

Matthew McNair Secondary School

GRADE 8 PROGRAM PLANNING GUIDE

2025 - 2026



Website: mcnair.sd38.bc.ca

Phone: 604-668-6575

Principal: Mr. M. Jaswal
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Counsellors: Ms. D. Ozla (A-L), Ms. K. Louie (M-Z)

Table of Contents

Purpose of this Booklet	1
Principal’s Message	2
Grade 8 Requirements	3
General Information	3
Grade 8 Courses	5
Mini School (for Highly Motivated Students)	7
Complementing the Curriculum	8
Student Services	9
Dates to Remember	10

Purpose of this Booklet

The Purpose of this booklet is to provide students and parents with an overview of the grade 8 course offerings at Matthew McNair Secondary School. It is intended to help students and their parents choose the most appropriate courses for the coming school year. Some courses must be taken to meet the graduation requirements of the Ministry of Education, while others will be chosen to meet individual future interests and goals.

Matthew McNair Secondary School

Principal's Message

Welcome to Matthew McNair Secondary School, home of the Marlins! As the grad class of 2030, this is the first time for you to connect with each other and experience what life is going to be like over the next 5 years. High school is a very exciting time in a young person's life, and McNair is a great place to experience all that a fantastic school can offer.

There are many opportunities here that will be of interest to you. We offer a comprehensive program of school sports (Basketball, Volleyball, Table Tennis, Soccer, Rugby to name just a few), we have very strong Theatre and Music programs, we also have excellent Arts Education classes, Business and Technology Education programs, Modern Languages, Home Economics, a Culinary Arts program, and a comprehensive Mini-school program (comprised of enriched learning experiences with an outdoor education component). This is all above our standard complement of Academic courses (Math, Science, English, Social Studies, and Physical & Health Education), all of which offer our students a first-rate education from our friendly, dedicated, and professional teaching staff.

We are very much looking forward to working with you over the next five years and want to encourage you to get involved and make positive connections, memories and relationships with both staff and other students as you move through your high school years.

McNair Secondary School is a great place to learn and we are happy to have you join our community.

Sincerely,

Mr. Michael Jaswal

Costs Associated with Courses

Please note: Basic materials required to fulfill learning outcomes in all courses will be provided to students free of charge. Should students wish to use other or additional supplies, these may be purchased directly or through the school on a cost-recovery basis. Students wishing to take home or consume completed project work may do so on a cost-recovery basis. Students will be asked to pay costs in connection with optional field trips. Please contact Mr. Jaswal, Principal, for any further information. Thank you.

Grade 8 Requirements

Students will be enrolled in eight (8) required courses each year.

- English 8
- Mathematics 8
- Physical & Health Education 8
- Science 8
- Social Studies 8
- French 8
- Elective Wheel (2 blocks):
 Combination of Art, Drama, Music, Home Economics, Tech. Ed., and Business
- Band 8 (optional)

General Information

REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

Grade 7 students living in McNair's catchment and attending a McNair feeder school will automatically be registered in the spring to enter grade 8 at McNair in September. Grade 7 students living in McNair's catchment who are attending other elementary schools will be contacted by our counsellors. Information will be sent to families in August explaining back-to-school procedures and dates.

TRANSFER APPLICATIONS

Students who are not residing in the McNair catchment area must apply to attend McNair by submitting a transfer application form by **February 28, 2025**.

Counsellors will be available in the school to assist students with course planning and timetable adjustments during the last week of the summer. An appointment is necessary.

CURRENT YEAR BELL SCHEDULES

Regular timetable

8:30 – 9:40	Block A
9:45 – 10:20	Flex
10:25 – 11:35	Block B
11:35 – 11:50	Break
11:55 – 1:05	Block C
1:05 – 1:45	Lunch
1:50 – 3:00	Block D

Collaboration Day*

8:30 – 9:50	Staff Collaboration Time
9:55 – 10:55	Block A
11:00 – 12:00	Block B
12:00 – 12:15	Break
12:20 – 1:20	Block C
1:20 – 1:55	Lunch
2:00 – 3:00	Block D

*Collaboration Day is the first Wednesday of every month except September.

Matthew McNair Secondary School

COURSE LOAD

All Grade 8 students carry a full schedule of classes – 4 courses every day. Any exceptions to this schedule requirement must be approved by the principal.

ATTENDANCE


Regular attendance is an essential element of success. Vacations should be taken during the scheduled breaks in the school year. Absences at other times cannot be authorized and the loss of time may have serious impacts on learning.

REPORTING AND EVALUATION

Formal Learning Updates are issued in November, February, April, and June (at the end of each term). Informal Learning Updates are typically sent home in October and March. Updates may also be requested from and, in some instances, will be initiated by the teacher at any time during the school year.

Students should always know how they are progressing in all subjects. To help in this process, teachers provide regular and ongoing feedback on learning and skill development. Students should pay attention to the feedback given and use this information to focus their skill development on the areas suggested by the teacher.

All grade eight classes will be evaluated using the Ministry of Education Proficiency Scale. At the beginning of each semester, teachers will share course-specific criteria for each level of the Proficiency Scale with students and parents.

Proficiency Scale				
	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.

Grade 8 Courses

ENGLISH 8

English 8 is a required course that builds the foundations of students' core reading, writing, listening, speaking, and critical thinking skills. Course content will cover a wide range of literature in various genres. Studying and responding to these texts will help students develop both their comprehension and composition abilities, as well as their vocabulary and grammatical knowledge.

SOCIAL STUDIES 8

Social Studies 8 examines the development of our world from the 7th Century to 1750 through the Dark Ages, the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and the Age of Exploration. Students are encouraged to be active informed citizens who can think critically, understand, and explain the perspectives of others, make judgements and communicate ideas effectively. The geography portion of this course will emphasize the use of mapping skills, interpretation of charts, graphs and tables and the understanding of geographic terminology.

PHYSICAL & HEALTH EDUCATION 8

The Physical and Health Education 8 (PHE 8) curriculum aims to empower students to develop a personalized understanding of what healthy living means to them as individuals and members of society in the 21st century. The PHE curriculum focuses on well-being — the connections between physical, intellectual, mental, and social health. This class will promote a deeper and more holistic understanding of overall health and well-being in students.

MATHEMATICS 8

In Math 8, students improve their understanding of proportional reasoning, number operations, measurement, geometry, algebra, and financial mathematics through the ongoing development of curricular competencies: reasoning & analyzing, understanding & solving, communicating & representing, and connecting & reflecting. Developing these curricular competencies will be the instructional focus in the course.

SCIENCE 8

In Science 8, an engaging exploration of foundational scientific concepts, students will actively develop science inquiry skills and enhance scientific literacy through hands-on laboratory experiments and comprehensive lab reports. The curriculum also includes stimulating inquiry projects, collaborative group presentations, and assessments to reinforce understanding. Join us on this dynamic journey to cultivate a passion for scientific exploration and critical thinking. Topics covered include: safety, the scientific method, life processes within cells, behavior of matter, light energy, and plate tectonics.

FRENCH 8

Learn to communicate in French! This course teaches French at an introductory level, and uses situations and themes familiar to students to encourage authentic practice and connection to the language. Emphasis is placed on communication and speaking as well as common cultural practices. Students will create an interactive notebook to help relate to and organize their newly developed language skills.

Matthew McNair Secondary School

GRADE 8 ELECTIVE WHEEL

This is a full year exploratory course in which all Grade 8 students will gain experience in the FINE ARTS and APPLIED SKILLS subjects: Art, Business Education, Drama, Home Economics, Music, and Technology Education for 6 weeks each.

Applied Design, Skills, and Technologies 8

This is an exploratory course in which all Grade 8 students experience ADST subjects such as Business 8, Home Economics 8, and Technology Education 8.

Arts Education 8

This is an exploratory course in which all Grade 8 students will gain experience in the fine arts subjects: Art, Drama, and Music. Students will spend one-third of a semester in each of the above areas of study. The music portion of Fine Arts will focus on guitar performance, basic music theory, rhythm, and listening.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING (ELL)

Students who do not have English as their first language must acquire the skills of Levels One to Three in the ELL program before enrolling in an English Language Arts class. Students in Level Three will take a Social Studies course concurrently with Intermediate ELL. Students in Level Four will take English Language Arts concurrently with ELL English. Students will receive the following number of blocks of support per year for each level:

Level 1: Level 2: Level 3: Level 4:
3 blocks 3 blocks 2 blocks 1 block
Level 5: Support provided through a non-enrolling teacher

CAREER EDUCATION 8 & 9

The Career Education 8 and 9 curriculum address education and careers, healthy living and relationships, safety and injury prevention and substance misuse prevention. Learning standards for Career Education 8 & 9 are covered within Grade 8 required courses and through assemblies, guest speakers, and special events.

ORCHESTRAL STRINGS 8-12

Violin, viola, cello and string bass players are welcome. Bowing techniques, orchestral ensemble playing, and performance techniques will be studied through a wide variety of music. Listening skills will be strongly emphasized through organized school field trips and study of famous string players. Performances by orchestra will be an important element of the class. This course is open to beginners. One auditioned piano player will be accepted into this course.

JUNIOR CONCERT BAND

In this course, students will have the opportunity to continue their music studies as a continuation from an elementary band class or from private study. Various performance, listening, and music creation activities will be introduced through a rich selection of band literature. Beginners are welcome in this class but should consult with the teacher before selecting an instrument. We meet one lunch time and one after school per week. **Any students electing to take Band 8 must take it in addition to the required Grade 8 course load.** See our website: mcnairmusic.ca for more information.

Mini School (for Highly Motivated Students)

The McNair Mini School is a five-year program beginning in Grade 8. The selection process for this exciting program begins each January.

PHILOSOPHY

The McNair Mini School is designed to challenge academically able, motivated students with an enriched course of studies in a cohesive setting. The curriculum will be enriched to develop critical thinking skills, creativity, and independence. McNair Mini School graduates have an enviable record of achievement. They have won many scholarships and been accepted to many prestigious post-secondary institutions.

Just as intellectual progress is vital to each student's future; so too is the social aspect of each student's development. There are three major field trips each year designed to foster the acquisition of essential attitudes: leadership, responsibility, initiative, cooperation, and mutual respect. Service to the community will be encouraged. Although the students remain together for their core courses, they retain access to all the elective courses, facilities, clubs, and teams of McNair. We believe that these students should play an important part in the environment of the school. Grade seven students must apply by February 10, 2025, to be eligible for this program in Grade 8.

Matthew McNair Secondary School

Complementing the Curriculum

LIBRARY

Matthew McNair Secondary School has a large, fully computerized library facility located in the center of the school. Teachers often book their entire subject-area classes into the library to begin research projects or get instruction/lessons on certain aspects of research work. Teachers also send small groups of students to the library for a variety of reasons (e.g., to get books for individual research work, special help from the librarian, and reading guidance).

ATHLETICS

The objectives of Matthew McNair's Athletics Program are:

1. to contribute toward the improvement of the health, fitness, and general welfare of the student athlete.
2. to engage a maximum number of students in both the administrative and activity areas of the program.
3. to stimulate all participants to progress academically and to make a contribution to the general education program of the school.
4. to encourage the development of leadership, sportsmanship, and citizenship in each student athlete.

The athletics program offers the students of Matthew McNair a wide and varied selection of team and individual activities:

Fall Season

Cross Country	All Grades
Rugby	Gr. 8 Jr. Boys
Soccer	Sr. Boys
Swimming	Jr. & Sr.
Volleyball	Gr. 8, 9, Jr. & Sr. Girls

Winter Season

Basketball	All Grades
Table Tennis	All Grades

Spring Season

Badminton	Jr. & Sr.
Golf	All Grades
Rugby	Jr. & Sr. Boys
Soccer	Sr. Girls
Tennis	All Grades
Track & Field	All Grades
Ultimate	All Grades
Volleyball	Gr. 8, 9, Boys

Student Services

The goal of our Student Services is to support and enhance the academic, personal, social, and vocational development of students.

COUNSELLING CENTRE

Counsellors provide support as well as assist students to check their records as they progress towards graduation and advise individuals of any problems that might hinder graduation. The alphabetic breakdown of students assigned for each counsellor is by first letter of the student's last name:

A – L Ms. D. Ozla

M – Z

Ms. K. Louie

**For purposes of checking records and interviewing, students are assigned to specific counsellors. Students are welcome to work with either counsellor regarding personal concerns.

Counsellors provide support in the following areas:

Personal:

- Crisis counselling involving home or school problems
- Resolving problems arising from difficulties related to class and/or school routines and policies
- Inter-community referrals to qualified specialists who may offer additional assistance

Educational:

- Course planning leading to graduation, post-secondary education, and employment
- Arranging assistance for students experiencing academic difficulties
- Providing scholarship information and applications

Career:

- Referring students to prospective employers who have contacted the school
- Exploring career alternatives and checking for prerequisite courses and requirements for various occupations

Students may make appointments with the counsellors during school hours, before or after school, and at lunch. Parents are also welcome to phone counsellors if they have any questions or concerns or to make an appointment.

RESOURCE/APPLIED LEARNING STRATEGIES

Resource teachers provide assistance to students who are experiencing significant difficulties in all or most areas of their learning. Students in the Applied Learning Strategies Program are enrolled in core academic and elective programs and receive direct support from resource teachers. Support is also provided by working with the student and teachers in their classrooms. Teachers, counsellors, parents, and students can make referrals for support. Students in Applied Learning Strategies will develop skills to help promote learning success in all classes.

Dates to Remember

Jan-Feb	2025	<p>Feeder School Visits Counsellors, teachers, and current students will visit all elementary schools that feed into Matthew McNair Secondary School. The Team will introduce all that McNair has to offer, both academically and socially. The counsellors will start programming the grade seven students for the Fall Semester by giving them course descriptions and option sheets that will be completed by all grade seven students and their parents.</p>
February 6,	2025	<p>Open House Night and Parent Information Meeting All students currently in Grade 7 and their parents are welcome to come visit Matthew McNair Secondary School for more information on the programs offered to not just Grade 8 students, but students in all grades.</p>
February 6,	2025	<p>Mini School Program Information Meeting Please check the Mini School website (https://mcnairminischool.wordpress.com/) for updates</p>
February 10,	2025	<p>McNair Mini-School Applications Due</p>
February 18/19,	2025	<p>McNair Mini-School Interviews</p>
February 12,	2025	<p>Grade 8 Course Selection Sheets Due to Grade 7 Teachers</p>
February 28,	2025	<p>Round 1 School Transfer Application Deadline</p>
March 10/11,	2025	<p>Grade 7 Basketball Tournament at McNair</p>
May	2025	<p>Grade 7 Visit McNair (9am to 1pm)</p>

