

LEARNING IN SAANICH SCHOOLS

Optimal learning environments allow for a range of possible classroom organizations to meet the diversity of student needs.



The construction of meaning takes place within the social context of the learner and that interaction with supportive, competent language users is integral to developing language skills.

Vygotsky

Saanich Schools support a culture that promotes the best possible outcomes for children and families. We believe all classrooms present a unique opportunity to personalize instruction and support a diversity of developmental learning needs. As educators, our task is to respect, value and respond to the diversity that occurs among students in classrooms leading to a more effective, exciting and enabling learning environment.

Saanich Schools



WHAT DO WE BELIEVE ABOUT ALL LEARNERS?

- Every child is unique and every child can learn.
- All learners are valued and belong to a community of learners.
- Learners thrive in a safe, caring environment.
- Learning is a journey and we support children from where they are.
- Learning is active, ongoing and builds on prior experience.
- Diversity is the norm and is something to be embraced.
- All learners need opportunities to wonder, talk, question, discover, and explore in order to make sense of ideas and construct understanding.
- Children learn in a variety of indoor and outdoor environments.
- Public education is the responsibility of the whole community.
- Healthy relationships are the foundation of an optimal learning environment.



People learn best in community, when they are engaged with one another, when everyone is both student and teacher, expert and apprentice, in a rich exchange of experiences and learnings.

Margaret Wheatley

PRINCIPLES OF LEARNING

Learning occurs in varying ways and at different rates.

PRINCIPLES OF INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS

"Diversity is the one true thing we all have in common."

Inclusive schools acknowledge the uniqueness and enhance the dignity and self-respect of all students.

The inclusive environment is flexible, providing for age-appropriate placement in neighbourhood schools.

In inclusive schools, educators seek to understand and support the diverse learning needs of all students.

The practice of inclusion transcends the idea of physical location and supports student learning in a variety of settings.

Inclusion requires a flexible learning environment wherein curriculum adaptations and modifications are assumed, thus ensuring curriculum relevance and accessibility for all students.

Inclusive schools promote collaborative consultation with parents and all educational partners.

Inclusive schools honour and celebrate the diversity that exists in the school community.

FIRST PEOPLES PRINCIPLES OF LEARNING

Learning ultimately supports the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits, and the ancestors.

Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place).

Learning involves recognizing the consequences of one's actions.

Learning recognizes the role of indigenous knowledge.

Learning is embedded in memory, history, and story.

Learning involves patience and time.

Learning requires exploration of one's identity.

Learning involves recognizing that some knowledge is sacred and only shared with permission and/or in certain situations.

Learning requires the active participation of the learner. Learning is an individual and social process.

PARENTS OFTEN ASK:

- **How does a teacher support the diverse needs of students in the classroom?**

Every classroom has a diverse range of learners. Individual growth is supported through an approach to learning that is child centered. Teachers start by getting to know each child's strengths, needs and interests. Using a variety of instructional strategies and learning materials, flexible groupings, and consistently monitoring learning, students are able to participate at their own level of development.

- **What is considered in the composition of a classroom?**

In successful schools, classrooms are organized to meet the diversity of learners. The following factors are considered in the composition of all classes.

- Individual learning needs
- Gender balance
- Social / emotional
- Friendships
- Opportunities to make new friends
- Diversity

- **What is a multi-age class?**

There are many words used to describe the practice of combining different grade levels or age groups in one classroom. In Saanich, we believe the term "multi-age" more accurately reflects the cohesive learning environment we expect to find in all classrooms.

- **What will my child learn in a multi-age class?**

The Ministry of Education sets the education standards for students in grades K to 12 through the provincial curriculum. At this time, The Ministry of Education is working with stakeholders to redesign curriculum for learners in today's world. Research and consultation are an integral part of the process. While work is ongoing, the current thinking is to:

- Continue to emphasize the fundamentals of literacy and numeracy in primary grades.
- Focus on acquiring skills to help students use knowledge critically and creatively, to solve problems ethically and collaboratively, and to make the decisions necessary to succeed in an increasingly globalized world.
- Focus on the "big ideas" or concepts and allow more flexibility to personalize the learning experience.

For more details on these changes, see: ***Enabling Innovation: Transforming Curriculum and Assessment.***

http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/irp/transforming_curriculum.php

- **How do I get more information?**

Visit Saanich School District #63 website to locate / contact your neighbourhood school: www.sd63.bc.ca

Contact Ministry of Education: www.gov.bc.ca/bced/ 1 888 879-1166