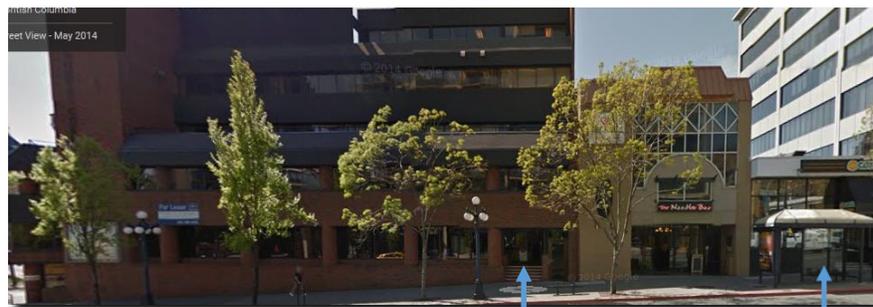


Information for 2016-17 PSII Learners and their Families

Even with a summer break ahead of us, 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

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 on 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. All other buses stop two blocks away on Fort St., so access to and from the school by bus is very convenient.

Bikes

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 provide a door code in August to each learner who needs it. **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
- one 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 or lost items – even those left behind at school. 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 arrange for you to take it back to where it was purchased for warranty repair.

A working laptop device is required at PSII as we use it for many things including communication, planning, research, portfolio access, assessment, and scheduling.

Indoor 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 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 overshoe slippers for guests as required.

Start and End Times

The school day starts at 9:30 and ends at 3:30. The doors open at 8:45 each morning for those learners who need to arrive early.

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 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. 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](#).

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 as they plan timing of personalized learning activities around those already scheduled. 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.

School Year Calendar

The 2016-17 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 Early Important Dates We Already Know About...**
 - **Open House** – Wednesday, August 31 (1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.)
 - **First Day of School** – Tuesday, September 6 (morning only – 9:30 to 12:30)
 - **School photos** – Friday, September 9 (a.m.)

Graduation Program Exams

IN BC, in order to graduate, each learner must complete a series of province-wide assessments sometime in their graduation program years (Grades 10 to 12). These are:

- A language arts (English) assessment (just being designed by Ministry of Education)
- Math 10 exam
- English 12 (or English First Peoples 12) or Communications 12

Only learners who have met the outcomes associated with each related course 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 by special arrangement.

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.

We report in writing three times a year (December, April, and June) 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. There is also a formal learner-led conference in the fall.

Portfolios

Each learner will have an electronic portfolio – a place to save their learning artifacts. These artifacts may be products, records of conversations, reflections on experiences, or anything that could be considered a representation of learning. It is not intended to be a place where all the “work” is located, since learning is much more than that. Having said that, much of what learners do produce in a tangible format will be accessible through the portfolio. All learning artifacts that are assessed will also be accompanied by assessment notes in the portfolio as well.

What to Expect (What's Different?)

Because PSII is based on a very different paradigm from the mainstream, there are several noticeable differences from a parent's point of view.

Here is a short list of those most-noticeable differences:

- **Homework:** Your child will only have homework if they have something they need or want to do outside of scheduled school time. Because PSII is not a lecture-based school, the 6 hours spent there each day is a full work day (with no bells or breaks between classes), and we expect our learners to do most of their work during that time. This is also a decision made on the preponderance of research about homework and its net detrimental effect on learning.
- **Classes/Courses:** You may not hear your children talking about classes or courses. If you ask, "How are you doing in Science?" you may not get a clear answer. This is because we do not teach classes in the traditional sense, nor do we arrange most learning by course. Group sessions are scheduled to support identified needs within learners' inquiries, especially those that are helped by group discussion, debate, and multiple points of view. When we report formally in December, April, and June, we will translate all of this in to "course completion levels" since courses and credits (versus interdisciplinary competency development) are still the currency units of graduation in BC for the time being.
- **Product:** As mentioned in the section about portfolios, learning is not measured by product alone. Do not be alarmed or concerned, especially early in the year, if your learner is not able to show you many product-based learning artifacts. Many projects within inquiries do not have tangible products as their end-points. So, rather than just product, look also for comments on learning that will result from assessment conversations between teachers and learners.
- **Asynchronous Learning:** Because inquiry-based learning is personalized, people are in different places in their learning at different times. If you know of someone doing something in Grade 10 in another school and you wonder why your child in Grade 10 is not doing that, do not panic. Learning is not linear, nor is it best organized by universally-applied timelines. We look for readiness, and we take cues from learners' inquiries. We also "nudge" learners as needed, to help them consider things they might not otherwise think of if they were in a self-directed (versus PSII's co-constructed) mode all the time.

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, 2016. Please see the details on the payment schedule at www.learningstorm.org/tuition.

Payments can also be made by e-Interac transfer if preferred. The payment schedule is the same regardless of method.

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 – August 31

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.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeff Hopkins". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jeff Hopkins

Principal Educator,
PSII