 to 45 minutes per night, and grade 8 students between 45 to 60 minutes per night on homework. However, we need to keep in mind that although an evening school activity is important, students need time to be children too. There must be a balance between work and play. If parents believe excessive amounts of homework are being done by their child, they are encouraged to contact the teacher.

Homework during Extended Absences

Teachers *will not* be expected to provide detailed classroom work and homework assignments for students who are away for extended periods of time as a result of family or parent-initiated absences. If students are going to be away for a significant period of time, please contact the school.

For absences due to extended illness, parents should contact their child's teacher to discuss available options for him/her to keep up with his/her school work.

What classes will my child be taking?

All students take the same subjects. The core subjects include Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Studies, French, Physical Education, and Career Education. The Explorations subjects include Home Economics, Tech Ed (Shop), and Music.

Students may also choose to take Band and/or Choir in addition to the above subjects. Band and Choir are not scheduled on a term basis, but run all year long, with classes scheduled before and after school.

Looping

"Looping" is a simple concept: a teacher moves with his or her students to the next grade level, rather than sending them to another teacher at the end of the school year. At the end of a "loop" of two years, the

teacher begins the cycle again with a new group of students. At Howe Middle, students and teachers in grades 6 and 7 will loop.

What Are the Benefits of Looping?

Teachers and students in looping classes need not start from scratch every fall, learning new sets of names and personalities, establishing classroom rules and expectations. Most teachers find that students remain on task far longer at the end of the first year; accordingly, teachers estimate that they gain a significant amount of learning time at the start of the second year.

Spending two years with a class enables teachers to accumulate more in-depth knowledge of students' personalities, learning styles, strengths, and weaknesses. This longer contact reduces time spent on diagnosis and facilitates more effective instruction. It also helps teachers build better relationships with students and parents.

For students, having the same teacher and classmates for two or more years provides stability and builds a sense of community. Looping reduces anxiety and increases confidence for many children, enabling them to blossom both socially and as learners.

Athletics and Clubs

Being involved in extracurricular programs in school is a very important part of enjoying time at Howe Middle. Howe Middle also offers an intramural program during the lunch break allowing students to play with and against friends and meet new friends in an organized setting.

Our extracurricular sports programs may include Football, Cross Country Running, Volleyball, Basketball, Rugby, and Track and Field. These athletic teams will be coached by teachers, parents, and community members. Our Athletic Director is Ms. Kelly Ledbrook.

School Supplies

The basic supply lists required for our students can be found on our webpage. Once students meet with their teams and teachers in September, additional supplies may be required. *Students will only need a pencil and some paper on the first day.* Please label all supplies as students will not be in the same class all day.

Textbooks

Textbooks and other educational resources are the property of the school and school district. Students are issued textbooks at the start of the year and are responsible for returning the textbook they were originally issued at the end of the year. Students will be expected to pay for lost or damaged textbooks.

School Fees

Middle school students are expected to pay a student activity fee of \$30 (subject to change), to cover costs related to student planners, guest speakers, student cards, school events, student recognition, student leadership, lock and locker rental.

Students who choose to participate in extra-curricular activities e.g., athletics, will be asked to submit an additional fee to cover costs related to each specific sport.

Parent Advisory Council

The Parent Advisory Council (PAC) is your parent community at Howe Middle. It is hoped that our parent community will work closely with administration and staff to support, encourage, and provide assistance to enhance the quality of education and the well-being for all students at Howe Middle. Contact information for the PAC will be sent out in September.

If Concerns Do Arise

While many factors affect a child's education, there is one that can be of paramount importance - *communication*. Frequent and open communication between parents and teachers leads to a greater understanding and appreciation of the educational process, as well as each child's participation in it. We welcome and appreciate your inquiries and visits, and trust you will contact us when, and if, concerns or questions arise.

First, contact the teacher involved. If you are not satisfied with the teachers' response;

Second, make an appointment to discuss your concerns with the Vice-Principal or Principal. If you struggle with the administrators' reply;

Third, contact our Assistant Superintendent, Dr. Angus MacKay, at the School Board Office(604-859-4891)

How Can Parents Help?

Learning is not confined to the classroom. Parents are vital partners in the educational process. Some ways in which parents might help are:

- Ask what was the best part of his/her day. Why?
- Help him/her set aside a time and place to study.
- Be supportive by offering lots of praise and encouragement.
- Read aloud to your child to help foster vocabulary development and comprehension, and listen to him/her read; a very powerful activity.
- Limit 'screen time', and promote physical activity.
- Keep in touch with the classroom teacher as to the classroom routines, expectations, projects, etc.

This We Believe

The association of Middle level Educators believes successful schools for young adolescents are characterized by a culture that includes:

- *Educators who value working with this age group and are prepared to do so.* Effective middle level educators understand the developmental uniqueness of the age group, the curriculum they teach, and effective learning and assessment strategies. They need specific teacher preparation before entering the classroom and continuous professional development as they pursue their careers.
- *Courageous, collaborative leadership.* Middle level leaders understand adolescents, the society, and the theory and practice of middle level education. As the prime determiner of the school culture, the principal influences student achievement and teacher effectiveness by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining an effective instructional program.
- *A shared vision that guides decisions.* A shared vision and the mission statement derived from it should guide all decisions made about the school.
- *An inviting, supportive, and safe environment.* A successful school is an inviting, supportive, and safe place, a joyful community that promotes in-depth learning and enhances students' physical and emotional well being. In such a school, human relationships are paramount.
- *High expectations for every member of the learning community.* Educators and students hold themselves and each other to high expectations. Such confidence promotes positive attitudes and behaviors and motivates students to tackle challenging learning activities. Successful schools recognize that young adolescents are capable of far more than adults often assume.
- *Students and teachers engaged in active learning.* The most successful learning strategies are ones that involve each student personally. When students routinely assume the role of teacher, and teachers demonstrate that they are still learners, a genuine learning community is present.
- *An adult advocate for every student.* Academic success and personal growth increase markedly when young adolescents affective needs are met. All adults in successful middle level schools are advocates, advisors, and mentors.
- *School-initiated family and community partnerships.* Successful middle schools promote family involvement and take the initiative to develop needed home-school bonds. The involvement of family is linked to higher levels of student achievement and improved student behavior.

Therefore, successful schools for young adolescents provide:

- *Curriculum that is relevant, challenging, integrative, and exploratory.* An effective curriculum is based on criteria of high quality and includes learning activities that create opportunities for students to pose and answer questions that are important to them. Such a curriculum provides direction for what young adolescents should know and be able to do and helps them achieve the attitudes and behaviors needed for a full, productive, and satisfying life.
- *Multiple learning and teaching approaches that respond to their diversity.* Since young adolescents learn best through engagement and interaction, learning strategies involve students in dialogue with teachers and with one another. Teaching approaches should enhance and accommodate the diverse skills, abilities, and prior knowledge of young adolescents, and draw upon students' individual learning styles.
- *Assessment and evaluation programs that promote quality learning.* Continuous, authentic, and appropriate assessment and evaluation measures provide evidence about every student's learning progress. Grades alone are inadequate expressions for assessing the many goals of middle level education.
- *Organizational structures that support meaningful relationships and learning.* The interdisciplinary team of two to four teachers working with a common group of students is the building block for a strong learning community with its sense of family, where students and teachers know one

another well, feel safe and supported, and are encouraged to take intellectual risks.

- *School-wide efforts and policies that foster health, wellness, and safety.* A school that fosters physical and psychological safety strives to build resiliency in young people by maintaining an environment in which peaceful and safe interactions are expected and supported by written policies, scheduled professional development, and student-focused activities.
- *Multifaceted guidance and support services.* Developmentally responsive middle level schools provide both teachers and specialized professionals who are readily available to offer the assistance many students need in negotiating their lives both in and out of school.

WHAT ARE EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS?

According to the most recent research, effective schools are places where...

- All students learn as a result of focused teacher actions
- All students learn regardless of their socioeconomic status or family background
- Student *attendance, behaviour* and *attitudes* improve as a result of improved *achievement*
- Staff accept that “improving schools” share common characteristics

STUDENT & SCHOOL SUCCESS

Student *achievement, attendance, attitudes, and behaviours* can be influenced by actions taken by schools. When schools are improving on these measures, they tend to focus on seven indicators.

1. Safe & Orderly Environment

In the effective school, there is an orderly, purposeful, businesslike atmosphere which is free from the threat of physical harm. The school climate is not oppressive and is conducive to teaching and learning.

2. Climate of High Expectations

In the effective school, there is a climate of expectation in which the staff believes and demonstrates that all students can attain mastery of the essential school skills and they believe that they have the capability to help all students attain that mastery.

3. Strong Instructional Leadership

In the effective school, the principal acts as an instructional leader and effectively and persistently communicates that mission to the staff, parents and students. The principal understands and applies the

characteristics of instructional effectiveness in the management of the instructional program.

4. Opportunity to Learn & Student Time on Task

In the effective school, teachers allocate a significant amount of classroom time to instruction in the essential skills. For a high percentage of this time, students are engaged in planned, teacher-directed learning activities.

5. Clear and Focused Mission

In the effective school, there is a clearly articulated school mission through which the staff share an understanding of and a commitment to the instructional goals, priorities, assessment procedures, and accountability. Staff accept responsibility for students’ learning of the school’s essential curricular goals.

6. Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress

In the effective school, student academic progress is measured frequently. A variety of assessment procedures are used. The results of the assessments are used to improve individual student performance, and also to improve the educational program.

7. Positive Home-School Relations

In the effective school, parents understand and support the school’s basic mission and are given the opportunity to play an important role in helping the school to achieve this mission.

