



## ZOOM Meeting Notes – January 19, 2021 Grade 8 Parent Q&A

### **Intro:**

HWSS is an amazing facility with a dedicated staff, amazing students, and supportive parent community. I realize that some of you may be anxious about your kids making the transition to high school but assure you that the vast majority of students make the transition smoothly. For those that may need some extra support, we have teachers, support staff, counselors, a youth worker, and caring administrators to help as needed.

The biggest adjustment for the students will be having 4 classes each semester, with 4 different teachers and 4 different sets of classmates. It is quite different from their middle school experience, but the students seem to enjoy the change. In terms of conduct and behaviour, the students enjoy more freedom and with that freedom comes responsibility. Our expectations are high for your kids. We expect a solid work ethic, kindness towards others and respect for our institution. We have no doubt that they will rise to the challenge. We encourage our students to advocate for themselves, but if there are bumps in the road along the way we will work with you to smooth them out. Our goal is success for every student. Our motto is **We Are Kodiaks**. We will challenge your kids to become an active part of our school community. We want them to be able to articulate what they contributed to HWSS when they graduate. It all starts in Grade 9!

### **Q & A:**

#### **1. What is the difference between Accelerated Math 9 and Math 9 Honours?**

- In Math 9 Accelerated, students complete Math 9 and Math 10 in the same course/semester.
- In Math 9 Honours, course concepts are enriched.  
\*both courses are suited for strong math students looking for extra challenge.

#### **2. Why is Math 9 Accelerated not being offered this year?**

- Due to the challenging nature of this course, an entrance exam is required and due to Covid restrictions we are not able to perform testing this year.

- Interested students can self-select Math 9 Honours on their course selection form (nothing else is required). Space may be limited, and placement will depend on compatibility with the rest of a student's course selections.
- There are no other acceleration courses planned in its place. If a student really wanted to, they could explore taking Math 10 on-line after completing Math 9 or perhaps summer school, but it isn't a race!
- Honours courses are not recognized as such on transcripts (they show as regular courses; this is one of the reasons they are not more appealing to a larger number of students).

**3. Will other courses or activities be cancelled due to Covid concerns?**

- At this stage, we are planning for a semester schedule and full activity offerings in September. Of course, things could change. If this is the case, we will adjust, as necessary.

**4. Can the school post a virtual tour of the facilities?**

- We will be posting a virtual Tour on January 29<sup>th</sup>.
- If things return to normal for start-up, parents are welcome to contact me to come in for a look around at the end of August.

**5. Cross Catchment:**

**My child is planning to apply for cross-catchment, when do they complete the course selection form?**

- If they are accepted, the course selection form would be submitted afterwards. There is no disadvantage since none of the forms will be inputted into the system yet.
- I do not anticipate many cross-catchment applications being accepted this year as our space is limited. Any available spaces will be determined by a District lottery system.
- Successful applicants are typically notified in early March.

\*\* If you live out of catchment but your child has a sibling currently attending HWSS that will still be in attendance next year, your child will automatically be accepted due to the District's sibling rule (\*you still need to go through the cross catchment process).

**6. Do we need to do anything to register if or child is in catchment at an SD43 school?**

- No. The info gets transferred directly from the middle school.

**7. If we live in catchment, but my child is not currently attending an SD43 school, how do I register?**

- Email me directly ([tclerkson@sd43.bc.ca](mailto:tclerkson@sd43.bc.ca)) and I will put you in touch with our student records secretary to help you through the registration process.

**8. How many credits do you need to graduate?**

- 80 credits
- Most of our students graduate with more than 100 credits.
- Gr 9 courses do not count towards the 80 credits. Gr 9 is an exploratory year. Use it to try different courses, get used to the new routines, establish work ethic, get involved in school activities, etc.
- Extra courses taken outside of the regular schedule (Music, Agility, etc.) are credit courses and are graded. Gr 10-12 courses count towards the 80 credits.
- Some work hours and other specialty achievement levels (dance, piano, athletics,) may count for credits. Ask your child's counselor about this when it is relevant.

**9. AP courses:**

- We offer AP Calculus 12 and AP Psychology 12 (assuming enough students sign up for them)
- We are not aware of other sites that you can take additional AP courses at while attending HWSS.
- We offer a comprehensive academic program that results in a large percentage of our students being admitted to Universities (last year: SFU 90% of HWSS applicants accepted; UVIC 90%; UBC Vancouver 79%; UBC Okanagan 100%), so we have no impetus to offer more AP classes.

\*If AP classes are a real interest, you may want to explore Pinetree Secondary as they offer quite a few.

**10. Can we get more information about the specific elective courses?**

- Use this link to access our course booklet:  
<https://www.sd43.bc.ca/school/heritagewoods/Documents/Course%20Book%202021-2022-9.pdf>
- Students choose 3 electives and 2 alternates (list them in order of preference)
- All grade 9 students take 8 classes inside the timetable + Digital Literacy 10 outside the regular schedule. \*They sign-up up for the 'extra classes' (ie: Music, Agility,..) on the same course selection form (middle schools will complete in February or early March)

- Digital Literacy 10 is taken by all grade 9 students (this course is now a part of all SD43 secondary schools). We have been running this program for 5 years, so we are a fully 1-to-1 school now meaning that every student in our school brings a laptop to school to enhance their learning. It is a Coquitlam On-Line course taught by our teachers and students receive 4 Gr 10 level credits for completing it. Along with teaching the students Digital Citizenship, the course helps students create a digital portfolio they can use as part of their Gr 12 Capstone project.

\*\*We work extremely hard to build the best schedule possible for each student. It is an extremely complex process. Over 1300 students squeezed into an 8-block grid. Plus, each of the kids has a unique set of requests. Some of which will conflict with each other depending on where the courses land within the schedule (ie: if a student chooses Japanese 9 and Ceramics 9 and there is only one of each class offered and they are offered in the same block, the student can only get one of them...).

- As a rule, students are expected to stay in the courses once they start them. We do not allow off blocks and changing classes after they begin is usually not possible for a variety of reasons (the main one being class size and composition rules, but also space limitations and lack of course options in the same block). Students are expected to be resilient and work hard in all of their classes. You never know when they will be surprised and find unexpected joy in an area they never considered before. If they don't enjoy it, they still are expected to persevere and make the best of it – this is an important life skill.
- We base our staffing and schedule on the selection forms so changing your mind after the fact can be extremely problematic.

### **11. Which Language courses are required for University entrance?**

- Many institutions do not require a language, but students should do their own research on this. We also have an AMAZING post-secondary advisor at HWSS (Ms. Butler). As you progress towards graduation you can meet with her to discuss options).
- It so happens that SFU and UBC do have language requirements:
- SFU requires an Intro Language 11 (course designed for students with no previous experience in the language)
- UBC requires a regular Language 11 course (students either take the 9, 10, 11 level of a language course or have the option of taking the Intro 11 version of the course, followed by the regular 11 level).

- Students coming in with well-developed language skills (ie: former Frim students or native French speakers, for example, ...) may arrange for a placement test allowing them to start at higher level.

**12. If a student tries a different language (ie: Spanish 9) and does not like it, can they revert back to French 9?**

- It may be possible if it worked out that Spanish was in Semester 1 and French was offered in Semester 2, and there was space in the French class, and the block that French was in didn't mess up the rest of the student's schedule. An unlikely scenario. It is more likely that the student would have to pick up French 9 on-line somewhere and then take French 10 the next year or they could wait and take Intro 11.

**13. If my child is an elite athlete or performer and has an intense schedule, can the school schedule be adjusted to accommodate their participation in the outside program?**

- Epic program status: this is available for elite level performers that are required to miss an inordinate amount of school because of their training/competition schedules. If you think our child may require this type of accommodation you can contact VP Mr. Rao for more information regarding the application ([mr Rao@sd43.bc.ca](mailto:mr Rao@sd43.bc.ca)).

\*A typical example would be a student that only attends ½ days with us and completes the rest of their courses on-line because of their training/competition schedule.

\*\*This does not apply to kids with "busy" extra-curricular schedules (dance, soccer, etc.) that do not conflict with the school day.

Hopefully, this answers more of your questions. Later in the year I will send some more information regarding September start-up.

Take care,

Todd Clerkson

Principal

HWSS