

Hello Parents & Guardians,

August 2024

Welcome back to a new school year! I hope you and your families had a wonderful summer. As we begin this year, I'm filled with hope and excitement for all that lies ahead. Our staff has been working hard to create a positive and engaging environment where your children can thrive, learn, and grow.

We're committed to partnering with you to ensure that your child has a successful and fulfilling year. Together, we can make this year one of growth, achievement, and joy for all our students. This newsletter contains a lot of important information that you should familiarize yourself with, including a reminder of the provincially mandated changes to our electronic device policy.

Thank you for your continued support, and here's to a fantastic school year ahead!

School Fees, Lockers & Parking Passes (parking passes for Gr. 11 & 12 only)

School fees support a multitude of student activities in our school that foster a warm, caring and inclusive environment at Ridge. This year school fees are \$35. School Fees are to be paid on the SD42 Parent Portal. Please contact the school office if you are unable to pay the fees on the Portal. Students can pick a locker once student fees have been paid.

Students can select their locker before the school year begins if they wish – see the section below for details per grade. Lockers will still be available once the school year begins so early selection is just a bonus. Students need to provide a lock for their locker – we do not sell locks. Additionally, students taking PE (all Grade 8, 9 and 10 students as well as some senior students who are taking a physical education course) will need a 2nd lock for the PE locker in the changerooms. Students are reminded that they must lock their clothing and personal effects in a locker in the changeroom to secure them.

We have created a parking pass system for students and staff to ensure organized and efficient use of limited parking spaces on campus. As the number of student drivers increases, a parking pass system will help manage the demand. Further, passes will promote safety by regulating who can park on school grounds, as well as reducing congestion and unauthorized parking. Additionally, it allows the school to monitor and maintain order in the parking areas, address security concerns, and enforce parking rules effectively. Overall, a parking pass system contributes to a safer, more orderly environment for students, staff, and visitors.

Parking passes will be distributed on a first come first served basis and be available during locker distribution times. Students wishing to receive a parking pass must bring in the signed parking pass application form along with a \$5 deposit for the window hanger which will be returned when the hanger is

Locker Selection Times & Parking Passes (Gr. 11 & 12 only)

Tuesday, August 27

7:00pm – Grade 12s only

@ **Senior Sunset** – enter the

Courtyard through the door

beside the art room/delivery door

Wednesday, August 28

Report to Caf for instructions

Grade 11 @ 11:00am

Grade 10 @ 12:30pm

Grade 9 @ 2:00pm

Thursday, August 29

Report to Caf for instructions

Grade 8s @ Orientation

Yearbooks

We will begin accepting orders and payment for yearbook at the end of August through to February 2025. The cost is \$65 - our preferred method of payment is the Parent Portal. We will also accept cash or cheque (payable to MRSS).

Student Photos

Mountain West Studios will be taking student photos on Thursday, September 5 beginning in the morning. Typically, we call students down alphabetically by grade. Photo retakes are scheduled for Wednesday, October 9.

First Week of School

Tuesday September 3 – Opening Day – 1:00-1:45 only

On this day all students will report to their A Block class from 1:00-1:45pm for introductory activities.

Wednesday, September 4 – Day 3: B, Extended Tutorial, A, D, C Grade 8 rotation classes begin

Thursday, September 5 - Day 4: F, Extended Tutorial, E, H, G

Friday, September 6 - Day 2: E, Extended Tutorial, F, G, H

Changes to our Electronics Device Policy

As communicated in June, the implementation of this systemic change was directed by the Premier of British Columbia in order to ensure student attention is focused on social connection, academic achievement, and building interpersonal skills. Teachers have always had the individual discretion to institute their own technology policy and many teachers already have cell phone bans and/or a classroom policy in place.

At MRSS the use of personal digital devices (smart phones, smart watches, laptops, ear buds etc) will be determined by each classroom teacher to support the teaching and learning that will occur in the classroom. If a teacher chooses to restrict the use of personal digital devices during instructional time, the use of devices will be permitted to support inclusion and accessibility to learning such as: digital literacy, communication, medical and health needs and as defined by an individual education plan.

When use of electronic devices is not permitted the device should be stored out of sight in a bag or backpack. The storing of electronic devices in bags should happen before the student enters the learning space. These guidelines are also applicable during Tutorial.

When a student is using a device at an inappropriate time the student must give the device to the teacher when asked; students who refuse can expect progressive discipline for both inappropriate use of phone and refusing to comply with the direction of a staff member.

Students can freely access their phones before school, at lunch, during class transition, and after school. If there is an emergency and parents need to connect to their student during school hours, please contact the front office.

We have been working with our Staff on these changes and sought input from staff, Student Council and our Parent Advisory Council (PAC).

We hope that all parents and caregivers will support our staff's efforts to create a positive and productive learning environment. We appreciate your support as we implement significant changes that are intended to benefit our students and their learning by focussing their technology use during instructional time for educational purposes only.

If you have any questions or concerns about these changes to our school cell phone/electronic device policy for students, please contact the appropriate grade level administrator.

Hall Passes

Building on our work last year to reduce student hallway traffic during instructional time, we are implementing a hall pass system to enhance the safety, security, and overall management of student movement during instructional time, including Tutorial. By requiring students to carry hall passes when outside of their classrooms, we can better monitor and control traffic in the hallways, ensuring that students are where they need to be and reducing unnecessary disruptions to the learning environment. This system also helps prevent unauthorized wandering, ensuring that students are accounted for minimizing opportunities for misbehavior. Ultimately, a hall pass system supports a more organized, disciplined, and safe school environment, allowing both students and staff to focus on education. More details on our hall pass system will be shared with students during our first week of school.

We will collect regular feedback from staff, students (via Student Council and Student Voice) and families (via PAC) on our new initiatives and make adjustments as needed.

Student Email

Students should access their @sd42.ca email accounts beginning August 28. Students can log in with the same password they used last year.

Student Schedules (Timetables)

Student schedules will be available through MyClass accounts **later in the day on August 28**. Student MyClass log-in information will only be sent to individual @sd42.ca student email accounts. Students needing MyClass help must email myclass@sd42.ca as school-based staff cannot reset MyClass passwords.

Password Assistance

If your student has forgotten their password, they can either click this link ([Forgot Password](#)) and the District's IT department will reset or they can email mrss_reception@sd42.ca and we will endeavor to reset as quickly as possible.

Course Change Requests

Our counsellors and administrators have spent hours creating/balancing class sizes and composition. As such, course change requests will only be considered in the following situations:

- 1) the student has passed a course at summer school
- 2) the student needs to repeat a course that wasn't passed last year
- 3) a senior student's post-secondary plan has changed
- 4) the student is not in a position to graduate and needs schedule adjustments.

If one of the criteria above is met – **please email the grade level counsellor with a description of the change request**. Counsellors will do their best to connect with you as soon as possible.

Unfortunately, class size and composition limits may not allow us to consider change requests for other reasons (teacher preference, elective changes, timetable preference, etc.).

Due to the high volume of requests that happen at the beginning of the school year, we will only reply to requests that meet the criteria.

Grad Parent Meeting

We will host a grad parent/guardian meeting in the cafeteria on Thursday, September 12 at 7 pm. We hope all grad families will attend.

Post-Secondary Night

We will host our annual Post-Secondary Night for Grade 11 & 12 students, parents and guardians on Tuesday, September 17 at 6 pm. Post-secondary institutions will be on site offering information sessions. We hope you can join us!

Attendance

If your student is going to be absent for all or part of a day, please log their absence via the Parent Portal or contact the school directly by telephone. A reminder to families that if students need to leave school during the school day, we must confirm with a parent or guardian. If you have not advised us either by phone or the Parent Portal, we will contact you by telephone to confirm.

The autodial program will notify parents late in the afternoon of same day absences. If you forgot to call or receive a message in error, please let us know the following day so we can correct the attendance module.

While we value and support your commitment to your child's education, we want to emphasize the importance of classroom engagement and the role it plays in your child's learning journey.

Classroom instruction offers more than just content delivery; it provides opportunities for interactive learning, peer collaboration, and teacher guidance tailored to your child's individual needs. These interactions foster critical thinking skills, creativity, and social development, which are integral components of a well-rounded education.

When students miss classroom instruction, they may miss out on valuable discussions, hands-on activities, and real-time feedback that enrich their learning experience. Additionally, trying to cover missed material independently may not always align perfectly with the pace and focus of classroom instruction, potentially leading to confusion or gaps in understanding which may negatively impact student achievement. Further, assessment of student learning, especially at the end of June, can require in-person real time interactions involving teacher and student.

While some teachers may be able to accommodate these requests, there are many cases where it isn't feasible to support students who are away for travel or extended periods of time.

Parent Advisory Council

Our first PAC meeting is scheduled for September 18 at 7pm. All parents are welcome.

Maple Ridge Secondary School App

Students, parents and school staff have access to the full year calendar of activities and events on our App. Simply download the app for free from your App Store by searching, *MySchoolDay*. Once downloaded, select Province>School District 42>School. This app serves as an agenda for students. It is simple to use and allows students to personalize their settings. We will push out information about upcoming events and last-minute notifications using this app. Another great function is the ability to enter your student's class schedule so on any given day you can tell what class they are in. This is very useful when making appointments.

Cafeteria Service

Our teaching kitchen offers a wide selection from snacks, beverages to hot lunches and everything in between. When we begin our school year, the cafeteria is closed while it is cleaned and restocked and while our Chef Instructor teaches the FoodSafe course that culinary students must pass before preparing food in our teaching kitchen. We also close the cafeteria the week before our breaks (Christmas, Spring Break, and at the end of the year. During times of closure, we typically offer pizza sales on a limited first come-first served basis. Additionally, we have our school stores and the Health Hut that sell muffins, beverages, smoothies, noodles, Pizza Pops, etc.