

ACS

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PARENT SURVIVAL GUIDE

ABBOTSFORD CHRISTIAN MIDDLE SCHOOL (6-8)

Events and Activities New Middle School
Parents Need to Know About





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WELCOME TO OUR COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS

Welcome to the wonderful world that is middle school!

This booklet is designed to give you a better sense of what to expect as your son or daughter works through these transition years between elementary school and secondary. We would like to give you a sense of some of the things that happen here at Abbotsford Christian Middle School.

From the start, one of the distinctives of this place is that we are all about community. Not only do we have an amazing bunch of students we are privileged to work with, we also have an incredible community of parents that we are in partnership with. This means that pretty much everything we do is accomplished with support from home. So, welcome to our community!

For each of the events or activities that are mentioned below, we will try to give you an idea of who is involved, what generally happens, when this event or activity usually takes place, and any other information that may be pertinent.

Mr. Berger, Principal



OUR MISSION

Engaging minds, nurturing hearts, shaping God's world.

THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL

There is always a lot of excitement, and some anxiety about the first day of school; especially when it is a completely new place! We want to do everything we can to make the transition to ACMS as stress-free as possible. To help with this, we send out class lists via email in July. This allows students time to process who will be in their class and possibly build some good friendships over the summer months.

We also try to partner all the students who are completely new to Abbotsford Christian School with a buddy student. We encourage buddies to connect at least once over the summer, and we make sure to place new students and their buddies in the same homeroom class.

The Middle School doors open to students at 8:00 a.m. (before that our staff is in devotions as we pray a blessing on our students and the new school year). Parents are welcome to come in to school on that first morning (or on any morning, for that matter!) to see their son or daughter to class. We do not hold our opening chapel until after our morning break. This allows teachers to work on building a classroom community without distractions or interruptions. Parents are again welcome to join us for this time of praise and worship, as we gather as a campus community to kick-off the new school year. The first day is a full day of classes, with dismissal at 2:50 p.m.

MEET THE TEACHER BBQ

This event is done in conjunction with our Secondary campus during the first week of school in September. Typically, we start with a BBQ that includes hotdogs, salads and drinks. As long as the weather allows, we eat outside on the field, so remember a picnic blanket and/or some lawn chairs. Following a time of fellowship over the meal, we gather in the Secondary gym for a brief orientation. From there, parents are invited to visit the Middle School classrooms to informally meet with the Middle School homeroom teachers. Please note that this time is not for a conference between parents and teachers.

Middle School students, their parents, and any younger siblings are welcome to attend. We do not provide any child-minding, so young children must be

supervised by their parents. This event runs from about 5:00 p.m. until 7:30 p.m. with the plenary and classroom visits taking place between 6:30 and 7:30 p.m.

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

Parent-Teacher Conferences happen over two evenings in November; most often on a Wednesday and Thursday. These conferences are a time for teachers to find out how things are going from a parental perspective, and for parents to get a sense of how the student is doing from the teacher's perspective. Since this is a time for parents and teachers to share, students and their siblings usually do not attend. We do provide coffee and cookies for parents to enjoy before or after their scheduled conferences.

The evenings are set up in 15-minute sessions between 5:30 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. We start a half hour after the Elementary School, and the Secondary campus starts a half hour after the Middle School. Notice of Parent-Teacher Conferences goes home two weeks beforehand, so parents have the opportunity to sign-up for preferred dates and times.

GRADE 6 TRIP TO CHINATOWN

This is a popular field trip with parents. Usually sometime in the first term, all our Grade 6 students are bussed to Chinatown for a day of exploring a different culture. Parents are needed to accompany small groups of students as they work through several activities. Parents need to sign up for this field trip, and notices are sent out well in advance. Depending on the size of the Grade 6 class, there may or may not be enough room on the school buses for parents. If we are tight for space, we often ask parents to car pool.

GRADE 7 TRIP TO NEWCASTLE ISLAND

The Grade 7 trip to Newcastle Island is one of the perennial highlights for students! Usually, we schedule this three-day, two-night trip for the second or third week of school. It is a camping trip, and students (and accompanying parents) all stay in tents. Parents are needed to work with small groups of students, and typically we have more parent volunteers than we need (it is that popular of a trip!). Details

about Newcastle and the format for the trip are sent home in June, and further details and updates are again sent home the first week of school in September.

PRESENTATIONS OF LEARNING NIGHT

Our Presentations of Learning event (POL night) is a celebration of student learning that takes place in January. This is an evening event during which all the Middle School students have the opportunity to present what they have been learning in certain classes. The evening is run in conjunction with the Secondary campus, and all parents are given a schedule of specific presentation times so that they can make sure they can be in the right place at the right time for their son's and/or daughter's presentation.

Many people from our school community and beyond are invited and parking is often a concern. To alleviate some of the parking stress we usually make arrangements with Living Hope Christian Reformed Church to use their parking lot and then we run a shuttle bus from their parking lot, about half a kilometre away, to our campus. Younger children are welcome to come, though they must remain with their parents for supervision for the entire evening as no child care is provided.

COFFEEHOUSE

Coffeehouse is a celebration of the Fine Arts. It is a community event that features performances by students that showcases their work in music, the visual arts and the dramatic arts. This event usually happens in late April or early May, and involves all of our Grade 6 and 7 students, and most of our Grade 8 students. Performances include the Grade 6 Music students, the Grade 7 Band, the Grade 8 Band, Grade 8 Drama students, and our Knight Sounds Choir.

We set up for the one night performance in the Secondary gym. Due to limits on seating, we pre-sell tickets for a small charge that helps to cover some of the costs associated with the event. The performance typically runs for 90 minutes. In addition to our onsite parking, we have run a shuttle bus from Living Hope Christian Reformed Church for this event.

CELEBRATION WEEK AND GRADE 6 MARKET DAY

Celebration Week is mainly organized and run by the Secondary campus. However, there are a number of cross-overs that involve the Middle School. This always happens in the four-day week following Victoria Day in May. Usually the Secondary has their Sports Day on the Tuesday, an Air Band/Talent Show on Wednesday, and a Celebration BBQ on Thursday. Grade 8 students from the Middle School are invited to participate in the Air Band, both as spectators and as entrants. Information about how to audition is made available in April. Parents are welcome to attend the Wednesday afternoon performance, but once more, child care is not provided.

Our Grade 6 students host their Market Day on the same evening as the Celebration BBQ. Market Day is a culminating activity for the study of Global Awareness. Our Grade 6 students, with the help and support of Junior Achievement Canada, design and operate their own small businesses. Their products and services are sold at Market Day, and all their profits go to Opportunity International who then uses the money to offer micro-loans to entrepreneurs in developing countries.

Both the BBQ and Market Day are family events. There is a small fee for the BBQ (usually hamburgers or hotdogs, salads, and beverages) and you are advised to bring a picnic blanket or lawn chairs. The Secondary usually sets up a volleyball court out on the field, and younger children are invited to play soccer or Frisbee. Market Day is set up in the Middle School gym, and you are encouraged to purchase “coupons” as you enter. These coupons are then used to pay for any of the products or services, which usually include some great treats for you to enjoy as a dessert after the BBQ. Once again, young children are welcome, but parents need to supervise them

GRADE 8 CELEBRATION

To celebrate our Grade 8 students' achievements and to bless them as they move on to secondary school, we hold a Grade 8 Celebration evening on the last Thursday evening of the school year. Parents, extended family and friends are all invited to join us as we praise God and honour our Grade 8's. Refreshments are served after the program.



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This is not a Graduation (that happens upon completion of Grade 12) and we try to set a casual tone. Parents and students are advised to avoid buying expensive dresses or suits.

GRADE 8 SAILING TRIP

Abbotsford Christian School has a long-standing relationship with S.A.L.T.S., the Sail And Life Training Society. For many years we sent only 25 of our Grade 8 students on a five-day, four-night sailing experience aboard a tall ship. However, we are thrilled that the opportunity is now open for ALL of our Grade 8 students to set sail.

We typically do not send any parents, as there is only room for two chaperones (one male and one female) and at least one of the chaperones has to be a school employee. The trip dates vary a little from year to year, but typically we go in March or early April. This year we will be sailing in June.

Our middle school is based on the idea that our curriculum should be both exploratory in nature and work to reveal Christ in everything. We desire to make sure that all our students are given opportunities to try a wide variety of activities, experiences, and life-skills learning. As the SALTS trip is part of our school culture, we are very excited about the opportunities this experience will provide for us to engage the minds and nurture the hearts of our students, as well as empower them to confidently shape God's world!