

## Welcome Back to Citadel!



As summer winds down and backpacks get packed, we're thrilled to welcome our students and families back to École Citadel Middle School! A new school year brings fresh opportunities to learn, grow, and connect—and we can't wait to get started. Whether you're returning or joining us for the first time, we're excited to build a strong, caring community together. This newsletter is your guide to a smooth and successful start, filled with helpful reminders and updates to support a great beginning to the school year. Let's make this year one to remember!

### Tuesday September 2<sup>nd</sup> Community Meeting Areas

Each learning community has a designated meeting spot for Tuesday. Your child's learning community and meeting spot was shared in a separate email, but here's a quick reminder:

Forest Community – meet students in AMPHITHEATRE

River Community – meet students in the STONE CIRCLE

Mountain Community – meet students in the courtyard COURTYARD

Ocean Community – meet students in ROOMS 101&102

Sky Community – meet students in the GYM

### Walking to School & E-Bike/E-Scooter Safety

We encourage students to walk to school whenever possible—it's a great way to start the day with fresh air, movement, and a chance to connect with friends. Walking also helps reduce traffic congestion around the school and supports a safer environment for everyone.

As a reminder, students are not permitted to ride E-bikes or E-scooters to Citadel Middle School. This school policy aligns with a recent Government of British Columbia regulation that states: *E-scooters may only be operated by individuals aged 16 and older, and "light E-bikes" (max 250W) are permitted for riders aged 14 and up, while "standard E-bikes" (max 500W) require riders to be at least 16 years old.* These devices also have restrictions on where they can be legally operated, and school grounds are not included.

We appreciate your support in helping us maintain a safe and welcoming school environment. Let's keep our mornings active, safe, and community-focused!

### Traffic Safety Reminder

The roundabout in front of the school can become very congested during morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up times. To help reduce traffic and promote a healthier lifestyle, we encourage

families to walk to school whenever possible. If driving is necessary, please consider dropping students off along Citadel Drive, where they can safely walk up the driveway to the school. Please note that the school parking lot is reserved for staff only, and parking spaces are extremely limited.

We kindly ask all parents and guardians to take a moment to review traffic safety rules with their children. Remind them to use crosswalks, stay on sidewalks, and be alert to vehicles and other pedestrians. Student safety is a shared responsibility and remains our highest priority.

### **The Value of a Timely Start**

Starting the day on time helps students ease into their routines and sets a positive tone for learning. At Citadel Middle School, our day begins at 8:45 a.m. on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays and at 9:00am on Wednesdays. [Click [here to view the full bell schedule](#).] Arriving a few minutes early gives students the chance to get settled, connect with friends, and be ready for the day ahead. We understand that mornings can be busy, and we appreciate families making the effort to support punctuality. Every minute counts and being on time helps students feel confident and prepared to make the most of their school day.

### **Reporting Student Absences**

If your child will be late or absent please fill in an [Absence Report](#), or contact the school office by phone, 604-945-6187.

To help ensure the safety of all students, Citadel Middle School uses a “call-back” system. If a student is absent and we haven’t received a report, our office will begin contacting the numbers listed in priority order to confirm the child’s whereabouts. You can support this process by calling the school to report your child’s absence as early as possible. Your help allows us to respond quickly and ensures that every student is accounted for.

### **A Fresh Start & Building Community**

September is a time of new beginnings, and at École Citadel Middle School, we embrace the excitement and energy that comes with it! While we aim to have class placements finalized by Friday, September 5th, the first week of school is all about settling in, making connections, and building a strong sense of community. Sometimes enrolment shifts bring surprises, so students may spend a little extra time in their learning communities before moving into their permanent classes.

During these opening days, we focus on getting to know one another, exploring our shared values—Take Care of Ourselves, Take Care of Others, and Take Care of This Place—and creating a welcoming environment where everyone feels a sense of belonging. Expect team-building activities, cross-classroom fun, and lots of opportunities to build school spirit. These first weeks lay the foundation for a great year ahead, and we’re excited to kick things off with positivity, purpose, and lots of fun!

## Getting Ready with Supplies

We know the start of school can come with a lot of questions—especially about what to pack! On Tuesday, students will find out exactly what supplies they'll need for the first week. In most cases, just a basic pencil box with something to write and colour with will do the trick. No need to rush out and buy everything at once.

For those who like to plan ahead, you can check out our [full school supply list on the Citadel Middle School website](#). We'll ease into things together, and make sure everyone has what they need to feel prepared and confident.

We understand that back-to-school expenses can be challenging for some families. If you're experiencing financial hardship and need assistance with school supplies or other start-up costs, please don't hesitate to reach out. We're here to help, and all conversations will be handled with care and confidentiality. You can contact me directly for support at [rdhaliwal@sd43.bc.ca](mailto:rdhaliwal@sd43.bc.ca) or by phone at 604-945-6187. We want every student to start the year feeling confident and prepared.

## Lunchtime at Citadel

Starting **Wednesday, September 3rd**, please send your child with a **snack, lunch, and a refillable water bottle** to keep them energized and hydrated throughout the day.

If you ever need to drop off a lunch during the day, you're welcome to leave it at the office—students can pick it up during their break times. We'll be encouraging students to enjoy their lunch indoors and then head outside for some fresh air, **rain or shine**. Spending time outdoors is a refreshing way for students to reset, recharge, and return to learning with renewed energy and focus.

A quick reminder: **Citadel is a closed campus**, which means students must stay on school grounds during the day. We kindly ask families not to use food delivery services like Uber Eats, as we're unable to accept deliveries for students.

## Technology at Citadel – BYOD

All middle schools in SD43, including Citadel, follow a Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) model. We believe technology can be a powerful tool to support learning, and we want students to have easy access to it when needed. That said, we also value balance—students won't be spending their entire day in front of a screen.

We'll continue to have clear expectations around device use, including “Tech-Free Breaks” during Nutrition Break, Lunch, and before/after school while inside the building. This means personal devices like cell phones and laptops should be stored away when not actively supporting classroom learning.

If you haven't yet purchased a laptop for your child, please don't worry. Here are some things to consider: acceptable options include laptops, iPads, and tablets; however, **smartphones are not**

**suitable** for this program. To ensure a smooth experience, we recommend devices with a **minimum 9-inch screen**, a **keyboard** (either attached or Bluetooth), and **WiFi connectivity**. Entry-level devices are encouraged, provided they meet the following minimum specifications: **camera/webcam for photos and video, at least 8 hours of battery life, 16 GB of internal storage, offline functionality**, and a **protective case**.

As we begin this new school year together, we want to thank you for your continued support and partnership. At École Citadel Middle School, we believe that a strong school community starts with kindness, connection, and shared purpose. We're looking forward to a year filled with learning, growth, and memorable moments—and we're so glad to have you with us on this journey. If you have any questions or need support at any point, please don't hesitate to reach out. We're here to help and always happy to connect. Here's to a fantastic start and a wonderful year ahead!

Sincerely,

Rick Dhaliwal, Principal & Rachel French, Vice Principal