



Answers to the many questions from our grade 7 visits....

Academics:

1. How to decide which courses you take/ electives
 - in Grade 8 the courses are the same for everyone, the only choice is between the Fine Arts rotation & Band 8.
 - starting in Grade 9 students will get to choose elective courses, academic courses remain the same for all students
2. Is there an art program?
 - Yes, we have many art classes, grade 8s get to try Art 8 & Ceramics 8, in later grades they can continue with these art courses up until the Advanced Placement (AP) Art courses. They can also try other art courses such as Photography.
3. When do we choose classes? How much choice?
 - all course planning is done in February/March of the prior school year
 - there is more choice every year, Grade 9 you can choose 3 electives, in later grades there is more selection in the elective & academic courses and AP stream.
4. Do French Immersion students receive the same number of electives?
 - Yes, French immersion students receive the same number of electives
5. If you leave French Immersion, do you have to have French or can you choose another language? Can you take several language classes? What languages are offered?
 - in Grade 8 you must take French (you can do French 9), in Grade 9 you can choose between French, Spanish, Japanese & Mandarin.
 - Yes you can fit multiple languages in your timetable as electives

6. Difference between English stream and French Immersion (FI) stream? How do you transfer? Pros/cons?
 - Your courses have the same curriculum in both streams, in FI 4 of the academic courses are in French
 - it is possible to transfer into English but once you leave FI you cannot go back
 - it is easiest to make changes at the beginning of a school year and not in the middle due to availability of spots in classes
 - FI students will graduate with a bilingual diploma and it is considered a rigorous program in terms of University admissions
7. Can you take a class from a different grade? Accelerated? Challenge courses? Placement tests?
 - in Grade 8 you can take an assessment for enriched Math 8 (English) or Mathématiques 9 (FI)
 - if you leave FI in Grade 8 you can go into French 9
 - there are no other challenge courses or placement tests at this level
8. Is there an IB program?
 - IB is at Rockridge Grades 8-10 & West Vancouver Secondary School Grades 10-12.
9. How many classes do you have to take?
 - A full timetable is 8 classes; you can have more if some of your classes fall outside the timetable such as Choir & Theatre Company. You cannot have less than 8.
10. If you don't like an elective, can you drop it?
 - In Grade 8 you cannot drop your electives
 - in later grades you will choose your electives plus your alternates, changing courses once school starts is challenging and might not be possible

11. Does doing French Immersion in high school make it easier to get into a good university?
- it is recognized by Universities as a rigorous program but does not necessarily make it easier to get in
12. What academies are available in Grade 8? How do I apply?
- there are many academies for Grade 8s, please go to <https://westvancouver.schools.ca/academies> for information on applications & fees
13. Can you take several academies?
- it is possible to take more than one academy but needs to work with the students' schedule
14. If you do an academy, can you still take electives?
- Yes, you still take an elective. For some it will replace a PE block.
15. Up until what grade do you have to have a language?
- it is recommended you take a language until Grade 11 for university entrance requirements
16. What grade of math and English do you have to have?
- English is required to Grade 12 and math is required to Grade 11 for graduation but many university programs require Grade 12 math too
17. Are there provincial exams?
- no but there are government required literacy & numeracy assessments in Grade 10 and a literacy assessment in Grade 12
 - students in FI will also write a French assessment in Grade 12
18. Credits? Spares? Credit for outside courses?
- students require 80 credits to graduate, this starts in grade 10 and most courses are worth 4 credits.
 - outside courses such as choir and others are for credit starting in grade 10
19. Do you get elective classes in grade 8?
- you get the Applied Skills rotation (woodwork, textiles, computer studies & business) and either the Fine Arts rotation (art, ceramics, choir, drama) OR Band 8.

20. Do we have midterms in high school? Are they standard tests for everyone? Does it depend on the teacher?

-midterms are determined by individual teachers, there are no standard tests except the literacy & numeracy assessments in Grades 10 & 12.

Timetable/Schedule:

1. -Normal day? Schedule?

-Currently we are running a semester system, 4 classes each semester with a shortened day (X block) on Tuesdays & Thursdays (T/TH) to accommodate academies, learning support etc.

2. Can you wander and go to different classes and ask teachers questions? Free time during the day? How long is the school day?

-You can see teachers on before school, on breaks, at lunch, during X block on T/Th and after school.

-students are expected to be at school Monday to Friday 8:30am-3pm, academy students may leave to go to academies after lunch on their academy days (currently T/Th afternoons)

3. When does school start? When does it end?

-8:30am

-3pm

4. Quarter system? Semester system? Terms?

-we do not currently have the answer to this for September 2022, more information will come out from the district in the near future

5. Time conflicts? How do you get around that?

-students are asked to make appointments outside of school hours as much as possible

-if you are away due to an appointment parents must email in to excuse their child

6. Calendar year?

-same as elementary-September to June

7. Orientation week?

- we hope to do an in-person orientation in May/June
- the first day & week back we work closely with the Grade 8s to ensure everyone is settled in
- in the first week or two we have a Grade 8 bbq and activities

8. Recess?

- there are two small breaks (10min) and a 45min. lunch each day

9. How long are the classes?

- typically 80 minutes, and can be up to 115 minutes depending on the day

10. What do the teachers teach? Different grades, different subjects?

- teachers generally teach multiple grades and most teach multiple subjects within their department

11. When is lunchtime (so many kids, what do you do at lunch?) what does lunchtime look like?

- lunchtime is midday
- all students have lunch at the same time so you can meet with your friends and eat where you like in the school or outside

12. Do you get to go off school grounds during lunch?

- in Grade 8 students are required to stay on campus for lunch

13. How do they decide which classes people get?

- our computer system creates all students' timetables, it is a very complex system with over 1200 students

14. How long to get to the next class?

- about 10 minutes

15. Can you stay after school? Can you hang out at the school?

- yes the school is open after school for students who need to wait for a ride, meet with friends, do a group project, go to a practice etc.

16. Can academies replace math class?

- no, math is a requirement from Grades 8-11

Athletics/Extracurricular:

1. Clubs? How do you create your own? How many can you be in at once?
 - we have over 50 clubs and yes you can create your own
 - you can be in multiple clubs if they meet on different days
2. Can you use the gym after school? Is there free gym time?
 - often the gym is open for use at lunch
 - after school the gym is often used for sports teams
3. What sports can you play?
 - we have 3 seasons of sports teams
 - you can find more information at sentinelathletics.ca
4. Can you be on 2 different sport teams at the same time? Academy & sports team at the same time?
 - yes you can do more than one sport per season as long as the practices do not overlap
 - yes you can be in an academy and on a Sentinel team
5. If you're playing a high level of sports now can you go to the upper level team?
 - it is a possibility, this would be a conversation with the coach during tryouts
6. Do they have a drama club?
 - we have Theatre Company after school
 - in previous years we have had an improv club
7. What are some of the clubs that are offered?
 - there are too many to list, garden club, debate club, model UN club, chess club and dragon dance club are just a few....
 - in September we host a "clubs day" where the leaders of the clubs put tables up in the gym and students can go around and sign up for any clubs they are interested in
8. Is there a snowboarding team?
 - yes, there is a ski/snowboard team
 - sign up is usually in December and races in January/February

9. Is there a pool? Swim team?

- there is no pool but there is a swim team!
- they practice at the WV Community Centre, this starts in September

Grade 8 General Information:

1. School tours?

- Grade 7 teachers have the Sentinel school tour video to show students

2. Library - uses, homework club? Tutoring? Help/support in school?

- the library is open before school, during the day and after school until around 4pm
- we have a tutoring club that offers peer tutoring help to students

3. What is it like during lunch?

- there is a lot of energy as all students are out of class
- students find places all over the school to have lunch and sit with their friends

4. Are washrooms gendered or unisex?

- we have both gendered washrooms and designated unisex washrooms

5. Grade 8 wing?

- there is no Grade 8 wing, everyone intermingles

6. Meeting new people? Across different grades?

- best place to meet new people across different grades is trying extracurricular activities such as clubs, theatre, sports..

7. Are there lockers?

- yes each student is assigned a locker
- larger lockers are shared between 2 people from the same homeroom

8. Can you use your phone at lunch time? During free time?

- yes you can use your phone at lunch
- phones can only be used in class with teacher permission

9. Do you have to lock up your phone during the day/during class?
-no but we recommend you keep it in a safe place, theft can occur
10. Is Grade 8 important for university?
-Grade 8 is a transition year for students to establish good study habits and adjust to life in high school. Universities do not look at Grade 8 marks.
11. Is the wifi good?
-students report it is not the best but we are hoping for some upgrades
12. Is there a cafeteria? How is the food? What is the average price of cafeteria food?
-there is a cafeteria that is open before school until after lunch time
-the food is great and made onsite, you can purchase things such as breakfast sandwiches, baked goods, salads, burgers, pizza, pasta
-pricing is from \$2-\$7 per item
13. Is there a school bus program?
-there is not a school bus program but there are often parents who arrange a bus program
14. Is there a dress code?
-no dress code
15. What do you do if you're sick and need to stay home?
-you stay home and have your family email sentinelattendance@wvschools.ca
-we recommend you also email your teachers individually