



A.R. MacNeill Secondary School

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Principal: Ms. C. Sakata, Vice Principals: Mr. R. Laing and Mrs. L. Collins

Assistant Superintendent: Mr. Scott Robinson

Trustee: Mrs. Grace Tsang

PAC: Mrs. Alice Wong

Parent Newsletter – August 2011

August 2011

To Students and Parents,

We hope everyone is having a very enjoyable summer holiday. Time does fly when we are having fun and before long the new school year will begin. This newsletter is intended to provide some general information to our **new grade 8 students**, and students new to the school, who may start to think about what the first week at MacNeill Secondary might look like. At the same time, our **grads of 2012** might start to think about grad events and activities. On behalf of the entire MacNeill Secondary School staff, we would like to extend a warm welcome to **all new MacNeill students** and their parents, as well as **all returning students** and parents!

MacNeill School will also be welcoming new staff in September. **Mr. Rob Laing**, from Palmer Secondary School, will be joining Mrs. Collins and Ms. Sakata on the administrative team as vice principal. Our counselling team would like to welcome **Mrs. Joan Cantwell**. Staff new to the school include: **Mr. Darren Low**, science teacher; **Mr. Jason Walley** and **Ms. A'lyiah Jesani**, educational assistants; and **Mrs. Natalie Orbasido** and **Ms. Lakrisa Hatch**, noon hour supervisors.

September 2011 marks the beginning of the ninth year since the opening of MacNeill Secondary School and the third 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 – participate enthusiastically; **O**wnership – being accountable; **W**e not Me – being safe, empathetic and welcoming; **E**xcellence – strive to do our best; and **R**espect – caring for self, each other and our environment. In our classrooms and school-wide, we will continue to strive to meet the goals set out in our Annual School Performance Plan. The two continuing goals in the 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 lessening A.R. MacNeill's environmental footprint in the areas of paper consumption and waste disposal.

We believe relationship and making connections to be the bases for developing a strong learning community. This coming year promises to be a successful one as students, parents and staff continues their hard work and commitment to creating a caring, respectful and responsible place for learning. This newsletter provides students and their families with start-up information that will help prepare for a positive school year.

Summer Office Hours at MacNeill from Monday, July 11, 2011 to Friday, August 26, 2011

Our school secretary, Mrs. Monica Lieffering, and/or our business assistant, Mrs. Ingrid Trouw, will be available during summer office hours from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. The office may be closed during the lunch hour, 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. if only one person will be in the office.

Regular Office Hours at MacNeill from Monday, August 29, 2011

Regular office hours at MacNeill on Monday through Friday are from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. beginning on Monday, August 29. It is also at this time the school administrators and counsellors will be available.

A.R. MacNeill Home-School Communication

To provide parents information about what is happening at MacNeill, a newsletter is written every month. This school year all newsletters will be available on the school website with a message on the home page indicating that the newsletter has been posted. The website address is part of the newsletter heading. Please book mark 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 weekly information and information not in the newsletter are posted.

This year we will be requesting parents to provide an e-mail address. Newsletters will be sent to parents by e-mail as will synervoice telephone messages sent home from time to time with important notices. Synervoice messages are automatically sent home when a student is absent from a class with no reason for the absence provided by a parent. As well, there will be some notices going home with students during advisory class or in their course classes.

New for 2011-2012 - MacNeill Start-End Time and Collaboration Time

To maintain a positive and effective learning environment for all students, the staff at MacNeill have worked very hard to review and make changes. The changes we have made and will be implementing at MacNeill are in consideration of the founding principles of the school – effective practice, flexibility and choice. In the continued development of MacNeill, next school will see three major changes. **The MacNeill Incentive Outdoor Academy will have the same start and end time** and a timetable that will align with the main school. The start and end time for **both schools will be from 8:30 a.m. to 2:59 p.m.** Previous to this the main school was from 8:40 a.m. to 3:10 p.m. and Incentive was from 8:15 a.m. to 2:35 p.m.

The third change is that MacNeill, along with five other Richmond high schools, will 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 27, October 25, November 29, January 24, February 21, March 27, April 17 and May 22.** 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 am. for their first class, or coming to school at the regular start time to have supervised study at school. 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.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR INCOMING GRADE 8 STUDENTS AND PARENTS

Grade 8's Get Wet!

Grade 8 Outdoor Camp is at the end of September. In preparation for this, students in grade 8 are asked to have completed their "Get Wet" certification. Camp includes various water-based activities (swimming, canoe, kayak, etc.) and students are required to have certification if they wish to participate. Certification will last several years and allows your child to participate in any water-based activities offered by the School District. MacNeill is trying to arrange weekend sessions and one during class time, but spaces are limited. **Should your child not have "Get Wet" certification you are asked to register your child at the local pool for this water safety course during the summer.**



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 30 minutes. This is the time for some organizational and homeroom business but most of the time lessons and activities will have a focus on social responsibility, literacy and the healthy living curriculum. Advisory lists will be posted on the first day of school with student names, Advisory teacher and room number.

Three times during the year, there will be grade level Activity Days. Advisory classes will be going on an extra-curricular field trip. The cost of transportation and activity will be \$35.00 for the year. Payment information will be sent home with students during the first week of school.

What Do I Do On The First Day of School?

Tuesday, September 6 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. The day will begin first, with a grade assembly in the Large Gym, followed by their Advisory homeroom. Advisory homeroom will be for approximately one hour, but will depend on the grade level.

For the first day of school, students will need both something to write with, and write on. Students will receive a more comprehensive overview of 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/excursion form).

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 are as follows:

9:00 a.m.	Grade 8
10:00 a.m.	Grade 9
11:00 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 but intends to attend 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.

What Will The First Week Look Like?

Regular school time begins on Wednesday, which is a shortened day ending at **2:00 p.m.** All the other days of the week end at **2:59 p.m.** The first class for all the days of the week **begins at 8:30 a.m.** There is a warning bell at 8:25 a.m.

Wednesday, September 7

8:30 a.m. Workshops and Grade Assemblies
Report to your Advisory classroom to receive your timetable.
8:55 a.m. Block Run Through. All students will rotate to all eight classes on this day.
2:00 p.m. Dismissal

Thursday, September 8

8:30 a.m. Same Grade Workshops/Field Excursions/POWER Rally
Report to your Advisory classroom.
2:00 p.m. POWER Pep Rally
2:59 p.m. Dismissal

Friday, September 9

8:30 a.m. First Day of Regular Classes – Day 1
Report to your Day 1-Period 1 class
2:59 p.m. Dismissal

On Wednesday, September 7 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 see students by appointment only. Students are assigned to counsellors by grade. Please check with Advisory teachers for the name of your counsellor.

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.

TIMETABLE SCHEDULE AT MACNEILL

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday

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	Nutrition Break	Nutrition Break
11:21 – 12:36	Period 1-3	Period 2-3
12:39 – 1:04	Advisory	Advisory
1:04– 1:44	Lunch	Lunch
1:44 – 2:59	Period 1-4	Period 2-4

Wednesday

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	Nutrition Break	Nutrition Break
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.

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 P.E. students will be able to use a locker in the change room to store clothing and books. For this, students must have their own lock to carry with them for use during the P.E. class block. The school does have a limited supply of locks for sale. School locks can be purchased from Mrs. Semotiuk, our business assistant for \$5.00.

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	sweats, t-shirt and
ruler	geometry set	binders	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. At MacNeill 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 \$48.00. Grade 12 students will have optional costs for a Graduation and Valedictory Ceremony, Grad 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. 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.

Meet the Teachers – BBQ and Potluck - Tuesday, September 20, 2011

This is a time to meet all of the teachers your child will be working with and also a time to meet other parents. This is an informal meeting to encourage maximum mingling with each other. M&M Meats will be cooking up the hot dogs and hamburgers available from 4:45 p.m. The tradition is that families bring along a salad or dessert for the potluck table. The MacNeill staff will be introduced in the Lounge at 5:45 p.m. and there will be a brief overview of the school at that time.

From 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., parents will be able to follow the student’s timetable and have an opportunity to formally meet each student’s subject teachers to learn about the course and course expectations.

As M&M food orders must be collated on Tuesday, September 13, an order form for BBQ tickets will be given to students on the first day of school. Please have the completed order returned to the school no later than Monday, September 12.

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 will be an informal social immediately after the Meet the Teacher evening on Tuesday, September 20, in the Library.

The 2011-2012 MacNeill PAC Executive is: Mrs. Alice Wong, Chairperson; Ms. Kelly Read, Past Chairperson; Mr. Sarosh Muncherji, Secretary; and Mrs. Tracy Sherlock, Treasurer. As most members of the Executive will be moving on after this year, it would be ideal for the Executive to be co-positions. This will enable parents to learn the tasks and roles of each of the positions for the following year as well as lighten the task load for both. Please consider a co-PAC position and should you be interested or have any questions do speak with parents on the Executive or Ms. Sakata. PAC meeting days are not held on the same day of the week, but rotate between Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. 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 2011-2012 school year, PAC meetings are scheduled for:

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| Tuesday, September 20, 2011 | Tuesday, February 21, 2012 |
| Wednesday, October 12, 2011 | Thursday, April 12, 2012 |
| Wednesday, November 9, 2011 | Tuesday, May15, 2012 (AGM) |
| Thursday, January 12, 2012 | |

Some Important Dates to Note:

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|  | September 6 | First day of the new school year:
Grade 8 at 9:00 a.m.
Grade 9 at 10:00 a.m.
Grade 10 and 11 at 11:00 a.m.
Grade 12 at 1:00 p.m. |
| | September 8 | Classes begin for everyone at 8:30 a.m. Block Run-through Day. |
| | September 12 | 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 20 | Meet the Teacher and BBQ starting at 4:45 p.m. |
| | September 22 | Grad Boat Cruise from 7:00 to 10:30 p.m. |
| | September 23 | Professional Development Day (Students not in attendance). |
| September 28-30 | Grade 8 Outdoor Camp at Zajack Ranch. | |
| September 30 | Activity Day for Grades 9 through 12. | |

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 20 and 28, 2012. The dates of these exams are not flexible, so please plan your holidays accordingly.