

École Ballenas Secondary School



Essential Information 2025-26

School Mission Statement

We are committed to providing our students with a common core of learning opportunities and to creating a learning environment which recognizes, understands, and appreciates students' individual and collective intellectual, emotional, physical and social needs as well as their potential.

School Motto

“Building Successful Students”

School Goal

“At BSS, we are engaged in developing the skills of lifelong learning.”

School Administration Personnel

- **LEADERSHIP TEAM**

- Ms. Trish Cathrine: Principal (Grade 12)
- Ms. Heather Deering: Vice-Principal (Grade 8-11 A-L)
- Mr. Mario Tenisci: Vice-Principal (Grade 8-11 M-Z)

- **CLERICAL STAFF**

- CLERICAL Ms. Carmella Snyder
- CLERICAL Ms. Leah McMillan
- ACCOUNTS Ms. Sarah Orr
- COUNSELLING Ms. Nicole Sletto
- CAREER CENTRE Ms. Ashley Bowater
- LIBRARY CLERK Ms. Allyson Daly

CODE OF CONDUCT

The École Ballenas Secondary School has been developed in collaboration with staff, students, and parents and guardians to maintain a safe, caring, and orderly school environment, as per the Ministry of Education and Childcare guidelines, and in support of Qualicum School District policy, and the laws of BC and Canada. As well, it reflects Sections 7 and 8 of the BC Human Rights Code, which protects the rights of all individuals from discrimination based on race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, religion, marital status, family status, physical or mental disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, and age.

We are a community that celebrates and values the diversity of our members

Expectation Matrix

We Respect Others by:	We Respect Ourselves by:	We Respect this Place by:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Treating others with respect and dignity ✓ Respecting others' privacy ✓ Communicating respectfully and using kind words ✓ Following the guidance and direction of school staff ✓ Being an upstander vs a bystander ✓ Understanding that any form of discrimination will not be tolerated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Striving to get adequate sleep and proper nutrition ✓ Prioritizing our mental health and learning ✓ Prioritizing attendance and engagement in class ✓ Staying home when we are sick ✓ Recognizing that vaping, smoking and substance use is harmful for our growing brain and body ✓ Accepting policies that are in place to keep everyone safe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Using school materials, library books and devices with care. ✓ Keeping our classrooms, shared spaces, playgrounds and community clean and free from litter and vandalism. ✓ Moving safely around the campus and respecting the personal space of others – this includes walking your wheels ✓ Being aware that we are members of the community and need to contribute positively to our neighbourhood and town.

When we make mistakes we:

We take responsibility for our actions and impact. We work to make amends to whomever or whatever was harmed and we solve conflicts peacefully. We move forward and learn from our mistakes.

Behaviours We Do Not Accept:

Vaping or smoking on school property; bullying, cyberbullying, racism, harassment, intimidation, threatening or violent behaviours; weapons, including replica weapons at school; the possession or use of drugs, alcohol or paraphernalia

Safe Reporting:

The Board of Education for the Qualicum School District will take reasonable steps to prevent retaliation by a person against a student who had made a complaint of a breach of the Code of Conduct

Responsibility to Inform Other Parties:

School officials may have the responsibility to advise other parties/agencies of serious breaches of the Code of Conduct, including parents, school district officials, RCMP and MCFD.

Distraction Free Learning Environment:

Ecole Ballenas Secondary School recognizes the impact of personal digital devices (any device that can be used to communicate or access the internet) on focused learning environments and online safety for students. Use of personal digital devices is restricted during instructional time at Ecole Ballenas Secondary School.

Devices may only be used at teacher request for instructional purposes, for student accessibility and accommodation needs, or for medical and health needs. At all other times, the devices must be put away, out of sight and in a secure location. An educative and progressive response plan will be developed to support students who struggle with meeting the expectations of digital devices.

Range of Responses to Unacceptable Behaviour:

Supporting students' academic, social-emotional and physical development is essential. Whenever possible, we strive to focus on responses that are **restorative rather than punitive**.

Responses will consider the student's age, maturity, and special needs. Special considerations may apply to students with special needs who are unable to comply with a code of conduct due to having a disability of an intellectual, physical, sensory, emotional, or behavioural nature.

Suspension

In accordance with the School Act, Sec. 85(2) (ii) and (d) the Board authorizes the Principal or designate of any school in the district to suspend a student from attendance at school for up to five days. Suspensions may be for the following reasons:

- a. because a student is willfully and repeatedly disrespectful to a teacher or to any other employee of the Board carrying out responsibilities approved by the Board.
- b. because the behaviour of the student breaches the [District Code of Conduct](#) or policy and/or has a harmful effect on others or the learning environment of the school.
- c. because the student has failed to comply with the School Code of Conduct.

Suspensions over five days are made in consultation with the appropriate Director of Instruction as per the District Student Code of Conduct, AP 350. As per AP 350 6. 7.1 an educational program must be provided

Dear Students and Families,

As you are aware, all school district buildings, grounds, buses, and vehicles parked on school property are required by law to be smoke free at all times. In addition to contravening the Provincial laws and our school and district Codes of Conduct, we are also concerned about the possible future adverse health effects from vaping, which are becoming more widely known as new research becomes available.

In response to concerns from students, parents, and staff, we are implementing some additional responses to help enforce our school's Code of Conduct. Therefore, this notice is serving as fair warning to families regarding disciplinary measures we will be enforcing. Our primary focus will be on the students who are vaping in the washrooms; however, students who continue to vape on school property will be subject to progressive discipline as outlined by Board Policy 701, Student Discipline.

The following actions will be in place after our May long weekend:

1. First offense:

- a. Vape is confiscated
- b. Parent/guardian contact
- c. Educational package to complete with follow up meeting with school counsellor or CYCW

2. Second offense:

- a. Vape is confiscated
- b. Parent/guardian contact
- c. In-school suspension
- d. District meeting at school site with school Administration before return to classes

3. Third offense:

- a. Vape is confiscated
- b. Parent/guardian meeting
- c. Out of school suspension
- d. District meeting at school site with school Administration before return to classes

4. Fourth offense:

- a. Vape is confiscated
- b. Parent/guardian meeting
- c. Out of school suspension
- d. District review meeting to discuss educational path



BSS IS A CELL-PHONE FREE ZONE DURING INSTRUCTIONAL TIME

THIS INCLUDES ALL LEARNING SPACES

PLEASE USE CELL PHONES BEFORE/AFTER SCHOOL, AT LUNCH AND
CLASS CHANGE TIMES ONLY



BSS CELL-PHONE USE POLICY

NO CELL AFTER THE BELL

In response to the Ministry of Education's announcement about electronic devices, BSS has established a "No Cell After the Bell" practice which we request parents and students respectfully follow. Concerns related to depression, disengagement (educational and social), empty affirmations, and the very real circumstance of cyberbullying has prompted this shift. **Students may still bring their devices to school and can access their personal technology at appropriate times and if students have specific learning/health needs as outlined in their IEPs, or medical documentation.**

- All BSS classrooms and learning spaces will be designated **CELL-PHONE FREE ZONES** during **instructional time**.
- Cell phones **ARE** allowed before or after school, on lunch break, and during transition time between classes.
- When classes are in session, cellphones should remain out of sight off in silent mode.
- The district and school are not responsible for any damaged, lost, or stolen electronic devices such as cellphones.
- This policy does not preclude the use of cellphones under teacher supervision due to "special circumstance" such as for the production of project/inquiry work when no other suitable technology is available. Teacher permission will always be required in such circumstances.
- For incoming and outgoing communication that require an immediate response, such as emergencies, please use the school office for communication.

PROGRESSIVE STEPS:

Note that ALL adults in our school (regardless of the position they hold here) are tasked with maintaining our learning environment. Should an adult make a reasonable request to a student regarding cellphones, ex: "Please put away your cell phone", then failure to comply will result in a progressive discipline process that follows district policy:

- **FIRST TIME:** Student is asked to put the phone away. Staff to record incident.
- **SECOND TIME:** Student is asked to put the phone away; parent contact is initiated.
- **THIRD TIME:** Student is referred to the office; Administration will work with the student and family. Replacement activities and behaviours will be developed.
- **FOURTH TIME:** Parent and student have meeting with administration to create a **PERSONAL ELECTRONICS PLAN**

PROGRESSIVE STEPS:

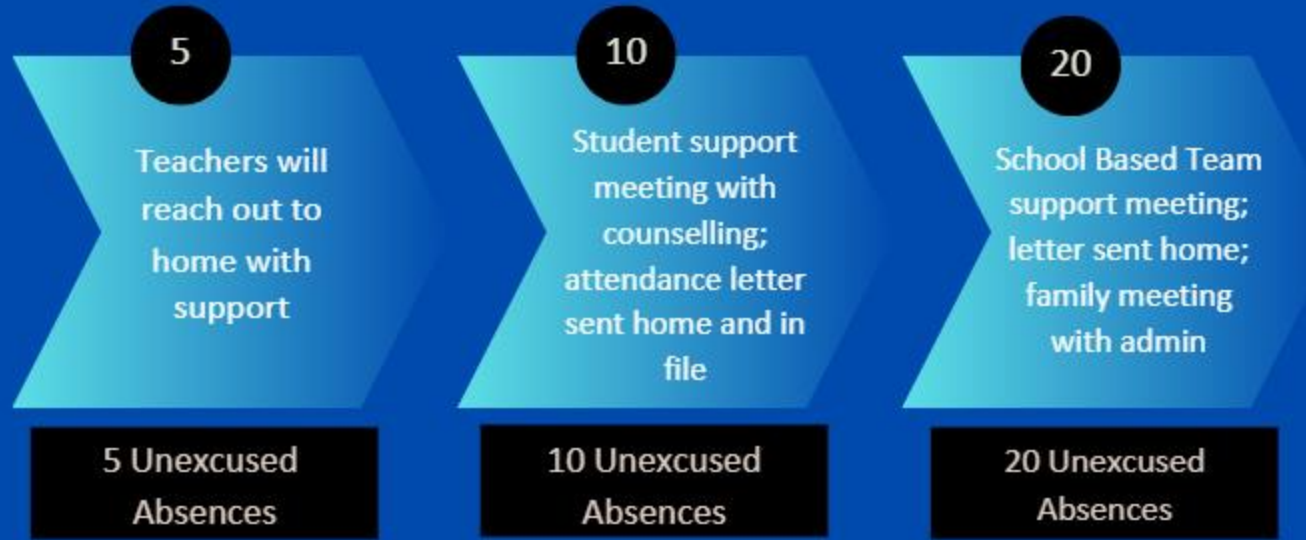
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Attendance

- *A student's absence must be addressed by an email (BSSAttendance@sd69.bc.ca) or a phone call to the school attendance line (248-5721 extension 1) from a parent/guardian within 48 hours of the absence*
- **HOW TO ACCESS THE VOICE MAIL SYSTEM**
- 1. Dial into the school (250-248-5721).
- 2. Press "1" to access the Attendance Message Centre.
- 3. When you hear the prompt, leave your attendance information. Please state the date of the absence, student's name, reason for absence, parent/guardian name and phone number.
- As well, parents have the option of sending an absentee note to the attendance clerical instead of phoning the school. Please email BSSAttendance@sd69.bc.ca

Attendance Support at BSS



Regular, consistent attendance is important at Ballenas. We know that there are sometimes barriers that get in the way.

We are here to help support you in this. When we know, we can do. We want you here, and want to support you in any way to be here.

Counseling Center

The aim of the Counselling Centre is to provide service and support to students and parents in the following areas:

- Student Registration, Course Planning and Advising, Graduation Requirements, Post-Secondary Advisement/Applications, Scholarships and Bursaries, Mental Health Support and Personal Counselling, Liaison and Referrals with Community Agencies

Counsellors:

- **Ms. Shannon Confortin— A-H**
- **Mr. Konrad Langenmaier— I-M**
- **Ms. Norberta Heinrichs—N-Z**
- **Ms. Carrie Philip—International**

Interim Transcript of Grades

- Current students can request copies of their Interim Transcript of Grades from the Counselling Office Clerical. These Interim Transcript of Grades contain all completed courses at the Grade 10, 11 and 12 level which lead towards graduation requirements. They also include all courses which are scheduled for the current year. Failures and withdrawals are not included
- Please note it is the responsibility of the student, not the school, to ensure the Interim Transcript of Grades is received by the post-secondary institution. It is not the practice of the school to mail, fax, or email the Interim Transcript of Grades unless there are extenuating circumstances. In no instances will the school email an Interim Transcript of Grades to a student. Students are encouraged to access their transcript via the Ministry of Education and Childcare's [Student Transcript Service](#). This will facilitate their marks submissions to the post-secondary institutions

Career Center

The aim of the Career Center is to provide the following services to students:

- Access to current information on careers and labor market trends
- Course planning and advising
- Transition planning-meeting requirements for post-secondary programs and preparation for the world of work
- Post-secondary liaison service – information on colleges and universities and assistance in selection of programs
- Psychometric testing to assist students with career options
- Work experience placement
- Train in Trades information and placement
- Coordination of all career preparation programs
- Apprenticeship program coordination
- The career center is available to students on a drop-in basis. Parents are encouraged to access this support as well

- **Career Counsellor:** Mr. Greg Muirhead
- **Career Assistant:** Ms. Ashley Bowater

Learning Commons



Students have access to the Learning Commons from 8:30am to 3:30 pm



LEARNING COMMONS aims to provide the following services to students and staff:

- a current collection of books and other print and digital resources
- equipment and facilities for the various needs of students and staff (table space, quiet space, lab space, etc.)
- information services to support students to develop research and information management skills. Developing information management skills is an ongoing goal of the Learning Commons



COMPUTER LAB:

is available to classes and to individual students who require the use of . Students using this lab are subject to the rules and policies that guide acceptable device use at BSS



LAPTOPS/DEVICES: are available for classes and individual students to sign out for the purposes of supporting their learning



Teacher Librarian: Ms. Mindy Holman

General Information

Lost & Found

- A Lost and Found box is located in the main foyer. Students are notified of periodic “Lost and Found cleanouts” via the announcements and have several weeks to look for lost items before they are donated to charity
- **Large sums of money or valuables should not be brought to school. Valuables should be locked in lockers when students are in PE classes**

Lockers

- It is not mandatory that students use a school locker, however those who want to rent a locker and a lock may do so for a \$5 fee. Lockers are limited, and available on a first come, first served basis. All lockers MUST use a school supplied lock. Students are responsible for the condition of the locker and should return their lock to the office at the end of the school year for a \$2 refund. Please do not leave items on top of lockers

School Locker Use

- Administrative Procedure Policy No. 700AP: The Board believes that school officials must be able to respond quickly and effectively to problems that arise in schools in order to protect students and to provide the orderly atmosphere required for learning. A student locker search may be undertaken if there are reasonable grounds to believe that a school rule has been or is being violated and that evidence of the violation will be found in the student’s locker

Textbooks

- Textbooks are issued near the end of the first week of each semester. Textbooks are on loan to students and it is expected that students will handle them with care. A fee will be charged for the replacement of textbooks that have been lost or damaged beyond normal wear and tear. At the end of the semester, students are expected to return the textbook when they no longer need it

Textbook and Student Activity Fees

- A textbook fee of \$40 will be charged to each student at the start of each school year at Ballenas. This fee will be returned to the student at the end of each school year, as long as all resources have been handed back in. A Student Activity fee of \$10 is charged to students to help support the costs of student events held throughout the school year. This fee will entitle students to a school ID card.

Graduation and Student Schedules

Graduation and Schedule Guidelines

- In order to participate in the commencement ceremonies, a student must be in the position to graduate by June 1st of their graduation year.
- This means:
 - The student is enrolled in the courses necessary to earn the required 80 credits
 - The student is in the position to pass the required courses
 - If the student is taking courses online, the student has completed at least two-thirds of the course work by June 1st. (CEAP will take you out of courses that have not been started)
- **Students in Grade 12 need to book a Grad Review appointment in counselling soon after the year begins to ensure they are on track to meet graduation requirements.**
- Students in grades 8 to 10 are required to take eight courses within the timetable unless on a partial program based on support needs
- Students in grade 11 and 12 are encouraged to take a full course load as well. Grade 11 and 12 students may apply for one study block which will be in one of the following forms. To apply for a study block, you must meet with a counsellor and complete the request form
- **In School**—students are assigned to a supervised study area in the library during this block.
- **Out of School**—students are required are required to leave the school and school grounds during this block.
- Students cannot self-drop courses; course changes are limited. Any conversation about course changes needs to be via a meeting with counsellors.
- ***Students in a study block must be off-campus or in the library. They may not be in the halls or parking area. An application for a study block does not ensure acceptance. Course load, past attendance and work habits will be considered on the application.***

Helpful Hints

Tips for Students

- We asked our group of high school students to tell us what they wish someone would have told them as they were starting high school:
- *“Get each semester off to a good start. I have this habit of not working very hard at the beginning of the semester, and then I have to work like crazy to bring my marks up. This semester, I got off to a good start in all of my classes. My marks are a lot better, and I’m not all stressed out about having to bring my marks up.”*
- *“Don’t get caught up in the social scene and don’t worry about being part of the “in” crowd. Choose friends who have similar interests and who you can be yourself with.”*
- *“Get involved. I’ve had a lot more fun during my last two years because I’ve gotten involved in activities. I wish I would have been more involved earlier.”*
- *“Choose your courses carefully and don’t wait until your last year to think about what you’re going to do after you graduate.”*
- *“Think about the consequences of what you’re doing. In Grade 10, I got caught drinking a beer during soccer season and I wasn’t allowed to practice or play for two weeks. I felt like I let my team down, and it killed me to just watch the games and not be able to play.”*
- *“Don’t be afraid to ask for help if you need it. I’m not very good at math, and last year I struggled the whole year. This year I have a tutor and I’m doing a lot better.” J*
- *“Don’t wish your high school years away, it goes really fast. Enjoy it.”*

Student Concerns: Steps for Resolving Student-Teacher Difficulties

STUDENT CONCERNS WITH TEACHERS:

It is not unusual for a student to have differences with a teacher. Most students resolve those differences through discussion with the teacher. In the event that a student is not able to resolve the matter they should be aware that the following process is available to them. When a student is not satisfied with the results at one of the levels, then they can proceed to the next step.

STEP #1

- The student discusses the matter with the teacher.
- There are some circumstances in which the student may not feel comfortable discussing the issue with the teacher.
- They then begin at Step #2.

STEP #2

- Discuss the issue with one of the following:
- Parent/Caregiver, homeroom teacher, Vice Principal, another student, CYCW or Indigenous Education Advocate
- The staff member chosen will assist in deciding upon a plan of action. The student may wish to have a Parent/Caregiver attend this meeting
- In most circumstances the plan of action will include meeting with the teacher, with an advocate present to assist the student

STEP #3

- Discuss the issue with Ms. Cathrine, the Ballenas Secondary School Principal.

STEP #4

- If a student believes a decision adversely affects her/his education, health or safety, they may appeal the decision. The procedure for such an appeal is outlined in School District Policy 710; copies are available in the office

Communication of Student Learning (End of Semester/Year)

GRADES 10-12

A - 86-100%

B - 73-85%

C+ - 67-72%

C - 60-66%

C- - 50-59%

<50%

IE Insufficient Evidence of Learning

GRADES 8/9

EMERGING	DEVELOPING	PROFICIENT	EXTENDING
The student demonstrates an initial understanding of the concepts and competencies relevant to the expected learning	The student demonstrates a partial understanding of the concepts and competencies relevant to the expected learning	The student demonstrates a complete understanding of the concepts and competencies relevant to the expected learning	The student demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of the concepts and competencies relevant to the expected learning.

RECOGNITION OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

- **PRINCIPAL'S LIST:** An average of 90% or better or consistently "Extending" in classes
- **HONOUR ROLL:** An average of 80% or better or consistently "Proficient" in all classes

IE Plan (Insufficient Evidence of Learning)

An “IE” plan is used to alert parents, caregivers, and students when students, for a variety of reasons, have not provided sufficient evidence of learning in relation to the learning standards.

This means that teachers do not have enough information to adequately assess a student. Students may be required to complete past assignments or complete an alternative assignment or demonstrate their learning in a manner that may be different from the initial assignment or assessment.

Students will have the opportunity to work on IE Plans during Flex time and will be assigned to specific teachers/spaces in order to complete their IE Plans

We encourage students to take extra time at home to help complete the IE Plans as well

IE Plans have a due date that will be set by the teacher. Should the due date of the IE Plan not be met, a meeting will take place with the school counselor and vice principal to determine next steps.

Parent Advisory Council (PAC)

- All schools in the Qualicum School District have a Parent Advisory Council, and any parent with a child in school is a member of the school PAC. The PAC serves in an advisory capacity to the school to further enhance and support the education of all students within the school
- The Ballenas PAC meets on the **second Tuesday evening of each month** and meetings are open to all members of the school community. Parents are the only voting members of the PAC. The Ballenas PAC discusses and makes recommendations on issues which are brought forward by parents, students, staff and administrators
- The PAC holds a gaming license which benefits many groups in the school and PAC members also participate whenever they can in school spirit activities. Parents wishing to discuss issues with a PAC representative may attend our monthly PAC meeting or leave a written note in the PAC mailbox in the school office



Athletics

Fall	Winter	Spring
Cross Country	Ski/Snowboard	Mountain Biking
Football	Basketball – Boys/Girls	Golf
Soccer - Boys		Soccer - Girls
Volleyball – Boys/Girls		Track and Field

We urge all students to get involved in extracurricular opportunities

- Ballenas Secondary School has active athletic programs, both intramural (within the school) and extramural (competition with other schools). Intramurals emphasize participation, fitness, and fun. It runs periodically at lunchtime throughout the school year
- The extramural program, which emphasizes skill development, teamwork, and competition, is more extensive. It allows students with the ability and interest to compete, as part of a team, against other schools in British Columbia. Successful competition allows winning teams to progress towards the provincial finals. Students who intend to join a school team should understand that time and commitment to the team is required in order to be a contributing member
- As participation on a school team demands travel, athletes have a responsibility for maintaining work in classes missed.
- NOTE: Students participating in the extramural program are required to participate in fundraising activities and are responsible for travel, food, and lodging costs on trips away from Parksville. Individual coaches will discuss financial information with their teams

Outside School Supports

It takes a community ...

- The phone numbers provided will assist students who are experiencing personal difficulties. People who are there to listen to youth and to offer support and information if necessary will answer the phone. Callers do not have to identify themselves and the services are free.

Contact Information

Crisis Line (Parksville)

(250) 248-3111

Child's Help Line

310-1234 (no charge & no area code needed)

Vancouver Island Youth Line (24-hour)

1-888-494-3888 or www.youthspace.ca

Child and Youth Mental Health

(250) 954-4745

Ministry for Children & Families

(250) 954-4737

Sources

(250) 752-6766 (Office)

1-888-534-2322 (Message)

Youth Against Violence Line

1-800-680-4264

Substance Abuse Hotline

(250) 248-8300

Alcohol & Drug Info Line

1-800-663-1441

Turning Point

(250) 248-9273

RCMP

(250) 248-6111

Victim Services (RCMP)

(250) 954-2277

Victim's Information Line

1-800-563-0808