

Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw School

Strong Together In All We Do



Parent Handbook 2025 - 2026

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Principal's Message

Gilakas'la, and welcome to the 2025–2026 school year!

It is with great excitement that I welcome all students and families back to Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw School. Our staff and I are eager to begin another year of learning, growth, and connection as we continue our journey together.

Our student expectations continue to be rooted in the traditional values of Maya'xala—respect and responsibility. These values guide us in fostering a safe, supportive, and relationally rich environment where all students can thrive academically, socially, emotionally, and physically.

We are fortunate to begin this year with a dedicated team of returning teachers and staff, along with some new members who bring fresh energy and experience to our school community. Our commitment remains strong: to hold high expectations for student success while supporting the whole child in every aspect of their development.

We deeply value the role that families, elders, and community members play in our children's education. When we work together—school, home, and community—we create the strongest foundation for our students to succeed and to grow into confident, capable members of the community.

We have an exciting year ahead, filled with opportunities for learning, celebration, and shared experiences. We invite you to be active partners with us throughout the year. Please take a few moments to read through our school handbook, which contains important information to support a smooth and successful year.

Keep this document handy as a helpful reference throughout the school year. And, as always, if you have any questions or need support, don't hesitate to reach out or visit us at the school.

Gilakas'la — we look forward to a wonderful year together.

Reed Allen



Statement of Philosophy

The philosophy of the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw School is to provide optimum learning in a culturally responsive and rich environment characterized by respect and care. We aim to provide child-centred learning that focuses on the cultural experiences of the children and encompasses their emotional, social, academic, and physical needs.

Our school is a place where children are accepted and appreciated for who they are, instilling in them respect for themselves, others, and the environment. Along with building a sense of safety and a strong cultural identity, we believe this fosters a sense of self-worth, self-confidence and a healthy mental attitude.

Our school is a place that strives to equip students with a wide range of experience, knowledge and skills. We set high standards of achievement for all learners. By utilizing teaching methods and developing programs that focus equally on each individual child's strengths and needs, we aim to develop the whole child and help them see their role in the community.

The school's goals include addressing the desires of the community regarding education, and implementing a feeling of ownership and pride within the community. We want our students to have an education which yields experiences that they can use successfully in this community as well as in the context of the larger world society.

The Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw School prepares students with an education which will enable them to explore future options.



Meet the Staff

Administration		
Reed Allen - Principal Karen Aoki - Vice Principal Debbie Perkovich - Administrative Assistant		
Teachers		
Lyam Donetz - Grade 6/7 (Div.1) Allyson Lowery- Grade 5/6 (Div.2) Deb Edzerza - Grade 4/5 (Div.3) Jen Hunchuk - Grade 2/3/4 (Div.4) Jackie Hunt - Grade 2/3 (Div.5)	Melanie Pavao- Grade 1 (Div.6) Sheri-An Nicholson - K (Div.7) Michelle Hinatsu - Pre K (Div.8) Sara Grover - PHE Robin Rosborough - Baḱwam'kala	Heather Hawley - Student Services Coordinator Latisha Wadhams - Culture Myra Connaty - Prep Teacher
Support Staff		
Dea-ta Dawson - SLPA Corey Swain - Ed. Assistant Hannah Waumsley - Ed. Assistant Tiffany Alfred - Ed. Assistant Sarah Lancaster - Ed. Assistant Shauna Topper - Ed. Assistant	Hannah Ankenmann - Ed Assistant Jane Cook - Ed. Assistant Martina Whonnock - Ed. Assistant Katerina Jolliffe - Ed. Assistant Amber Nastrom - Ed. Assistant Nicole Dondaneau - Ed. Assistant	Kristine Bratosh - Ed. Assistant Nina Reid - Ed. Assistant Carrol Ellingson - EA/Supervision Mable Munn - EA/Supervision
Culinary Staff	Operations and Maintenance	
Sharon Schraud - Head Chef Richard George - Kitchen Support	Chris Andrew - Maintenance/Custodian Dusty Dawson - Custodian Rick Kolich - Bus Driver Jon Nicholson - Operations and Maintenance Manager	

Hours of Instruction

Prescribed Minimum Hours of Instruction

Per the School Act [Last amended September 26, 2023, by B.C. Reg. 212/2023], a school under the supervision of the BC Ministry of Education must offer not less than the following hours of instruction in a school year to students enrolled in the school:

- (a) **823 hours of instruction for students in kindergarten**
- (b) **848 hours of instruction for students in grades 1 (one) to 7 (seven)**

Summary of 2025-2026 Calendar

Instructional Days: 175

Professional Development/In-Service Days: 14

Total Days in Session: 189

Days of instruction are different from "days in session." Days in session are days that school is "open," but the students are not necessarily in attendance. On a "day of instruction," students are in attendance and under supervision to receive instruction in an educational program.

2025-2026 Year Calendar

2025

August - 0 days

Monday, August 25 - Staff start

September - 19 days

Monday, Sept 1 - Labour Day holiday
Tuesday, Sept 2 - First day of class, Grades 1-7
Wednesday, Sept 3 - Full days begin for Grades 1-7;
No School for Kindergarten (K) or Preschool (PreK)
Monday, Sept 8 - 1/2 days for K; 1/4 day for PreK begin
Monday, Sept 15 - Full days for K; 1/2 days for PreK begin
Tuesday, Sept 16 - Terry Fox Run
Thursday, Sept 18 - Back to School Dinner
Friday, Sept 19 - School Based Pro-Day
Monday, Sept 22 - Full days begin for PreK
Thursday, Sept 25- Fire Drill
Tuesday, Sept 30- National Day of Truth & Reconciliation

October - 20.5 days

Monday, Oct 13 - Thanksgiving Day Holiday
Tuesday, Oct 14 - Friday, Oct 17 - Hada Trip Grade 7
Thursday, Oct 16 - BC Shakeout Earthquake Drill
Monday, Oct 20- Wednesday, Oct 22 - Book Fair
Thursday, Oct 23 - 1/2 day for students
Friday, Oct 24 - Provincial Pro-D, No School for Students
Tuesday, Oct 28 - Family Breakfast
Friday, Oct 31 - Halloween

November - 18 days

Tuesday, Nov 11 - Remembrance Day Holiday
Wednesday, Nov 12 - Friday, Nov 14 Soccer Tournament
Tuesday, Nov 18 - Lockdown Alert Drill
Thursday, Nov 27 - Family Literacy Night
Friday, Nov 28 - Pro-D Day, No School for Students

December - 14.5 days

Wednesday, Dec 3-Thursday, Dec 4 - Parent-Teacher Interviews
Thursday, Dec 18 - Christmas Concert
Friday, Dec 19 - Half-day for whole school
Monday, Dec. 22-Friday, Jan 2 - Christmas Break

2026

January - 19 days

Monday, Jan 5 - Pro-D Day
Tuesday, Jan 6 - Students return
Tuesday, Jan 13 - Fire Drill
Tuesday, Jan 27 - Family Breakfast
Thursday, Jan 29 - Lockdown Alert Drill

February - 18 days

Friday, Feb 13 - Pro-D Day, No School for Students
Monday, Feb 16 - Family Day Holiday
Thursday, Feb 19 - Student-led Conferences
Thursday, Feb 26 - Earthquake Drill

March - 12 days

Thursday, Mar 12 - Yayuma
Monday, Mar 16-Friday, Mar 27 - Spring Break
Monday, Mar 30 - School Reopens

April - 20 days

Friday, Apr. 2 - Good Friday
Monday, Apr 5 - Easter Monday
Wed Apr 15 - Fri Apr 17 - Camp Homewood
Thursday, Apr 23 - Fun Fair
Friday, Apr 25 - School starts at 10:30

May - 19 days

Tuesday, May 5 - Fire Drill
Friday, May 8 - Pro-D Day, No School for Students
Monday, May 18 - Victoria Day Holiday
Tuesday, May 26 - Family Breakfast

June - 15 days

Thursday, June 4 - Earthquake Drill
Monday, June 8 - Div 1 & 2 - Ba'as Boat Trip
Wednesday, June 10- Div 6 & 7 - Ba'as Boat Trip
Monday, June 15 - Sports Fun Day (1-3 pm)
Wednesday, June 17 - Education Celebration & Grade 7 Graduation Ceremony
Friday, June 19 - Last Day for School and Community Event at the School

Daily Schedule

8:30 a.m.	Breakfast Club Opens for all students
8:50 a.m.	First Bell indicating students go to their classrooms
8:54 a.m.	Second Bell: Attendance is taken, all students are to be in class
10:30 a.m.	Recess begins - All students
10:45 a.m.	Students in class
12:00 p.m.	Outside play for all students
12:30 p.m.	Eating in Classrooms Primary or Cafeteria Intermediate
12:50 p.m.	First Bell indicating students go to their classrooms
12:54 p.m.	Second Bell, all students are to be in class
3:05 p.m.	End of the school day bell - Clubs and Sports Club
4:00 p.m.	Afternoon bus run M/T/TH



Bus Schedule

	Morning Run		Afternoon Run
8:02	Leaves Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw School	3:12	Leaves Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw School
8:10	Hobby Nook	3:15	Seaview Drive
8:13	Waddington Gardens	3:17	Harbourview Apts. / Rupert St.
8:15	Seaview Drive	3:18	Rainbow Daycare
8:16	Harbourview Apts. / Rupert St.	3:22	Waddington Gardens
8:17	Rupert and Hastings	3:25	Thunderbird Way & Granville
8:20	Thunderbird Way & Granville	3:27	7370 Thunderbird
8:21	Pine Drive & Granville	3:29	Pine Drive & Granville
8:22	Port Hardy Secondary School	3:31	Port Hardy Secondary School
8:26	Elk Drive	3:33	Elk Drive
8:30	Woodgrove Gardens	3:36	Woodgrove Gardens
8:33	Carnarvan Road	3:40	Carnarvan Road
8:35	Eagle Crescent	3:42	Eagle Crescent
8:38	Arrive at Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw School	3:50	Hobby Nook
***Driver is instructed not to wait. Please be on time.			

Illness Guidelines



- Good health is necessary for effective learning. In fairness to all, children should not be sent to school if there are definite signs of ill health in the morning and should not attend school until their health has improved.
- We have neither the facilities nor the personnel to care for sick children.
- Parents are asked to please call the school every time your child is absent.
- Students who become ill during the day are to inform their teacher. Our policy is to get students who are ill, home as soon as possible.
- Our practice will be to call parents/caregivers and ask that the student be picked up as soon as possible. If a parent is unable to come immediately, the parent must make an alternative arrangement. For this reason, **it is important that parents keep work and emergency phone numbers current.**

Thank you for doing your part to make sure that all students are safe and accounted for at school.

Student Registration Procedure

All parents must register new students at the office and the following documents are required for all students attending our school:

1. Birth certificate
2. Status card
3. Medical card



Attendance and Safe Arrival Program

It is **our responsibility** as school staff to educate your children. It is **your responsibility** as parents to ensure that they are at school, on time daily and prepared to learn (free from stress, well-rested, and having had a healthy breakfast or arrive in time for breakfast in the school at 8:30).

For all absences, parents/guardians are asked to contact the school prior to each absence (medical appointments, funerals, severe illnesses).

The school has a safe arrival program in place which ensures that each child has made it to school safely. It is the parent's responsibility to contact the school about their child's absence. If the school has not been notified that a child will be absent, the school will phone the parents/guardians of that child. If your mailbox is full or your number has been disconnected we will be contacting your emergency contact.



The Safe Arrival Program is conducted both in the morning and after lunch.

Any change in phone numbers must be reported to the school immediately in order for this program to be successful.

Release Forms

According to The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and The School Act, parents are asked to sign a release form allowing their child's picture to be used for the school and classroom Facebook pages, school media productions, newsletters, and books throughout the school year. This is for educational and community purposes only. Parents are also asked to sign a release form allowing their child to attend **field trips in the district and community**, to allow staff to administer **emergency first aid**, and allow their child to access **prevention and maintenance health programs** offered by Health and Family Services through the school.



Community & Parental Involvement

We look forward to working together as a team with parents and community members and invite your participation in the educational and recreational activities planned throughout the school year. (e.g. Welcome Back Event, Christmas Concert, Open Houses, Soccer Tournament, Sports Days, School Picnic, Family Breakfast, Yayuma, etc. as well as in-class support)



Volunteers

The staff at Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw School recognizes that a partnership between the school, parents, and community is essential to learning and success. The school appreciates and depends on volunteers for support in classroom activities, field trips, sporting events, cultural activities, fundraising, etc. We welcome those who wish to volunteer. All volunteers must be registered with the school and are subject to a criminal records check.

The following obligations are required from all volunteers assisting in the school:

- Volunteers must observe all school policies and regulations.
- Volunteers must hold all matters connected with the school in confidence.
- Volunteers should respect the professional role and judgement of teachers and administrators and remember that they are in charge at all times.
- Volunteers should try to meet their commitment to the school, especially if a teacher is depending on help with planned activities.

The Ministry of Education requires volunteers working with students to have a Criminal Record Check.

Visitors

Visitors are welcome at Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw School. However, in order to ensure the safety of everyone, we ask all visitors to check in at the office when arriving. This will enable the office to be aware of all visitors in the school in case of an emergency.



Staff may only be able to meet during break times.

Recess and Lunch

Recess and lunch are held outdoors during favourable weather and indoors during extremely inclement weather.

Students are provided with a healthy lunch daily from Chef Sharon. Lunch will be served at 12:30; students in the Primary Classes will eat in their classrooms and intermediate students will be eating in the cafeteria. Only students who live on reserve may go home for lunch if they have permission. Students are encouraged to be prepared for all types of weather.

Food Programs

In partnership with Breakfast Clubs of Canada and the GNN Trust, the school provides our students with a breakfast, snack and lunch program every school day. Breakfast is served in our cafeteria between 8:30 - 8:54 am. Lunch is served between 12:30 - 12:50 pm.

By providing students with access to nutritious foods, these programs contribute to:

- short-term and long-term cognitive ability;
- the growth and development of the body and mind;
- a healthy immune system;
- healthy energy levels;
- appropriate classroom behaviours; and
- social inclusion among peers.

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Breakfast				
Oatmeal with Raisins	Homemade Banana Muffins	Hard Boiled Eggs	Shredded Wheat Cereal	Blueberry Oatmeal Muffin
Sliced Pears	Fruit Salad	Whole Wheat Toast	Fruit Salad	Whole wheat Pancakes
Milk	Cereal	Orange Slices		
Snack				
Fruit cups and granola bars	Crackers with cheese and Sausage	Chocolate Chip Muffin	Bananas and Yogurt	Veggies and Ranch Dip
Lunch				
Roast BBQ Chicken Legs	Hamburgers on a Whole Wheat Bun	Egg Salad Sandwich on Whole Wheat	Beef Barley Soup	Whole Wheat Veggies Pita Pizza
Red Beans and Brown Rice	Sweet potato salad	Vegetables and Dip	Whole wheat Buns	Fruit Salad

Our weekly food menu will be made available and posted on social media on the weekend.

***Foods requiring to be heated up are not permitted at school.**

Sports Club

Sports Club is offered for all students every morning from 8:30 - 8:50 am and on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday after school from 3:10 - 4:00 pm (Grades 4-7). Students who want to attend the after-school Sports Club need parental permission. Off-reserve students may take the afternoon bus run home.



Homework Club

Homework Club is offered to intermediate students (Grades 4-7) on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3:10 - 4:00 pm. This is a safe and supportive environment for students to complete school work and assignments. Students who want to attend the Homework Club need parental permission. Off-reserve students may take the afternoon bus run home.

Other School Clubs

Throughout the year, staff members, parents, or community members may sponsor several other clubs that run after school. Your child will bring home a permission and information sheet for each. Some clubs run during lunch; often, these will not require permission; an information sheet will be sent home.

Other sports activities throughout the year will require students to attend practices and games or meets away from the school and will require parent permission for participation. Students are encouraged to participate in extracurricular activities at lunchtime and/or after school.

Head Hygiene Program

The Head Hygiene Program is a coordinated program between GNN Health Services and the school. Head lice is a persistent challenge for all schools. Having head lice does not indicate neglect, unclean homes, or unclean children. It is nothing to feel shame about. All students will be taught head-checking procedures during the school year. These checks will occur on a weekly basis.

The program consists of the following:

- Students are taught to comb through and check their own head for signs of head lice
- Students who have signs of head lice are identified through this process
- If head lice are detected, GNN Health Services will make connect with the family and offer support
- Parents/Guardians are responsible for continuing to clean their child's hair

Medication Policy

All medication should be given, whenever possible, by the parent at home. If medication must be given at school, the parent must provide **written consent**, which includes the following:

1. type of medication
2. reason medication is to be given
3. when medication is to be given (time)
4. length of time (e.g. one week, one month, etc)

Students may not administer medication to themselves.



Peanut Free Environment Policy

Peanut allergies can cause sudden, severe, and potentially life-threatening reactions. Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw School recognizes its duty of care to protect students, staff, and visitors with these allergies. Working together with families, staff, and health providers, we aim to reduce the risk of accidental exposure while maintaining a safe and inclusive learning environment.

While the school cannot guarantee a completely allergen-free setting, we will take reasonable steps to provide a peanut-safe environment by communicating a clear peanut-free policy to families, staff, and visitors; requesting that no peanuts or products containing peanuts be brought to school, on buses, or to school events; eliminating peanut products from school meal programs and classroom snacks; posting signage and sharing reminders throughout the year; training staff annually in allergy awareness and emergency procedures; and reviewing and updating this policy each year.

Peanut allergies are serious, as even trace amounts can trigger severe reactions through ingestion, skin contact, or airborne exposure. Symptoms may include hives, swelling, difficulty breathing, vomiting, dizziness, or anxiety. Parents must inform the school of allergies at registration, update records annually, complete emergency plans, and provide necessary medications (e.g., EpiPens). The school maintains records and ensures key staff are informed.



To help prevent accidental exposure, peanuts and peanut products are not permitted anywhere on school property, including lunches, snacks, or baked goods. Families are asked to check labels carefully, and students are reminded not to share food. Eating areas are cleaned before and after meals. For students with severe allergies, individual emergency plans are developed, and staff follow these plans and call 911 if needed.

Student Code of Conduct Policy

At the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw School, we have high expectations for our students. We strive to provide optimum learning in a culturally responsive and rich environment characterized by respect and care. This code of conduct serves to promote a safe and relationally rich atmosphere and to promote respect and responsibility in order to create a conducive learning environment. All expected behaviours and a disciplinary process are outlined in the Student Code of Conduct. The Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw School's student code of conduct policy is based on the traditional values of Maya'xala (Respect).

1. Maya'xala for Self

- I have a **right** to feel good physically, emotionally and spiritually.
- It is my **responsibility** to take care of my physical, emotional and spiritual needs.

2. Maya'xala for Learning

- I have a **right** to learn in my school.
- It is my **responsibility** to be positive about learning and participate in such a manner where all students in my class can be successful.

3. Maya'xala for Others (Students and Adults)

- I have a **right** to be treated with respect and dignity.
- It is my **responsibility** to treat others with respect and dignity, helping to take care of their physical, emotional and spiritual needs.

4. Maya'xala for the School

- I have a **right** to use student equipment and school property.
- It is my **responsibility** to use the equipment and property to all applicable rules and with care and respect.

5. Maya'xala for Safety

- I have a **right** to be safe at school.
- It is my **responsibility** to behave in a safe manner and to protect the safety of others.

6. Maya'xala for the Environment

- I have a **right** to live, play and learn in a clean environment.
- It is my **responsibility** keep the environment where I live, play and learn clean.

The Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw School

Maya'xala for Self

Maya'xala for Learning

Maya'xala for Others

Maya'xala for the School

Maya'xala for Safety

Maya'xala for the Environment



Conduct Expectations

Behavioural expectations must be consistently taught and actively promoted.

Acceptable Conduct

These expectations are how students conduct themselves at school, going to and from school, and attending any school function or activity regardless of location. This includes during our food programs, any school clubs and on the school bus or van.

- *To respect others (other students and school staff)*
- *To try and do their best work*
- *To respect their learning environment and materials (tool, equipment, etc)*
- *To have regular attendance and punctuality*

Unacceptable Conduct

These behaviours are examples only and are not an all-inclusive list.

Behaviours that:

- *interfere with the learning of others*
- *interfere with play environments*
- *create unsafe conditions to learn, work or play in*

Acts of:

- *Bullying (physical, verbal, social & emotional, or cyber)*
- *Misuse of technology (cell phones, iPods, etc)*
- *Behaviour that interferes with the learning of others*
- *Physical and emotional violence (towards others or oneself)*
- *Intimidation*
- *Willful Defiance*
- *Inappropriate language*
- *Theft*
- *Vandalism*
- *Pulling the fire alarm without an emergency*
- *Phoning 911 without an emergency*



Disciplinary Process

Consequences

The severity and frequency of unacceptable conduct as well as the age, maturity and individual needs of students are considered when determining appropriate disciplinary action. The Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw School sets the following expectations for characteristics of consequences:

- Responses to unacceptable conduct should be pre-planned, consistent, logical and fair
- Disciplinary action should be preventative and restorative
- Serious and/or repeated misconduct may result in suspension from the school
- Whenever possible, students should be encouraged to participate in the development of meaningful consequences for violations of the code of conduct

Notifications

School officials have a responsibility to advise other parties of serious breaches of the code of conduct.

For example:

- Parents of student offender(s) – in every instance
- Parents of student victim(s) – in every instance
- School Officials (Band Manager and Band Council Education Committee) – when suspensions or expulsions happen
- All parents – when deemed to be important to reassure all members of the school community that school officials are aware of a serious situation or incident and are taking appropriate action to address it

Rising Expectations

It is our expectation that as students mature and progress through the grades that they will, in most cases, be capable of greater responsibility and self-discipline and therefore it is appropriate to have escalating consequences for inappropriate and repeated unacceptable behaviours. Conduct expectations for students in the primary grades may be very different from what we would expect of a student in Grade 7 at the same time being aware of the developmental age of students.

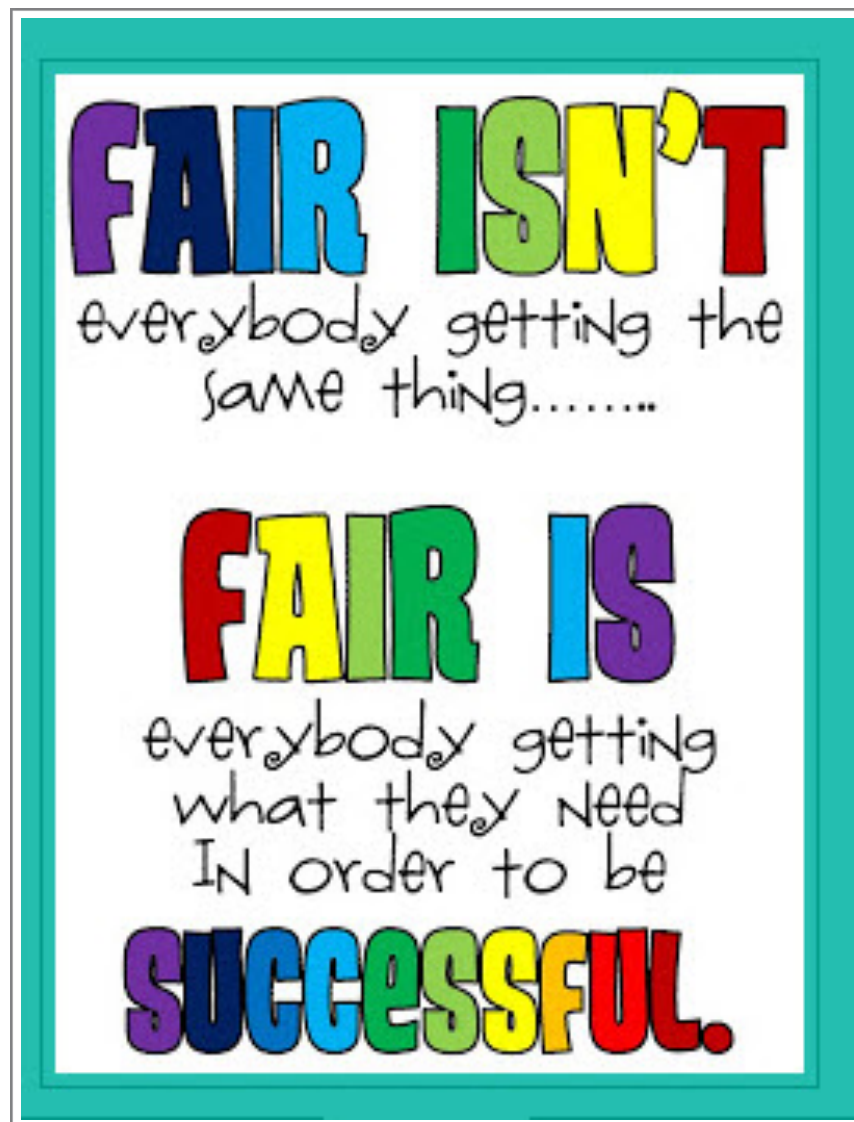
Returning to School After Suspension

Suspended students must return to school after the suspension is over. While a program for suspended students must be offered, students do not have to participate in program to return to school.

For students returning from a suspension lasting more than three school days, the principal will hold a re-entry meeting with the teacher, student and, the student's parent(s)/guardian(s), a representative from band council and an elder to:

- Make the student's transition back to school easier
- Identify any extra academic or other supports to promote positive behaviour the student may need when returning to school.

Community agencies that have been working with the student are also encouraged to attend the re-entry meeting.



Appeals and Complaints Process

Within the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw School, all complaints must be dealt with in a timely manner. Each member of the community is expected to follow the appropriate complaint procedure as described below. All parties involved must maintain confidentiality with respect to all aspects of this procedure.

Procedures

1. The issue must be dealt with first by the persons directly involved.
2. If the issue cannot be resolved the matter must be brought to the attention of the Principal of the school.
3. The Principal will clarify the issue of disagreement and document all matters pertaining to the issue and its resolution
4. The Principal having made a judgment to resolve the issue, both parties must be promptly notified of the resolution in writing. In this written notification, the parties must be informed of the available appeal procedures.
5. If the Principal's resolution is not accepted, the matter may be appealed to the Band Council Education Committee. The appeal must be submitted in writing no more than seven days after the Principal's decision has been received.
6. The Band Council Education Committee has the authority to make a decision regarding the appeal. This committee must always include the Band Manager. The committee will study the documentation and then call a meeting to hear presentations from the complainant and the Principal. Both parties will be in attendance and be given the opportunity to respond.
7. After this, the Band Council Education Committee will take the steps necessary to implement the decision.
8. The Band Council Education Committee shall notify the parents and the principal of its decision within seven days of the meeting. The decision shall be communicated in written form.
9. When the complaint is about the Principal, the process should start at #1. However, if there is no resolution at the end of this, the process should skip to #6 and the following.
10. The decision of the Band Council Education Committee shall be final. If parents refuse to accept the decision of the Band Council Education Committee and persist in pursuing the issues, disciplinary action may result in the removal of the child(ren) from the school.
11. Requests for extensions of the timelines mentioned in this policy, will, for valid reasons, ordinarily be approved.

Special Education Policy

At the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw School, we believe all children have a right to obtain an education in the setting most appropriate for their needs. All children have the right to access a culturally responsive education that encompasses their spiritual, physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development to prepare them adequately for their future options. Parents are encouraged to approach their child's teacher, the student services coordinator, or the principal if they would like to discuss their child's education, especially pertaining to Individual Education Plans and assessments. Both school and the family are involved in the entire process of planning for the success of each child's education.



Personal Digital Device Policy



The Ministry of Education requires schools to restrict the use of personal digital devices at school.

A **personal digital device** refers to any device that can be used to communicate or access the Internet, such as a cell phone or tablet. Other devices that may fall into this definition are smart watches, gaming devices, and electronic toys.

Students coming to school with a personal digital device must give them to their teacher for safekeeping during the school day. Students will not be given access to devices at recess or lunch.

The **first time** a student brings items to school that are not permitted or uses items that are not permitted on the school grounds, **the teacher will keep them and give them back to the student at the end of the day**. The **next time** a student brings items to school that are not permitted or uses items that are not permitted on the school grounds, the **principal will keep them and release them** only to the parent.

Field Trip Policy



Purpose & Philosophy

The Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw School recognizes the benefits of student field trips when such optional trips supplement educational programs for students. Effective learning experiences often result from first-hand observation of, or participation in, events or activities that occur out in the community away from the school. The principal or designated administrator must ensure that all school field trips are appropriately planned, authorized, organized, and supervised. School Administration must be satisfied that the teacher(s) and other supervisors will provide adequate supervision and follow recognized safety procedures for the planned activities to mitigate potential risks and address the safety of students and supervisors.

The Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw School believes it is of paramount importance that field trips are selected, planned, organized, and conducted in the context of:

- Clear benefit to students
- Safety and security of all participants
- Risk assessment and management of off-site activities
- Protection of students, staff, volunteers, and the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw School.

Policy

Conscientious supervision of students is mandatory during all school field trips. Volunteer supervisors must be screened by the principal or designate for the suitability, be advised of the expectations of their role and may be required to complete a criminal record check. Volunteers must be competent to deal with emergencies that might arise.

All overnight co-educational excursions require the supervision of both male and female adult supervisors.

1. Informed Consent

Permission slips will be issued at the beginning of the school, which will cover all field trips within school hours on the North Island. Any field trips beyond the North Island, or outside of school hours will require an additional signed written consent form.

A Pre-Trip information meeting scheduled for parents and students is mandatory for all high-risk, multi-day, or out-of-province field trips. Parents or caregivers must attend these meetings. An administrator must be present to support the discussion about expected behaviour.

High-Risk Field Trips—A high-risk field trip is a school activity that occurs outside the traditional school setting. It includes activities that have a higher potential for injury accidents and, therefore, represent areas of concern.

2. Supervision

Conscientious supervision of students is mandatory during all school field trips.

Volunteer supervisors must be screened by school administration for suitability, be advised of the expectations of their role and may be required to complete a criminal record check. Volunteers in Schools must be competent to deal with emergencies that might arise.

All overnight field trips require adult supervisors with a completed criminal record check.

Parent/guardian participation in field trips to augment supervision is generally encouraged and in some cases necessary. Circumstances determined by the

principal may warrant increased levels of supervision according to the age, maturity, knowledge and skill of the students, and the nature and inherent risk of the field trip.

3. Expectations of Students

Before Trip Expectations

Field trips are a privilege for students. For students to attend field trips they must abide by the following expectations during school.

- Student Code of Conduct Policy (Maya'xala Values)
- Attendance
- Fundraise, if applicable

Students who do not follow these expectations may be unable to attend the field trip, which is determined on a case-by-case basis.

During Trip Expectations

While on field trips, whether local or outside the North Vancouver Island area, students shall adhere to behavioural expectations as outlined in the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Student Code of Conduct Policy. These expectations will also be reinforced in parent and student meetings, as well as in any communication prior to the departure of the trip.

4. Bussing

- Teachers must have a list of students (manifest) who are on the bus including medical and parent/ caregiver contact information.
- Behaviour of students is the responsibility of the school staff. If necessary, the bus driver should make staff aware of areas of concern in misbehaviour by students. (The driver is still in charge and may implement safe ridership as required)

Field Trip Emergency Procedures

- Teacher should be designated emergency manager, unless injured, then another school staff should enact the plan. Enlist the support of other chaperones to help



with managing the situation, keeping students safe and calm, and mitigating further crises.

- Determine the nature of the emergency and the number of staff, students, and others affected.
- Call 911 if any personal injury or damage to vehicles has occurred. Render first aid, if necessary.
- Notify School Administration of the incident.
- In conjunction with Principal and other members of the Emergency Management Team, make a plan for contacting parents/guardians of injured student(s) or family members of chaperones/staff (see "Communication" section of this document).
- Provide follow-up and supports for students and staff involved in accident.
- Call meeting to hold a review of the incident and discuss changes to procedures, update as needed.
- Determine other communications necessary, i.e. GNN band, other families, public
- Document all events, noting time, date, severity of injuries, names of injured persons, witnesses, and emergency personnel, etc.
- Provide a complete written report to the Principal as soon as possible.

5. Communication

The ability to communicate in case of an emergency is vital. School staff should have available communication devices capable of calling for help in case of emergency. When leaving school property on a field trip, school staff should bring a communication device with them for safety purposes.

In the event of an emergency, the sponsor teacher or designate will notify the school principal as soon as possible. The principal or designate will then contact parents/guardians to provide them with information regarding the status of the situation.

Student Dress Policy

"Student dress" refers to all the ways a student may express themselves, including, but not limited to clothing, hairstyle, makeup, jewelry and accessories. Students are not permitted to wear excessive amounts of make-up (lipstick, eye shadow, perfume, hair spray, cologne, etc.). Students are not permitted to wear clothing that is distracting to others, this includes any with inappropriate 'graphics' and/or 'wording'. Parents will be informed of the situation and the student will be expected to change, this may including being sent home to do so, and returning in "appropriate" attire.

Bicycles, Skateboards, Rollerblades, Scooters Policy

Bicycles, skateboards, rollerblades and scooters are allowed to and from school if parents allow it. Students are **NOT** permitted to use this equipment on school grounds during the school day or during school activities. Students **ARE** encouraged to use proper safety gear when using any of this equipment.

Cigarette, Alcohol, & Drug Policy

If a student is involved with alcohol, drugs, or cigarettes, including e-cigarettes and vaporizers during any school activity, they will be referred to school administration, and parents will be contacted immediately. The student code of conduct will be followed as required.

Dogs at School Policy



When there are a large number of dogs or threatening dogs at school it jeopardizes the safety of the students, the school must act. Our policy is:

1. Get the dog off of the school grounds
2. Phone the owner to come get the dog if the dog has a collar. Sometimes the dogs belong to students, who are asked to take the dogs home.
3. If we do not know the owner of the dog, and the safety of the children is at risk, then animal control will be contacted.

Student Transfer Policy

As of September 30, students who are attending other elementary schools may not be able to transfer back to the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw School. Each student wanting to return will be reviewed by the School and Band Council on an individualized basis.

Decisions will be based on the following factors:

1. Class sizes and availability
2. Services available to support the student
3. Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw band membership



September 30 is a key date for attaining funding for each student. If a child registers after September 30 the school receives no funding for that student.

School Closures Policy

Planned school closures (e.g. holidays, professional development days, etc) are on the yearly and monthly calendar included in the newsletter. A notice will also be sent home with students the day before.



Unexpected school closures:

- a. Death/Funerals: the school will follow the direction of band council for deaths within the community.
- b. Other (e.g. snow days, power outage days): the school will use school social media platforms to families that the school is closed and post on our school Facebook page.

Emergency school closures: if an emergency closure is necessary, the school will do its best to keep parents informed, through community emergency procedures and media.

Supervision Schedule

The school is responsible for the supervision of the students within its care.

Before Class (8:30 - 8:54 am)

Two staff members are on duty outside.

Class Time

The students are supervised by their teachers and support staff.

Recess (10:30 - 10:45 am)

A total of four staff are assigned to the primary side and intermediate side.

Outside Play for all students (12:00 - 12:30 pm)

Two staff are assigned to the primary side of the school and two staff to the intermediate side.

Lunch (12:30 - 12:54 pm)

Students are expected to eat their lunch in the classroom, cafeteria or walk home for lunch. Only intermediate students with permission who live on reserve are allowed to walk home for lunch. Each class will have a staff member in the classroom/cafeteria during lunch.

Bus Duty - A staff member will be on duty for students boarding the bus at the end of each day. One staff member will also ride the bus after school.



Playground Rules

Out of Bounds Areas

- Any area not designated school grounds (ie. Wakas Hall, Health & Family Services, wooded areas, the roadway & staff parking lot)
 - Fences
 - Rooftops of all buildings
 - The area by the front entrance of the school, by the big rock and totem poles

Playground Equipment

- Students may not access playground equipment (ie. basketballs, soccer balls, etc.) until the on-duty supervisor is present
- Staff member on duty will bring out the equipment
- Four Square: one ball per game
- Skipping ropes are only for skipping (not tying onto monkey bars, etc.)
- Soccer, baseball, and snowballing may only be played on the field (no soccer or dodgeball is played on hardscape between the school)
- Skateboards, scooters, and bicycles may not be used on the school grounds
- Spiderweb - no children can stand on the top
- The top of monkey bars or top of the "fireman pole"
- No climbing on any part of any equipment that's not meant for climbing

Behaviour

- Students are expected to follow the Student Code of Conduct Policy.

Additional

- Staff will wear a high visibility vest and carry a walkie-talkie
- Grades 1-7 will have use of the intermediate side at lunch
- Intermediate students must stay on the intermediate side at lunch
- Supervisors stay out until all children are inside and make sure equipment is all collected

Emergency Procedures

“Classroom Emergency Backpacks” are to be in the teacher’s possession during every emergency.

A. Fire Exit Plan:

- i) Section 31(h) of the Fire Services Act requires that a system of fire drills approved by the Fire Commissioner be adopted and practised by all persons in every school, childcare facility, children’s home, or other institution for the education or care of children.
 - ii) **For schools attended by children, the Fire Commissioner has approved a fire drill system that consists of total evacuation fire drills held at least three times in school year.**
 - iii) Subsection 2.8.2 of the BC Fire Code requires that a fire safety plan be prepared in cooperation with the fire department and any other applicable regulatory authorities. A fire safety plan must include the requirement for a regular system of fire drills.
- Staff and students evacuate the building immediately through the outside fire exit door of each room or the closest exit door to their location
 - Each class will line up in the gathering area on the sports field. Support staff to assist teachers.
 - The teachers will report the number of students enrolled, present and absent.
 - The secretary, custodian vice principals, and principal have assigned duties.

B. Earthquake Evacuation Procedure

Earthquake drills will take place three times a year, as recommended by the BC Earthquake Alliance.

- Staff and students assume positions under desks or an appropriate location, facing away from windows.
- Sixty seconds after the quaking ceases, everyone will evacuate the building immediately through the outside fire exit door of each room or the closest exit door to their location
- Each class will line up in the gathering area on the sports field. Support staff to assist teachers.
- The teachers will report the number of students enrolled, present and absent.
- The secretary, custodian, vice principal, and principal have assigned duties.

C. Emergency Bus Evacuation Procedures

An emergency bus evacuation drill will be conducted at least once a year; a staff member will be on board for all bus evacuation drills and students will be informed; the drill will occur while the bus is en route to or from a field trip.

REAR DOOR EXIT PROCEDURES (usually the case)

- The staff member closest to the rear stands up and leaves the bus through the back door.
- A staff member closest to the front stands up and assesses the situation for injuries, then requests another staff member to evacuate any injured. This must be done by the "assessor" if no other staff member is present.
- Passengers evacuate the bus in an orderly manner - one seat at a time, starting with the seat on the right closest to the back.
- Teachers will report the number of students enrolled, present and absent.

FRONT DOOR EXIT PROCEDURES

- The staff member closest to the front stands up and leaves the bus through the front door.
- A staff member closest to the back stands up and assesses the situation for injuries, then requests another staff member to evacuate any injured. This must be done by the "assessor" if no other staff member is present.
- Passengers evacuate the bus in an orderly manner - one seat at a time, starting with the seat on the right closest to the front.
- Teachers will report the number of students enrolled, present and absent.

D. First Aid / Injury Procedures

These are used when a student is injured during school activities.

- First aid is provided by a staff member with current First Aid Certification and parents are contacted.
- In the event of a more serious injury, staff call 911 and parents are contacted.

E. Lockdown Protocol

These are used when the administration is alerted to the presence of an unsafe person is in the building

Please see Lockdown Protocol that follows:

Immediate Lockdown and Caution Lockdown

Lockdown Protocol

Rationale

The purpose of the following guidelines are to ensure that responses to safety concerns within the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw School are appropriate, effective, and coordinated.

General

- 1) Display room number on the inside of the windows facing out and exterior doors. Be large and visible as well as laminated. Place on the lower left corner of the windows facing out.
- 2) Lockdown procedures are posted on the inside, or next to, classroom doors.
- 3) Each class needs a basic first aid kit.
- 4) RCMP and Fire should have a master key.

Crisis Management Team

- 1) Wear a high-visible vest. Members should all have access to communicating with one another.
- 2) Lockdown sign for the front door.
- 3) Lock all exterior doors
- 4) Notify classes taking place outside, on field trip, or in a loud area where they may not be aware (radio, cell phone)

*****All classes and staff must sign out at the front desk if they are leaving the school grounds.**

- 5) During a lockdown, an announcement will be made on the PA system.
- 6) Check bathrooms.
- 7) After lockdown, debrief about the incident.