



MCGOWAN PARK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

2080 Tremerton Drive Kamloops, BC V2E 2S2

Phone: (250) 374-4545 Office Hours: 8:00-3:30

Website: <http://mcgowan.sd73.bc.ca>

Principal: Mrs. Jayne Latta

Welcome to the 2026-2027 school year!

The McGowan staff welcomes back to school all the students and parents in our community as well as those families who have recently joined us. We hope everyone had a great summer holiday and is now ready to get back into the routines for the fall.

The staff has been working hard to get our new school ready and it looks great! The following newsletter provides information about the upcoming school year- Please do not hesitate, however, to give the office a call (250-374-4545) if you have further queries or check out our website at: <https://mcgowan.sd73.bc.ca/en/index.aspx>.

On TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 8th, all children reported back to their new grade grouping classes. This last week, our students have been with their grade groupings and classes have been reviewing school beliefs and our school Code of Conduct as we have finalized our student annulment numbers and class placements.

Today, Monday September 14th, we were able to finalize class placements and students were placed with their new classroom teachers. Enrolment always dictates whether we can go ahead and post the classes or whether we need to wait for more staffing if enrollment has increased over the summer months and we can no longer accommodate the demand with the present number of classrooms. Attendance during this first week was very important for us. Thank-you for your patience and understanding during this process.

Class Placements

When students are placed into their new classes, we want you to know we appreciate your concerns and requests regarding your child's classroom placement. Our school is very full and class size/composition is always a factor in student placements. Due to the sheer number of requests, it is impossible to accommodate everyone's requests. The staff at McGowan Park have met and reviewed all parent requests. We have weighed the academic and social needs of individual students, as well as class composition carefully before assigning children to their classes. There will be no changes to these classes for the first couple of weeks so that teachers and students have time to adjust to their new groups. If after this time, if you feel it is necessary to review your child's placement, please make an appointment with his/her teacher and the principal. Parents are reminded under the School Act the principal has the final authority on all student placements. Thank you for being a member of our McGowan Park family. We value your support and participation in our school.

School Fees, School Purchases and SchoolCash Online

McGowan is a cashless school which means all school supplies and other school purchases throughout the year will be paid for online through the SchoolCash website. There is no need to buy your own school supplies, as the school provides these items at a reduced cost. An email will come out over the next few weeks to purchase school supplies for this year.

If you are a new student to McGowan, the primary guardian in our system will receive an email inviting you to sign up for SchoolCash online. When you receive this email, please click the “accept” button and register your account. It is also helpful to toggle off “receive an email when there is a new item to purchase”. This allows you to be informed when there is something new to purchase. Please contact the school if you are having difficulty registering your account.

Fruit and Vegetable Programs

McGowan runs the Fruit and Vegetable program. If you would like more information about the program, please check out <https://www.bcaitc.ca/>. Please note: If you do not want your child participating in the fruit and vegetable program, please call the office.

Verification Reports and Media Forms

During the month of September, you will receive several important documents. Please sign and return to your child’s teacher. The school district requires parents to update Student Verification Records on a yearly basis. Along with this document, a *permission for personal information consent* and an *Outside Media in Schools* will be sent home. **These forms must be signed and returned to the school as soon as possible.** We appreciate your prompt response.

Parent Involvement and Parent Advisory Council

There are several ways in which you can be an active parent at McGowan Elementary School. Our Parent Advisory Council meets at the school on a regular basis, and the meeting dates are published in the school newsletters. Meetings are held on the first Tuesday of every month. **The first official PAC meeting is scheduled for Tuesday October 6th at 6pm in the school library. The AGM to vote in new members will be on this date. If you are interested in getting involved sooner and helping with our back to school BBQ (on Sept 22- 5-7pm) please email mcgowanparkpac@gmail.com or contact Faren Brogan @ farenbrogan@gmail.com**

Parent Email Addresses

If you have either a **Hotmail or Yahoo** email account, you may find you are not receiving emails from the school. Please check your junk and spam folders. If you have an alternate email address to offer, we would appreciate that. Gmail accounts seem to be working fine.

School Messenger Program

Parents no longer leave a message on our school answering machine for absences. Our new system handles the majority of parent contact (including phone calls) when a student absence is unexpected. This also allows parents to interact directly with the system in the following ways:

- by phone when the system calls you, or when you want to initiate a call to notify that your child will be absent

- by internet through a login controlled web page interface
- by a Smart phone app (iOS and Android version; both available for free).

All parents are asked to please report student absences before 8:30 am on the day of the absence (you can also report absences in advance, if they are known).

To report an absence you may choose to:

- call the toll free # 1-844-350-2647 or
- access the following website: <https://go.schoolmessenger.ca> or
- download App from Itunes or Google Play

Please choose the reason for your child's absence from school: sick, appointment, family vacation, etc. Do not forget to wait for confirmation # to ensure your child's absence has been recorded. A registration email will be sent to parents in advance. These emails are not spam and will contain specific parent login information for the system, as well as, instructions on how to log in as a parent to report your child's absences. If you do not connect with the system by 8:30 am on the day of your child's absence from school, and when the teacher has completed attendance for his/her class, then a report will be dispatched for all.

Attendance

Consistent attendance is a vital component of your child's learning and absolutely necessary in order for a child to succeed. Significant student absences and lateness will impact your child's ability to do well and achieve success in the educational program we offer at McGowan Elementary. However, on occasion it is necessary for your child to be away due to illness or other factors. If you know your child will be absent from school **please call 1-844-350-2647 to report an absence or download the School Messenger app for smartphones. Contact the office if you have trouble accessing the app.**

BELL SCHEDULE 2026- 2027

Elementary Bell Schedule		Bells scheduled to ring outside only
8:25	Warning Bell	8:25 (warning to come in)
8:30 – 9:10	Period 1 (40 minutes)	
9:10 - 9:50	Period 2 (40 minutes)	
9:50-10:30	Period 3 (40 minutes)	
10:30-10:45	Recess (15 minutes)	10:30 (warning to come in; outside bell)
10:45– 11:25	Period 4 (40 minutes)	
11:25-12:05	Period 5 (40 minutes)	
12:05- 12:55	Lunch (55 minutes)	
1:00 1:40	Period 6 (40 minutes)	

1:40 - 2:20	Period 7 (40 minutes)	
2:20 – 2:34	Reflection on Learning	Prepare for home dismissal

Photo Day

PHOTO DAY – September 24th: This year Mountain West will be taking our school photos. Each student will receive two poses and families can choose up to 130 different backgrounds. All packages and ordering will be online. Retakes will be taken on Oct. 21st.

<https://www.mountainwest.ca/>

Medical Policy

Please contact the school if your child has any health issues or potentially life-threatening conditions that we need to be made aware of. No medications (prescription or non-prescription) are to be administered by school district employees without prior written consent of the parent/guardian and doctors must sign a ***Request for Administration of Medication at School*** form which includes written medical advice from a physician. This form must be renewed/resigned each school year. For more information, please see *District policies 1006.1 and 1006.2* at www.sd73.bc.ca.

Indoor Shoes

Students NEED “indoor” shoes at school. All shoes must have non- marking soles to keep our floors clean. For gym classes, athletic shoes are required (Please, no flip flop or open toe shoes). These can also serve as indoor shoes for your child. In the wet weather, the floors get slippery and dangerous.

McGowan Guidelines for Personal Electronic Devices: It is recommended that all digital devices including cell phones and smartwatches are to be left at home and not brought to school. Thank-you.

Background

As of July 1, 2024, the Kamloops Thompson School District is revising the district’s student code of conduct ([Administrative Procedure 350](#)) to include the following language as required by [Ministerial Order M89](#):

- Comply with restrictions on personal digital devices (cell phones, smartwatches, etc.) use at school to promote online safety and focused learning environments by demonstrating:
 - Use of personal digital devices to support equitable access to learning outcomes.
 - Use of personal digital devices for instructional purposes and digital literacy development.
 - Use of personal digital devices that is appropriate to a student’s age and developmental stage.
 - Use of personal digital devices for accessibility and accommodation needs, including medical and health needs.

McGowan Park Elementary School’s personal digital devices guidelines & expectations are guided by the above language and have been developed in collaboration with staff and parents/caregivers to promote online safety and focused learning environments for all students. Moreover, there is no need for students to rely on their personal digital devices as instructional tools.

Expectations

1. Permitted Use:

In certain unique cases, students are allowed to use personal digital devices at all times:

- When required for medical needs as outlined in their Competency-Based Individual Education Plan or confirmed by their physician.
- When necessary for accessibility and instructional accommodation needs as outlined in their Competency-Based Individual Education Plan, Service Plan, or Annual Instruction Plan.

2. During Instructional Time:

- Student use of personal digital devices is only permitted at the discretion of the staff.
- Students are encouraged to avoid bringing personal electronic devices to school.

3. During Non Instructional Time (before & after school, breaks):

- Use of personal digital devices is discouraged to be brought on school district property before and after school.
- Use is not permitted during breaks (recess and lunch) and during after school sponsored events.
- Any use must comply with [Administrative Procedure 145: Use of Personal Electronic Devices](#).

4. Violations and Consequences:

Student behavior that does not adhere to these guidelines will be addressed using [Administrative Procedure 350: Student Code of Conduct](#) and [Administrative Procedure 355: Student Discipline](#).

In the spirit of transparency and a commitment to working with our community, discipline under our McGowan Personal Digital Device Guidelines & Expectations will follow a progressive response system, aimed at promoting responsible use and minimizing disruptions during instructional time.

Policy Overview:

- **First Incident:** If a student is found using their personal digital device during the school day, they will be asked to store it in their locker/cubby and instructed not to access it until after school hours.
- **Second Incident:** If a student is found using their personal digital device a second time, it will be temporarily confiscated and stored at the school office for the remainder of the day. The student may retrieve it at the end of the day.
- **Third Incident:** On the third occurrence, the personal digital device will be confiscated, and parents/caregivers will need to come to the school to retrieve it. A consultation with the Principal will be required to develop a plan moving forward. This reinforces the importance of adhering to this policy

Communication

If you have any questions that come up during the year, there are a number of ways to get in touch:

- Call the school (250) 374-4545
- Send an email. Most of the staff and administration can be reached using the first letter of the staff member's first name's initials, followed by the last name @sd73.bc.ca. (Example: John Smith: jsmith@sd73.bc.ca) There are a few exceptions but staff email addresses are also listed on our website.
- Check out our website! It is located at <https://mcgowan.sd73.bc.ca/en/index.aspx>

Driving/Parking/Drop Off Safely

Our excited students will be scrambling to make their way in and out of our school during pick up/drop off times. Please decide, if possible, to walk to school!

Please **do not** use our staff parking lots to pick up and drop off children. Those are for school and District staff only. The **bus turnaround** is designated for bus/daycare pick up and drop off **only**. We know that this poses an inconvenience for parents, but in the interests of child safety, please obey the signs and make suitable and safe arrangements for your children. We strongly recommend that you use the parking lot at the church on the corner and walk your child along the sidewalk to school. If your child is confident enough, say goodbye there. Children can take the sidewalk all the way to the school. When children walk to school they are often more ready to learn. This also eases the congestion around the school and provides a safer environment for buses and students. Many thanks!

Upcoming Dates:

School District 73 calendar: <https://www.sd73.bc.ca/calendar>

2026	Date	Event
September	8	First Day Back! 10:30-12:34 pm
	9	First Full Day of Classes (Gr. 1-7)
	21	Professional Development Day
	22	Back to School Open House/ PAC BBQ- 5-7pm
	22	First Fire Drill
	24	Student Photo Day
	24	Indigenous BBQ- Henry Grube
	25	Terry Fox Run - AM
	29	McGowan Orange Shirt Day- wear orange!
	30	National Day for Truth and Reconciliation (Holiday)
October	1	Fire Drill #2
	7	Kindergarten Bus Training RLC/Eagle Point Cross Country Run
	12	Thanksgiving Day Holiday
	14	Westsyde Cross Country Run
	17	Civic Election
	20	Lockdown Drill #1
	21	Photo Retakes
	23	Professional Development Day
	28	Gr.3 Vision Screening
	30	Halloween Day
November	10	Remembrance Day school ceremony
	11	Remembrance Day - No School

	12	Fire Drill #3 Come Read with Me- Gr.1
	30	Professional Development Day
December	10	Tentative Xmas Concert Date
	11	Term 1 Learning Updates Published
	18	Last Day before Winter Break

Staff List 2026/2027

	ADMINISTRATOR	POSITION	EMAIL ADDRESS
	Jayne Latta	Principal	alatta@sd73.bc.ca
DIV	TEACHING STAFF	POSITION	
1	Kerilyn Scott	Primary	kscott@sd73.bc.ca
2	Jessica Bone	Primary	jbone@sd73.bc.ca
3	Bernita Carrigan	Primary	bcarrigan@sd73.bc.ca
4	Karla Pawliuk	Primary	kpawliuk@sd73.bc.ca
5	Rosanna Covaceuszach	Primary	rcovaceuszach@sd73.bc.ca
6	Pamela Milburn	Primary	pmilburn@sd73.bc.ca
7	Liz McCaugherty	Intermediate	lmccaugherty@sd73.bc.ca
8	Noah Woods	Intermediate	nwoods@sd73.bc.ca
9	Amanda Straker	Intermediate	astraker@sd73.bc.ca
10	Cindy Ruberg	Intermediate	cruberg@sd73.bc.ca
11	Jamie Blower	Intermediate	jblower@sd73.bc.ca
12	Sharmaine Baerg	Intermediate	sbaerg@sd73.bc.ca
	Gitte Nessman	Classroom Prep	anessman@sd73.bc.ca
	Trudy Stonehouse	Library/Prep	tstonehouse@sd73.bc.ca
	Michelle Dagg-Hall	Learning Assistance Teacher	mdagg@sd73.bc.ca
	Kate Nadeau	Intermediate/ Learning Assistance	knadeau@sd73.bc.ca
SUPPORT STAFF		POSITION	

	Evelyn Murphy	Secretary	emurphy@sd73.bc.ca
	Brittney Inskip	CEA Schoolwide	
	Heidi Kotani	CEA Schoolwide	
	Caitlyn Thomas	CEA Schoolwide	
	Amber Snider	CEA Schoolwide	
	Erin Simon	CEA Schoolwide	
	Diana Baglee	Indigenous Education Worker	
	Jeff Murphy	Daytime Custodian	
	Matt Richardson	Evening Custodian	
	Tia Anderson	Evening Custodian	

After School Plans

Please make every effort to plan after school arrangements before the start of the school day. If you have made after school arrangements and the plans have changed please notify the school directly. The staff cannot let students leave for home, if they are not feeling well - unless they are accompanied by a supervising adult. This adult must be a relative or an approved representative of the family. Our staff must speak directly to the child's parent or legal guardian before they will be permitted to leave.

School Clothing

Our school is considered a 'place of work' for students. It is expected that our students will respectfully represent McGowan both in and outside of school. At school, and at all school functions, students are expected to dress in a manner and style appropriate and safe for school. We ask that students refrain from wearing inappropriate language and content on clothing. Please refer to Administrative Procedure 350.2 for further information.

Hansport will once again be supporting our school with school clothing orders. The online store for ordering school merchandise will be set up soon! Stay tuned.

Noon Hour Supervisors: Please consider helping out as a noon hour supervisor. This is a paid position and this year once again at \$20 a lunch hour. We will need help with supervision at lunch from 12:05-1pm each day. All supervisors must have a criminal records check which we can help set up for you through the office. If you are interested in helping for 1 or more days, please email Mrs. Latta (alatta@sd73.bc.ca) or call /stop by our office.

Open House/ Welcome Back BBQ We would like to extend an invitation to all McGowan families to come out to our Welcome Back BBQ on Tuesday September 22nd. The school and classrooms will be open for parents and students to come in and see the building and meet our staff. More information will be sent home soon regarding this exciting back to school celebration! Watch for an email from our PAC.

Thank you for being a member of our school family. We value your support and participation in our school. I hope you have a wonderful return to school.

All the best,

Mrs. Jayne Latta

(Principal)

Tips for a Great School Year

GENERAL POINTS

Keep a Family Calendar

Be sure to read the school year calendar and post it in a visible spot. Note parent-teacher conference dates, report card distribution dates, and other school events. Record them into your personal calendar too. Children love predictability!

Focus on Friendship

When a child feels a sense of belonging and connectedness to his environment, he will learn and develop with greater ease and comfort.

Look for Extra-Curricular Activities

However, parents beware: Do not over-schedule your child (and yourself) to the point of stress and exhaustion.

Spend Some Time at School

Most teachers, principals and vice-principals are delighted to have parents lend a hand in the classroom and around the school campus. It provides an additional sense of connectedness to strengthen their village of care and support. Make sure you check with your child's teacher on when it is appropriate

to visit and help. Sometimes parents in the class can be a distraction.

Create Two-Way Communication

After checking to see whether your child has accurately completed her homework, take a moment to initial the agenda or school planner to let her teacher know you have reviewed the work. Write a comment or ask a question.

Read the School Newsletter, Check the Website, Join the School Facebook Page

This shows your interest in the school community and your willingness to be a part of that connection.

Develop Healthy Habits

Good physical health, proper nutrition, and enough sleep are the most important elements for school success.

Things To Tell the Teacher

What can you tell a teacher that will help him or her do their job better? Students do best when parents and teachers work together as partners. Not sure where to start?

Health conditions If your child is diabetic, uses an inhaler, is allergic to peanuts, or has a serious health condition, her teacher should know. It's also helpful to let the teacher know whether your child has been diagnosed with conditions like ADHD, which may affect

behaviour and concentration.

Family issues

Fill in the teacher if your family is going through a major change that could affect your child, such as a divorce, a death in the family, or a move.

Personality traits or behaviour issues

Maybe your child is painfully shy and is worried about making friends at a new school.

Strengths and weaknesses

If you tell teachers these things up front, they will have more time to help your children improve in the areas they need it most.

Learning style

If your child learns better through hands-on activities than through listening to explanations, mention that to his teacher. Also share any teaching strategies that you've found work well with your child.

Study habits

Tell teachers about your child's study habits and any issues they face in completing the work. Teachers often can offer suggestions to make homework time go more smoothly.

Special interests

Let the teacher know that your child loves a particular comic book superhero or that your child is a gifted painter.

Overcoming Anxiety

Let your children know you care

If your child is anxious about school, send personal notes in the lunch box or book bag.

Reinforce the ability to cope

Children absorb their parent's anxiety, so model optimism and confidence for your child. Let your child know that it is natural to be a little nervous anytime you start something new but that your child will be just fine once he or she becomes familiar with classmates, the teacher, and school routine.

Do not overreact

If the first few days are a little rough, try not to over react. Children in particular may experience separation anxiety or shyness initially but teachers are trained to help them adjust. If you drop them off, try not to linger. Reassure them that you love them, will think of them during the day, and will be back.

Remain calm and positive

Acknowledge anxiety over a bad experience the previous year. Children who had a difficult time academically or socially or were teased or bullied may be more fearful or reluctant to return to school. If you have not yet done so, share your child's concern with the school and confirm that the problem has been addressed.

Reinforce your child's ability to cope

Give your child a few strategies to manage a difficult situation on his or her own. But

encourage your child to tell you or the teacher if the problem persists. Maintain open lines of communication with the school.

Arrange playdates

Try to arrange get-togethers with some of your child's classmates before school starts and during the first weeks of school to help your child re-establish positive social relationships with peers.

Plan to volunteer in the classroom

If possible, plan to volunteer in the classroom at least periodically throughout the year. Doing so helps your child understand that school and family life are linked and that you care about the learning experience.

Here are a few final tips for a fantastic school year

Get enough sleep.

Eat a healthy breakfast.

Try your best.

Use good work habits.

Take your time with school work.

Ask the teacher for help.

Keep a sense of humour.