

Dear Grads of 2011:

And so you start the final chapter of high school. Sounds so ominous, doesn't it? This next year will be filled with responsibilities, deadlines, and celebrations, not necessarily in that order. But this year will be different from any of the previous ones. Are you ready?

Things you need to know. Where do I start? Well, I guess with the most important items.

1. The First Day Back

We have planned a special first day for your grad class so that you have some time to reconnect with friends, get all the information you need for important deadlines and dates, and get organized for your upcoming year. Our day starts at 10:15am with the Grad Tea in the foyer for parents, students and staff. Our Superintendent and Board Chair will be there with staff to welcome students back for their last "first day" of high school. Ms. Thomas is collecting photos of all grads showing them in Kindergarten (either at the office or by email to her at ethomas@sd46.bc.ca that will be used in our slide show so get them in quickly! Grads will then have time to change and be taken by bus for their own day at Cooper's Green. We are unable to have students drive themselves to the event due to insurance reasons. ALL students must arrive at Cooper's Green via school bus in order to participate.

We will be serving a BBQ lunch and there will be a chance to swim and relax on the beach so come prepared with a towel and bathing suit and/or clothing suitable for beach volleyball. This will also be the time for your grad class to plan your committees, get ideas for your Prom and Winter Formal themes and make some decisions about Dry Grad events. Parents are very welcome to join us at Cooper's Green and we are definitely needing at least **6-8 parents** willing to help with BBQ'ing and serving food as students arrive, and then light clean-up after students leave.

Students are expected to be at school ready to participate and are reminded that grad t-shirts are not considered appropriate clothing for school events. Students arriving in a state that is considered inappropriate for school will be processed according to school rules.

2. Attendance

Please go to your classes. There are many of you who may not graduate simply because you chose not to attend. You are all smart enough to do well. The determining factor of whether you graduate or not will be whether you had the discipline to get out of bed, off the couch, or away from the beach so that you could make it to every class. Also, use your study blocks to study! The most frustrating thing for a teacher is to see someone with so much potential throw away graduation on trivial excursions. This includes shopping in Vancouver. Plan those grad clothes shopping trips, manicures, pedicures, tanning sessions and haircuts for the weekends.

3. Deadlines

Deadlines have to be met. If you're not on top of things you can miss out on graduation, scholarships or post-secondary entrance. Post secondary institution deadlines start cropping up around the end of January. For graduation, June 1st is the big deadline. If you are taking any Distance Learning (DL) courses, all marks for these courses need to be reported to our school office by June 1st, so students need to ensure their DL courses are finished before this date to give your teacher time to compile marks and report grades. Missing marks for DL courses could mean that your name may not be included in the grad ceremony program or the big composite photo, which can be very disappointing for students and their families. Also, be careful about dropping courses during the year. One miscalculation could end your chances of graduation. Work closely with your school counselor to make sure you have everything you need for graduation! Students who are short credits do NOT take part in the grad ceremony and fees cannot be refunded once the school has paid deposits and fees for caps, gowns and certificates.

Please note: Any Grade 12 student found to have used any illegal substance while at school or any school related activity, may lose the privilege of attending or participating in any, if not all, extra-curricular events including sports teams and/or school clubs, Formal, Prom and Dry Grad.

4. Grad Meetings - In the theatre

Meetings will occur on Thursdays at lunch, every week to start and then tapering off as we hit October. Our first meeting will be at Cooper's Green on the first day of school. The second one will occur on Sept. 9. As we get closer to graduation, meetings will take place more often as more decisions need to be made, or information needs to be given. Please make sure you attend, as major decisions will be made there and others will make these decisions for you.

5. Grad Parent Meetings - The Library

The first parents meeting will be on Tuesday, Sept. 14 in the library at 7:00 p.m. We will be contacting parents mostly through e-mail and updating them on what the students have been discussing and deciding (so make sure the main office has your parent's e-mail address). Any parents who wish to attend the student meetings are more than welcome. If your parent/guardian is interested in being the official parent representative at student meetings, please let me know.

6. Major Grad Events

Grad Photos - November 8-10
Senior Formal – January 28th
Grad Prom - Friday, May 27th

Awards Night - Wednesday June 13th
Grad Ceremony - Tuesday, June 28th

7. Costs

Here's an approximation of what the year will cost, based on this past year's expenditures.

Grad fees \$ 175

This amount includes: Cap & gown rental (~\$50)
Graduation certificate (~\$25)
Prom ticket for graduating student (~ \$25)
Ceremony costs (~\$25)
Portion of Dry Grad cost (~\$50)

Grad photos \$ 150 (average)

This amount is optional and based on whether photo package is purchased through Artona. Students wishing to be in the big composite photo need to pay the sitting fee and have their photo taken even if they don't plan on buying the package

Suit/Tux for Senior Formal and Prom	\$75 to 400 (dependent on whether you rent or buy)
Dress for Senior Formal and Prom	\$100 to 500 (dependent on how much you want to spend)
Prom Tickets (family and dates)	\$25 each (depending on type of meal and amount fundraised)

We also participate in the Cinderella Project, which helps those who cannot afford formal wear. If funds are a problem, let us know; we can help. Please talk to Ms. Clarke or me.

Grad fees are due as soon as possible as we use the funds for deposits that are required in advance. Fees can be paid in installments and/or with post-dated

cheques for September, December and March. **All fees must be paid in full by March 1st.** Students wishing to attend Senior Formal must have paid at least half of their grad fees in order to purchase tickets. Students wishing to attend Prom must have paid their grad fees in full in order to purchase tickets.

As stated above, grad fees are meant to cover the cost of the Grad ceremony in June. Senior Formal, Prom and Dry Grad require extra fundraising over and above this amount and depend on full participation and supervision from parent volunteers.

Attendance at Senior Formal, Prom and Dry Grad is at the discretion of administration and is a privilege, not a right. Grads are also reminded that dates for Senior Formal must be 19 years and under. Escorts for Prom who are older than 19 will be allowed to attend as long as parents remain. One final reminder that these celebrations are about recognizing the accomplishments of our students and as such, only graduating students will be involved in the official "Promenade" part of the evening and in the Graduation ceremony.

8. The Grade 12 Area/Lockers

You will be upstairs again and will have access to two lockers depending on availability. The week before school starts you will be given one locker and will be allowed to get the second one by the end of the first week. We need to make sure everyone has a locker before second lockers are given out. A reminder that this area is not a study area. For your Study Block, you must be down in the foyer, library, CAPP room or in the grad study room. Remember that classes are in session, so please refrain from being disruptive. We also need you to be aware that on the top floor, your actions are highly visible to the rest of the school. Please manage yourselves wisely.

9. Parking and Vehicles

All grads wishing to bring their own vehicle to school are required to fill out a "Driver Contract" to be kept on file at the office. Student parking is in the TOP lot only. There is no parking in the teacher/visitor lot for students and no vehicles are allowed to park in the Fire Lane/Bus Drop-off Area at all.

10. General Expectations

So now you enter your grad year. With this, comes privileges, but also responsibilities. You have the privilege of the grad mezzanine, special events just for you, preferred seating at assemblies, just to name a few. You also have the responsibility of being a leader in our school. And this is something you can't say no to. The younger students in this school will look up to you whether you

like it or not so you have a decision to make - are you going to be a positive role model or a negative one?

The year ahead holds so many possibilities. You have the ability to make a big difference in this school, if you want to. I challenge you to take a risk and get involved with what's going on with grad and the school in general. I am proud to be one the sponsors for this year's class and I look forward to seeing what you will accomplish.

We are born the same. What you make of yourself is up to you.

Matthew J. Brierley

So, have a fun summer. Get ready for the challenge of Grade 12. It's going to be a great year.

Ms. Thomas