

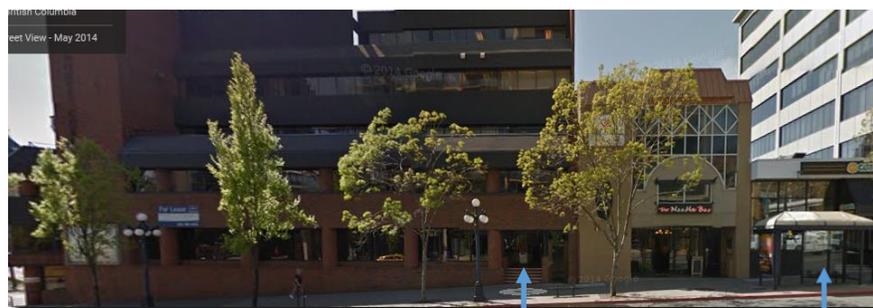
Information for 2015-16 PSII Learners and their Families

June 25, 2015

Another year (our third!) is about to begin. We have a long summer ahead of us, but September will be here soon enough, and there is some information you will need. We have done our best to predict what you need to know, but please feel free to ask more questions if we have not answered them to your satisfaction in this document.

Location

We are moving from our current space on Fort Street to our new downtown digs, and will be in that new space as of mid-August. The school is located at 100-808 Douglas Street in Nootka Court at the south end of the complex at the corner of Douglas and Humboldt. The main entrance is off Douglas.



(view from Douglas street, courtesy Google Maps)

entrance door

bus stop

Remember that the city parkades offer one free hour, so if you are driving your child to school and need to come in with them for some reason, you can park briefly for free. (Library, View St., Yates St.)

Buses

Almost all the buses in the Greater Victoria transit system stop right in front of the school, and for most return trips, it is just a matter of walking across Douglas Street and catching the same bus in the opposite direction. The #2 (to Oak Bay) and the #11 (to UVic) stop right across the street also. The buses that stop in front of the school are:

#3 (Beacon Hill / Gonzales)	#57x (Thetis Heights / Westhills via Millstream)
#27 (Gordon Head / Downtown)	#61 and #61x (Sooke / Langford / Downtown)
#30 (Royal Oak / Beacon Hill / James Bay)	#70x (Swartz Bay / Downtown Express)
#31 (Royal Oak Exchange / James Bay)	#72 (Swartz Bay / Downtown)
#32x (Cordova Bay / Royal Oak)	#75 (Saanichton / Royal Oak / Downtown)
#50 (Langford / Downtown via Goldstream)	Please check http://bctransit.com/victoria/schedules
#52 (Colwood / Millstream/ Bear Mountain)	for complete and up-to-date schedule information.

Bikes

Aside from just locking up bikes on the street, our staff and learners have access to a locked bike compound that also contains a rack for locking the bike within the compound. It is located on the Courtney St. side of the Nootka Court Complex (near the Bug Zoo). We will be given two key cards for this door, and so we will need to coordinate bike parking each morning so that we do not have to keep running back and forth between the school and the compound. This is something we will sort out in August and will provide details as soon as we know them.

Bikes are not permitted inside the building under any circumstances.

Supplies List

The supply list for PSII is pretty short, as we encourage learners to use their laptop as a portal to most of what they will need. Here is the list:

- slippers or indoor shoes
- pens and pencils
- USB memory stick (8 GB should be enough for most people)
- one binder (a 1-inch binder is big enough for most people)
- three-hole punched, lined paper
- graph paper - 1 cm or ¼ inch squares (50 to 100 sheets)
- optional: pencil crayons

FYI, We try to supply everything a learner might need beyond this list, but there may be occasions where an inquiry-based project requires an item or items that are beyond our means.

Laptops

A laptop computer is supplied to each learner, on a 2-year replacement cycle. We supply devices that are hearty enough to withstand at least two years of service in a school environment provided they are properly cared for.

Once the laptop has been issued and instructions given about how to care for it, the laptop becomes the responsibility of the learner and her/his family. We recommend labelling chargers and the laptops themselves with the learner's name. The school will not be responsible for repairs. In cases where there is a manufacturing flaw (within the first six months of use), please contact the school and in most cases we can take it back to where it was purchased for warranty repair.

A working laptop device is required at PSII.

Inside Shoes / Slippers

We have noticed that in a small school with no hallways, staff and learners wearing outdoor shoes can really make a mess, even to the point of being unhealthy. Because our new space is carpeted and has a modern heating/cooling system, we are implementing an "indoor shoes and slippers" custom. Staff and Learners can remove their outdoor shoes and just wear sock feet if they wish, or they may change into slippers or indoor shoes as they enter the school. We will also supply a small number of slippers for guests.

Start and End Times

The school day starts at 9:30 and ends at 3:30.

Attendance Notification

If for some reason a learner is going to be away from school, we appreciate an email to let us know. Our email address for attendance reporting (THIS IS A NEW FEATURE) is attendance@learningstorm.org and there is a link to this also from our school website.

Website

Our school website is deceptively simple-looking. We wanted it to be easy to navigate and uncluttered, while still acting as a one-stop-shop for the information you need. We encourage you to check the website often to stay up to date; you may even want to "RSS" it so that you

are notified anytime a change is made to the site. We have made it so that it works well on mobile devices as well as computers.

Twitter

Though we try to get everything important on the website, there may be times when we use Twitter, especially in rapidly-emerging situations or to share information that is pertinent but not critical. We use Twitter as an “as well as” and not an “instead of” method of communication. Our Twitter handle is [@psiivictoria](#).

Daily Bulletin

Every day at PSII we post a daily bulletin, conveying detailed information about the day ahead. It is critical that PSII learners form the habit of viewing the bulletin each morning so that no opportunities are lost. Many items on the bulletin are last-minute reminders of things that are also on the school’s Google calendar, but there are sometimes emergent items that did not make it to the calendar and need to be mentioned explicitly.

The bulletin will be on our website, and also displayed inside the main entrance to the school near the area where people hang coats and change footwear.

Google Calendar

On our website at www.learningstorm.org, you will find a link to the school’s Google Calendar. This is an ever-changing calendar of detailed events that happen throughout the year. Find out, for example, when certain groups are meeting within the school day, when a lab is taking place, or when a guest speaker is coming in to support someone’s inquiry.

We require all learners to use the calendar each day, and we encourage families to view it occasionally too, as a means of knowing some detail about your learner’s school day.

The Google calendar can be viewed through any browser and can be modified so that you can see a day, a week, or a month at a time.

And don’t worry; names very rarely appear on the calendar, and if they do, we use only first names, in order to retain as much privacy as possible.

Year Calendar

The 2015-16 school year calendar is a separate attachment with this document, and it will also be posted to the school website so you can find it easily on your computer or phone. It shows what days are in session throughout the year. Dates for specific events will be on the Google calendar, and we will also send out email updates from time to time.

- **Some Important Dates We Already Know About...**
 - Open House – Wednesday, September 2 (1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.)
 - First Day of School – Tuesday, September 8 (morning only – 9:30 to 12:30)
 - School photos – Friday, September 11 (a.m.)
 - September 21 – professional day (regional) – school not in session for learners
 - School photo retakes – Wednesday, October 21 (time TBD)

Graduation Program Exams

IN BC, in order to graduate, each learner must complete a series of province-wide assessments. These are:

- English 10
- Science 10
- Math 10
- Civic Studies 11 **OR** BC First Nations Studies 12 **OR** Social Studies 11
- English 12 or Communications 12

Only learners who have finished the courses associated with each exam will be able to write the exam in any given exam period. Exams are written in January and June, with some opportunities for some exams in November and April.

On days scheduled for exams, only Graduation Program exam-writers will attend. Attendance may also be required for learners who are completing some kind of formal assessment that is school-based. This will be arranged on a person-by-person basis.

Reporting on Learning

PSII report cards look a little different from most. While we report on learning (as required by law), we do so in a way that emphasizes the learning that has taken place, and the goals that result from the assessment of that learning.

In the 2015-16 year, we will be reporting on competencies in an interdisciplinary way, with cross-reference to specific courses as required. The Final report for the school year (June 2016) will show completed courses and the associated percentage marks as required.

It is important to note that PSII has applied for an “Innovation Partnership” with the Ministry of Education, and has been working to implement a new set of graduation requirements in BC over the past few years.

In the fall of 2015, we will be holding a series of information sessions to let you know what this means for your child. In a nutshell, we hope to see competencies and high-level learning objectives as the organizers for learning. We will, of course, translate whatever we do into a more traditional course/grade format as needed, until the rest of the world catches up to us!

Tuition payment schedule

Thank you to everyone who has already sent in or brought in post-dated cheques for the year. For those paying over 12 months, tuition payments begin July 1, 2015. Please see the details on the payment schedule at www.learningstorm.org/tuition.

Some Things We Will Need from You in early September...

- **Low-Risk Routine Walking Field Trips**

We will be sending (via email) a consent form, allowing us to take your child on a number of “field trips” that will happen on a routine basis. One example is trips to the YMCA where most of our learners will be going to meet their 150 minutes per week of moderate to intense physical activity (a BC graduation requirement) and/or their PE course requirements.

- **Proof of Citizenship and Residency**

For those who have not already done so, we will be asking people to send in a scanned or digitally-photographed copy of two things that we need to prove that you meet the criteria for partial funding in the BC school system (this does not apply to International students):

- Proof of Canadian citizenship of one parent (or Permanent Resident)
 - (a copy of your passport photo page is best)
- Proof of residency in BC of that same parent
 - (a copy of your driver’s license or BCID is best)

Summer Open House – September 2

All learners and their families are invited to drop in any time on Wednesday, September 2 from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. to check out the new space and to meet your new colleagues and their families. Just bring yourselves; some light refreshments will be provided.

Contact Information

Please refer to the “contact” page on our website to know the best way to contact the school, depending on the particular need that you have. We are a lean operation, and so the way information comes in to us is very important so that we can be as responsive as possible.

That’s it! Don’t forget to look at the calendar attachment also included.

Jeff Hopkins

Principal Educator,
PSII