

WESTSYDE SECONDARY SCHOOL

COURSE SELECTION BOOK

GRADE 8



2025-2026

WELCOME TO WESTSYDE SECONDARY SCHOOL

ADMINISTRATION

Principal: Domenic Comita
Vice-Principal (last names A-K): Chris Spanis
Vice-Principal (last names L-Z): Jenny Bubela
Secretary In Charge: Danielle Strank
Administrative Assistant: Tiffany Nelson

COUNSELLING

Counsellor (last names A-K): Betty Lapeyre
Counsellor (last names L-Z): Matt Marra
Counsellor: Jeff Goodrich
Counselling Steno: Jennifer Walker
Trades & Transition Coordinator: Chris Gremaud

PARENT MESSAGE

At Westsyde Secondary School, our primary commitment is to create a vibrant learning environment that prioritizes your safety and inclusiveness. Our dedicated team is excited to work with you on your educational journey, delivering programs designed not only to inspire and engage but also to nurture your intellectual, emotional, and physical development. We strongly encourage your active participation in a variety of areas, be it academics, athletics, or the fine arts and applied skills.

At Westsyde Secondary, we firmly believe that your future opportunities are tied to the successful completion of a well-planned program during your secondary school years. While Grade 8 students may not have many choices in their courses, it is crucial for you to explore this handbook. This will provide you with valuable insights into the courses, helping you understand what to expect and what is required for success at Westsyde Secondary School.

Let's work together to create an environment where you not only thrive but also lay the foundation for a successful and fulfilling future. We're excited to be a part of your high school adventure at Westsyde Secondary School.

EDUCATIONAL AND PERSONAL COUNSELLING

At Westsyde Secondary School, students are assigned to one of our counsellors based on their last name; however, students may choose to see either counsellor. We treat all matters in an understanding and strictly confidential manner. Our goal is to promote, provide, and support students' well-being as advocates of mental health, relationships, and personal development. If students wish to see a counsellor, they can drop by the Counselling Office to make an appointment.

Parents are welcome to consult with counsellors at any time. Contact can be made either by phone or in person. Appointments can be made by calling the school at 250-579-9271.

CHANGING OR DROPPING COURSES

Every student has a timetable and needs to follow it. Each student is given as much opportunity as possible to select a suitable course program. Once the final selection is made the student has a commitment and is expected to live up to it.

Often class numbers are crucial. The movement of a few students can seriously complicate things. For these reasons, we expect that once students have made their choices, they need to be prepared to complete their courses. Every student is given as much opportunity as possible to select a suitable course program. Once the final selection is made, the student is committed and expected to complete the course. Only under special circumstances may a student be permitted to change a course. A change may **ONLY** be arranged by the student's counsellor and with the approval of the administration and parents/guardians.

SCHOOL TIMETABLE

Students will take a total of eight full course equivalents each year, four each semester. The first semester runs from the beginning of September to the end of January and the second semester runs from early February to the end of June.

COURSE SELECTIONS

Students and parents are always welcome to contact one of the counsellors with concerns or questions they may have. Each student will be required to complete a course selection sheet. They will take it home for approval by parent/guardian before final submissions. Should students change their plans after the final submission of the course selection sheet, they should immediately inform the Counselling Office.

HOW STUDENTS CHOOSE THEIR COURSES

In Grade 8 students are automatically registered for six courses that include:

- English Language Arts 8
- French 8
- Physical Education 8
- Mathematics 8
- Social Studies 8
- Science 8

Students will choose two top elective courses to round out an eight-course timetable. Please see the Grade course selection sheet for further details.

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS 8 (EN 8)

English 8 builds and expands upon the core competencies of communication, thinking, and personal and social responsibility learned throughout elementary school. Through an exploration of a variety of texts, including aboriginal texts, students will explore forms, function, and genre in literature. Students will also explore ideas within texts, reflect on meaning, and make connections to their own lives. In addition, students will continue to develop communication skills, focusing and thinking about how to use the writing process in the creation of different paragraph forms as well as visual and oral communication.

FRENCH 8 (FR 8)

French 8 is a required course as mandated by the BC Ministry of Education.

There is no pre-requisite. Westsyde language teachers are using AIM (Accelerative Integrated Methodology), a highly successful gesture-based approach to getting students to use the language in a real way. Students learn through speaking, listening, drama (*Salut mon ami!*), rhymes and songs, as well as reading and writing involving lots of partner work.

MATHEMATICS 8 (MA 8)

Topics include: fractions, integers, proportion, percent, logic, probability, Pythagorean Theorem, surface area, volume, algebra, and financial literacy. **Required: Scientific calculator**

PHYSICAL EDUCATION 8 (PE 8)

This program emphasizes basic skill development, physical activity, and active health education. A variety of team and individual activities will focus on skill development, participation, co-operation, personal fitness, and self-motivation. A doctor's note is imperative if a student is to be exempt from any area of the Physical Education program. Please note that a gym strip is required: shorts and a T-shirt, sweatpants for fall and winter, and appropriate footwear.

SCIENCE 8 (SC)

This course will cover the following topics: the cell, the immune system, optics - properties & behaviours of light, electromagnetic spectrum, properties of waves, lenses/mirrors, human vision & optical instruments, kinetic molecular theory; earth science - plate tectonics, layers of the earth, earthquakes, and volcanoes. This course included a lab component with an emphasis on safety.

SOCIAL STUDIES 8 (SS 8)

Social Studies 8 is interested in contacts and conflicts between people and significant cultural, social, political, economic, and religious change around the world from the 7th Century to 1750. This course may include the Roman Empire, Empires of Asia, Meso-America, Middle Ages in Europe and the Middle East, Renaissance, Exploration, Reformation in Europe, and the Industrial Revolution. First Nations will be examined in the context of Pre-Contact, Colonization, and Conquest.

ELECTIVE MOSAIC 8 ROTATION

Depending on which option your student chooses for their course selection, our Elective Mosaic 8 Rotation is where a student will learn skills and complete projects. Depending upon enrolment numbers and availability of specific elective resources, the specific elective courses that make up the Elective Mosaic 8 Rotation may vary. The intent is to provide students with an opportunity to sample a variety of elective subjects so they may be better able to choose specific elective areas of interest as they move on to higher grades. **Please see the course selection sheet for more information.**

VISUAL ARTS 8

Mosaic Art 8 at Westsyde Secondary is a stepping stone for all students moving out of elementary school. This fun and exciting Visual Arts sampler allows students to explore and experience Visual Arts in a creative and stress-free environment. Through a variety of projects, students will be encouraged to build on their existing skills and strengths and given opportunities to learn new processes and work with different mediums.

BAND 8

Do you play an instrument, or would you like to learn how to play an instrument? Would you like to perform with our program at special events, concerts, and musicals? Join Band 8! Students that join this course will learn how to play a band instrument of their choice (guitar and keyboard are not included as possible choices). Instruments may be rented from the school. **No experience is necessary!**

CAREER EDUCATION 8 & 9

The Career Education curriculum supports students in becoming successful, educated citizens by helping them learn how to effectively manage their life journey toward preferred future possibilities. This area of learning requires students to identify and develop their personal interests, passions, and competencies. Students reflect on learning experiences in school and community, build confidence through their contributions, and explore multiple career-life roles and choices. The curriculum fosters lifelong learning, beginning in kindergarten and continuing through to graduation and beyond.

DRAMA 8

This is an exciting introductory course designed to expand student personal development in communication, creativity, and self-confidence on and off the stage. With the instructor's direction, students will learn to work together to build plays and craft theatre scenes for classroom presentation. In this beginning course, students will explore and develop many theatre skills emphasizing movement, character creation, and performance. Be a part of one of the strongest acting programs in the city and take your first step onto our stage!

FOOD STUDIES 8

Food Studies 8 is a practical course where students learn about kitchen safety, food safety, and measurement. The food preparation skills they learn will help students throughout their lifetime. Students will be able to make a variety of foods that they will enjoy.

METALWORK 8

This project-based course introduces students to metalworking tools and processes in a safe environment. Students will learn about the safe and proper use of hand tools and machines and have an opportunity to develop their individual skills by designing and building a variety of small projects.

POWER TECHNOLOGY 8

This course is designed to provide Grade 8 students with an introduction to the fundamental principles of power and technology. The curriculum aims to foster an understanding of basic concepts related to energy, electricity, and simple technologies. This course will also introduce students to the basic tools used in the field of Power Technology.

TEXTILES 8

This course is designed for students who would like to learn how to sew. Students will learn both hand stitching and sewing machine techniques. Students will create a variety of small projects throughout the course. Students will learn practical skills that will be useful throughout their lifetime.

WOODWORK 8

This course is intended for students who enjoy the craft of woodwork. Both the creative and technical aspects of woodwork will be explored. Safety, creativity, and the development of self-confidence will be emphasized through project construction using power tools.

OFF TIMETABLE COURSES

CHOIR 8: VOCAL JAZZ

Choir 8: Vocal Jazz at Westsyde Secondary School is one of our Premiere Performance Groups. Many students enjoy being a part of this exciting performing group. **Students need to be aware that rehearsals are run year-long twice a week at 7:00 am.**

This course is part of our Performing Arts Department, so some extra rehearsals will be held throughout the year. Choir 8: Vocal Jazz provides instruction in many commercial music areas including: Jazz, Bebop, Rock, R&B, and The Blues. Students also study improvisation and soloing techniques. This class will be involved in performance-oriented training schedules, with a possibility of festival competition experience. Please note students may need to miss some school for travel and tour reasons. Credits will be given for this course from grade 10-12.

LEADERSHIP

Any student in grades 8-12 can select Leadership. This is a year-long off timetable course which runs during lunch hour one to two times a week.

Society needs well-trained, ethical leaders. Good leaders are found in all aspects and areas of life and serve as models for their accomplishments. Academic institutions seek them out. Commercial enterprises support the growth of new leaders within their corporations. Student leaders are acknowledged by their schools. It is with these realities in mind that we believe secondary school students should be given the opportunity to develop and discover leadership values, attitudes, and skills. Leadership at Westsyde Secondary helps students develop personal skills and positive attitudes, both of which will give students the opportunity to make a difference in their personal lives, their school, their jobs, and their community.

In this course students will gain practical experience working on Leadership projects which range from in-school events to community outreach, and to service-learning opportunities. Students work collaboratively on projects where they must work on self-improvement, self-assessment, communication, and teamwork to achieve their task. Credit will be given to this course in grades 10-12.

YEARBOOK (Graphic Production)

Any students in grades 8-12 can select yearbook. Yearbook students are responsible for the completion of the yearbook including photography, design, layout, and composition. This is a **year-long off-timetable elective**. Enrollment for this course is dependent upon recruitment and student interest. The yearbook class will meet at least once a week during lunchtime and carries the expectation that students will put in time working on the book outside of school hours and attending extracurricular events to photograph and/or report them. February to May will be very busy times in this course, so all students interested in joining yearbook are encouraged to consider their own extra-curricular schedules and consult with the yearbook teacher prior to committing to this course.

Students must be self-motivated and committed to taking ownership of this project in order to both create a high-quality product and meet publishing deadlines.