



A.R. MacNeill Secondary School

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Principal : Ms M. Timmins, Vice Principals: Mr. L. Banta and Mr. L. Leung

Assistant Superintendent: Ms. Wendy Lim

Trustee: Ms. Alice Wong

PAC: Mr. Borg Chan – borgklchan@yahoo.ca

Parent Newsletter – August 2015

To Students and Parents,

We hope everyone is enjoying the summer holiday. It won't be long before the 2015-2016 school year will begin. This newsletter is intended to provide some general information to our students and parents about important details pertaining to the first week of school. On behalf of the entire MacNeill Secondary School staff, we would like to extend a warm welcome to **all new MacNeill students** and their families, as well as **all returning families!** It is an exciting time for students who are entering MacNeill for the first time and also the beginning of a memorable year for the **Grads of 2016** who will be celebrating numerous grad events and activities throughout the year.

Introducing new staff ...

In July there were changes to the admin team. As the new Principal, I would like to introduce myself to the MacNeill community. My name is Marcy Timmins and I am excited to be working at MacNeill and look forward to meeting the students and families once school begins in September. I have been in the Richmond school district for 27 years; first as an elementary intermediate teacher, then onto highschools as teacher and Vice Principal.

In September we will be welcoming new MacNeill staff members. **Mr. Bone**, Art and Resource teacher, **Ms. Chang** Home Economics teacher, **Ms. Irshad**, Math and Science teacher and **Ms. Lewin**, Drama and English teacher. We look forward to working with all teachers joining our school in September.

September 2015 marks the beginning of the twelfth year since the opening of MacNeill Secondary School and the seventh year of the school-wide POWER program in the continued evolution of the school. Students new to MacNeill will soon learn about **POWER**: **P**ositive Attitude – participating enthusiastically; **O**wnership – being accountable; **W**e not Me – being safe, empathetic and welcoming; **E**xcellence – striving to do our best; and **R**espect – caring for self, each other and our environment. In our classrooms and around the school community, we will continue to strive to meet the goals set out in our Annual School Performance Plan. The goals in the 2015-2016 Plan are:

- 1) To improve reading comprehension (reading for information) of non-fiction texts of grade 8 readers by providing explicit instruction, guided practice and offering specific feedback focusing on note making, making inferences and making connections.
- 2) To be socially responsible by creating a safe, respectful learning environment which supports the building of positive relationships with a review of P.O.W.E.R., MacNeill's positive behavior support program.

We believe in building relationships and making connections as the bases for developing a strong learning community. This coming year promises to be a successful one as students, parents and staff commit to working hard and striving for excellence by creating a caring, respectful and responsible community for learning.

**Summer Office Hours at MacNeill from
Monday, July 6, 2015 to Friday, August 28, 2015
From 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.**

**Regular Office Hours at MacNeill from
Monday, August 31, 2015**

Regular office hours at MacNeill are Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. beginning on Monday, August 31. It is also at this time the school administrators and counsellors will be available for appointments.

A.R. MacNeill Home-School Communication

To provide parents information about what is happening at MacNeill, a newsletter is written every month. All newsletters will be available electronically on the school website with a message on the home page indicating that the newsletter has been posted. The website address can be found in the newsletter heading. Please bookmark the A.R. MacNeill Secondary website. If you are unable to receive the newsletter from the school website, there will be some hard copies of the newsletter available in the school office which you or your child can pick up. Please check the MacNeill School home page regularly as new information will continually be posted.

Once again this year, we will be requesting parents to provide an e-mail address or checking that the e-mail address already provided is correct. Newsletters will be sent to parents by e-mail and at various times an automated synrevoice telephone messages will be sent home with important notices. Synrevoice messages are also automatically sent home when a student is absent from a class with no reason for the absence provided by a parent. Teachers may also send notices home with students throughout the year to highlight special events or field trip opportunities.

MacNeill Collaboration Time –Fifth Year at MacNeill

Along with six of the ten Richmond high schools, MacNeill will continue to have **Collaboration Time**. To provide continued uninterrupted time for school staff to collaborate on effective practice, MacNeill will have 8 Collaboration Days which **will occur on the following Tuesdays: September 29, October 27, November 24, January 12, February 9, March 8, April 12 and May 10.** Collaboration Time will occur during the first instructional block of a Collaboration Day. Students on that day will have the choice of studying at home and coming to school at 9:45 a.m. for their first class, or coming to school at the regular start time to independently study at school. For independent study, student must come to school by 8:45 a.m., as students coming to the school after 8:45 a.m. will be directed to wait in the gym for class to start at 9:45 a.m. Though Collaboration Time occurs during one instructional block in a month, students will not miss any of the four course blocks scheduled on a day. Advisory on the Tuesday of Collaboration Day and the following Wednesday have been collapsed meaning slightly shorter course blocks on Tuesday and slight longer course blocks on Wednesday. Details about Collaboration Time will continue to be provided to students during Advisory Class.

What Advisory Am I In?

Advisory is the student's homeroom class. Generally, students remain in the same Advisory for all the years at MacNeill with the same Advisory teacher. Advisory classes are held every day for 25 minutes and on Wednesday for 35 minutes. During Advisory, students will be participating in silent reading and on each Wednesday the focus in Advisory will be on social responsibility. **Advisory lists will be posted in the large gym on the first day of school showing student name, Advisory teacher and the room number.**

Two times during the year there will be grade level Activity Days. Advisory classes will participate in an extra-curricular field trip. The cost of transportation, activity fees and a POWER t-shirt will be included in the \$35.00 Activity Day fee. Attached you will find a notice with more information on these scheduled Activity Days as well as a permission form that will need to be signed and returned by Wednesday, September 9 as the first Activity Day is on Thursday, September 10. Payment can be made by cheque (payable to MacNeill Secondary) or by cash.

What Do I Do On The First Day of School?

Tuesday, September 8 is the first official day of school and all students will go to the Large Gym to check the location of their Advisory classroom and then be seated in the bleachers. Each grade will have an assembly in the large gym, and then students will be dismissed to go to their Advisory homeroom. The grade assembly and Advisory homeroom will take approximately one hour, but will depend on the grade level (grade 8 will be one and a half hours).

For the first day of school, students will need both something to write with, and write on. Students will receive a more comprehensive overview during the first week of school. Teachers will explain and discuss policies and procedures. A locker and a school lock will be assigned. Important forms and handouts will be given to students and several will need to be returned the next day (fieldtrip forms). The order form for the Family BBQ is included in this package. Since the first day of school is for advisory/homeroom only, students will not need to bring their lunch.

The Advisory/homeroom times for each grade for the first day of school are as follows:

9:00 a.m.	Grade 8 (students will have a brief orientation to the school which will end at 10:30 a.m.)
11:00 a.m.	Grade 9
12:00 a.m.	Grade 10 and 11
1:00 p.m.	Grade 12

Absent During the First Week?

Please note: If your son or daughter will be absent during the first week of school in September but intends to return to MacNeill, it is vital that the school be informed as soon as possible. This will enable us to organize classes accurately and also ensure that absent students have a timetable and locker when they do arrive. Please complete the "Late Return" form and submit this to the school office before school begins. The "Late Return" form can be downloaded from the school website and is located in the "Notice" folder under "District Forms/Notices".

What Will The First Week Look Like?

Following the shortened first day of school, our regular schedule will begin on Wednesday. School begins at 8:30 a.m. and a warning bell rings at 8:25 a.m. On Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday students are dismissed at 2:59 p.m., and on Wednesdays, students are dismissed at 2:00 p.m. Parents are asked to help ensure that students arrive to school on-time each day. Please note that the school parking lot can get busy from 8:15-8:30 a.m., so please plan accordingly to ensure your child is not late.

<u>Wednesday, September 9</u>	<u>Advisory and full timetable run-through (8 blocks)</u>
8:30 a.m.	Students report to their Advisory classroom.
8:55 a.m.	Block Run Through. All students will rotate through all eight classes on this day.
2:00 p.m.	Dismissal
<u>Thursday, September 10</u>	<u>Activity Day #1</u>
8:30 a.m.	Report to your Advisory classroom.
8:45 a.m.	Participate in Activity Day field trip.
2:59 p.m.	Dismissal
<u>Friday, September 11</u>	<u>First Day of Regular Classes – Day 1</u>
8:30 a.m.	Report to your Advisory classroom
8:40 a.m.	All students attend their Day 1 class (period 1-4)
2:59 p.m.	Dismissal

On Wednesday, September 9 students will be given a copy of their schedule. They will have a "block run through" so they can meet their teachers and find out what they might need in the way of school supplies.

If there appears to be a mistake on the schedule/timetable, the student is to attend the class printed on the schedule until a meeting with their counsellor can be arranged. An appointment with the counsellor is arranged by picking up a Timetable Change Form at the counselling office or school office. The form is to be completed, signed by a parent and returned to the counselling office. Counsellors will contact students upon receiving the Timetable Change Form. Students are assigned to counsellors by grade. Changes to a timetable are made when there is a serious problem such as missing courses or placement in the wrong level of a course.

Student Counsellors:

Mrs. Cantwell	Grade 8-12 students with the last name A-Le
Mrs. Pasin	Grade 8-12 students with the last name Li-Z

Timetable Schedule at MacNeill

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday

Wednesday

Time	Day One	Day Two
8:30 – 9:45	Period 1-1	Period 2-1
9:48 – 11:03	Period 1-2	Period 2-2
11:03 – 11:21	<i>Nutrition Break</i>	<i>Nutrition Break</i>
11:21 – 12:36	Period 1-3	Period 2-3
12:39 – 1:04	Advisory	Advisory
1:04– 1:44	<i>Lunch</i>	<i>Lunch</i>
1:44 – 2:59	Period 1-4	Period 2-4

Time	Day One	Day Two
8:30 – 9:34	Period 1-1	Period 2-1
9:37 – 10:41	Period 1-2	Period 2-2
10:44 – 11:19	Advisory	Advisory
11:19 – 11:49	<i>Nutrition Break</i>	<i>Nutrition Break</i>
11:49 – 12:53	Period 1-3	Period 2-3
12:56 – 2:00	Period 1-4	Period 2-4

Lockers



Students will be moving from classroom to classroom during the day and will need a place to store their books, coats, gym strip and other belongings so they do not have to carry them around. The school provides each student with a locker and a combination lock. Lockers are located throughout the school. Lockers and locks will be assigned and distributed to students on the first day of school in advisory class.

Lockers must be locked to ensure belongings are secure. Students are advised not to share their lock combination with anyone. Although every precaution is taken, sometimes lockers can be broken into. **We ask students not to bring valuables to school.** The lockers and locks are school property and therefore, we reserve the right to check them if deemed necessary.

Gym Lockers

When taking PE students will be able to use a locker in the change room to store clothing and books. For this, students must have an additional lock to carry with them for use during the PE class block. The school does have locks for sale that can be purchased from Mrs. Semotiuk, our business assistant for \$5.00.

Message from the PE Department

We are looking forward to meeting you in September! We hope you are active during the summer months and ready to continue that during the school year. The PE department staff would like to remind you of two important things. There is a need to purchase a lock for daily use of the gym lockers. Bags on the gym floor or items left in open lockers pose various safety and security issues. Please leave things safely locked away to minimize your own risk.

Students are also reminded that the Richmond School District has a “no scents” policy. A recommendation is to bring a full change of clothing and a towel to shower or wipe yourself down at the end of each class. Please do not use scented products as students and staff may have allergic reactions to them.

What Supplies Do I Need?

Individual course teachers will inform students of required supplies during the first week of school. For students wishing to purchase supplies before then, the following list of supplies will meet the general needs for most courses. Some teachers may require a few more specialty items, but students will be told of this when they are needed.

- | | | | |
|------------------|--------------|----------------|----------------------|
| basic calculator | pencils | blank paper | gym strip (shorts or |
| paper scissors | pens | pencil crayons | track pants, t-shirt |
| ruler | geometry set | binders | and runners) |
| glue stick | lined paper | pencil case | |

What Other Costs Can Be Expected?



All secondary schools in Richmond have a standard school fee. This fee covers the cost of a student agenda, lock and locker, communication fee and some student activity costs. The General School Fee is \$28.00. There are optional and additional activity and enrichment program costs. For instance the Yearbook, which is optional, will be approximately \$40.00. Grade 12 students will have optional costs for a Graduation and Valedictory Ceremony, Valedictory DVD, Grad Boat Cruise, Winter Formal, Dinner and Dance and Dry Grad cost. Each student will have an itemized fee statement given to them towards the end of September and monies will be due to the school in October. Throughout the school year there will be other curricular and extra-curricular activities which will be planned that may incur cost to students.

Lunches at MacNeill



Lunch at MacNeill on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday is from 1:04 a.m. to 1:44 p.m. On Wednesday, with dismissal at 2:00 p.m. there is a nutrition break from 11:19 to 11:49 a.m. If students do not go home for lunch, the students have lunch in the school lounge or outdoors weather permitting.

Cafeteria service at MacNeill is open from 8:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. Service is not available to students during class time. The cafeteria offers breakfast sandwiches, bagels and other breakfast items. At lunch there are daily lunch specials, noodle bowl, soup, sandwiches as well as short order items. Students can check for specific items and costs on the menu board posted in the lounge. All food and beverage offerings provided meet the provincially mandated guidelines for food and beverage sales in schools.

MacNeill Traffic/Student Drop-off



The traffic at MacNeill before school and at dismissal can be a very frustrating experience for drivers and also not a safe one for both pedestrians and drivers. Please observe the traffic directional markings painted along our driveways. There is **NO PARKING** or **STOPPING** in front of the school facing Number 4 Road. This area is for daily school bus loading and District service vehicles. The **STUDENT DROP-OFF** is along the south wall of the gym facing Granville Avenue.

To avoid traffic back-up in the driveway, if you want to turn left onto Granville to go to Number 4 Road, drive along the gym to the west drive way and make your left turn to Granville there. If you need to wait for a student in your car, please park your car in the parking lot and not along the driveway. Please observe the **HANDICAP** parking signs. We hope this will make for smoother traffic flow and enhance safety for all.

The parking area for MacNeill students who drive their car to and from school is in the south parking lot along the gym. **Students driving to school must have a parking pass.** Please see Mrs. Semotiuk, our business assistant for a school parking pass.

Grade 12 Parent Meeting –Tuesday, September 22, 2015, 6:30 p.m.

“Supporting Your Child in Grade 12 at MacNeill”

Grade 12 is an important and eventful year for students and their families. There are credits and courses that must be completed and post-secondary education to make applications to. MacNeill counsellors and administration will be providing parents with information about the must-dos for students and activities and events in this last year of public education at this meeting. Dry Grad 2016 the grand finale for our grads and it is completely organized by parents.

Family BBQ/Meet the Teachers – Thursday, September 17, 2015

There will be an informal BBQ starting at 5:30p.m. Hamburgers and hot dogs will have to be ordered ahead of time. Please see the notice included (yellow colour form). Meet the Teacher Evening is a time to meet all of your child’s teachers and to hear information about the course. The Administration will address the parents at 6:30p.m. in the Lounge, and then from 6:45p.m. to 8:15p.m. parents will follow their child’s timetable and have an opportunity to formally meet the teacher for each subject to learn about the course and course expectations.

MacNeill Parent Advisory Council

Parent involvement and support at school makes a significant positive difference to student success. We hope that parents will become part of the school's many events and activities. All parents are members of the MacNeill PAC. The first PAC meeting is on Wednesday, September 23 at 7:00 p.m. in the school library.

PAC meetings are held on the second Wednesday of the month. Starting in October, at the beginning of each PAC meeting there will be a MacNeill teacher presenting on a curricular topic or a guest speaker who will present to parents for the first 30 minutes. All meetings begin at 7:00 p.m. and are held in the school library.

For the 2015-2016 school year, PAC meetings are scheduled for:

September 23, 2015
October 21, 2015
November 18, 2015
January 20, 2016

February 17, 2016
April 20, 2016
May 18, 2016 (AGM)

Some Important Dates to Note:



September 8	First day of the new school year: Grade 8 at 9:00 a.m. Grade 9 at 11:00 a.m. Grade 10 and 11 at 12:00 p.m. Grade 12 at 1:00 p.m.
September 9	Classes begin for everyone at 8:30 a.m. Block Run-through Day.
September 10	Activity Day
September 11	First regular day – Day 1
September 15	Incentive BBQ and Parent Meeting 5:30pm.
September 17	Meet the Teacher 6:30 p.m. (Family BBQ 5:30pm)
September 21	Photo Day in the morning – EVERYONE must have their picture taken. These pictures are needed for the library card, Go Card as well as for the yearbook.
September 22	Gr. 12 Parent Meeting 6:30 p.m.
September 23	PAC Meeting 7:00 p.m.
September 24	Grad Boat Cruise from 6:30 to 10:30 p.m.
September 25	Professional Development Day (Students not in attendance).
September 29	Collaboration Time – School starts at 9:45 a.m.

For other dates such as holiday times and professional development days for 2015-2016, you can refer to the school calendar located on the MacNeill School website in the “School Information” folder under “School Calendar”.

Students and parents of Grade 10, 11 and 12 – Provincial Exams

Please be aware that grade 10, 11 and 12 students will be writing Provincial Exams between June 22 and 27, 2016. The dates of these exams are not flexible, so please plan your holidays accordingly.