



Hello new KSA students and parents!

We'd like to welcome your family to our KSA family and give you some information and tips about KSA. We are the **Parent Advisory Council**, commonly known as the school **PAC**. We function entirely through volunteers, and we're involved in many different aspects of the school community, including connecting parents with school admin, connecting parents to other parents, and connecting parents to the school board. All parents & guardians of all K-12 students at our school are automatically members of the KSA PAC. We've also had active membership from grandparents, aunties, foster parents and more! We fundraise for the school, and work at enhancing the KSA Community for families to support their students.

The KSA PAC volunteers maintain the PAC Facebook page www.facebook.com/groups/ksapac, which updates our school community about KSA happenings, important dates, and fundraisers. We also attempt monthly additions to the school newsletter, to keep everyone informed on school and PAC events. These efforts are especially significant as we are a non-catchment school (meaning that our students come from all parts of town, not just the surrounding area); having an online community keeps parents in touch with each other and facilitates an open dialogue for questions, concerns, and acknowledgements (in a friendly, positive space). Your voice is best heard if you make it to PAC meetings, but you can contact KSA PAC on FB, in a letter to the PAC mailbox (found in the school office), talking or messaging with one of the PAC executives, or using the email board@ksapac.ca.

Thinking you might want to get involved in your school's PAC but don't know where to start? Try coming out to a PAC meeting (PAC has a minimum of five meetings a year that are open to all members and guests, and executive meetings as needed), volunteer for simple job within a PAC school event, volunteer on the PAC executive, donate items for raffles or bake sales, or simply share any public info about the school on your social media accounts. Every little bit helps and we're always happy to have the support and meet the other families of KSA and support each other!

Some important things to note about KSA:

You likely chose KSA because you wanted something a little different, in a good way. If so, you're in the right place, with families that feel the same way about KSA for their children. And, as with every generation, school for our kids is different than it was for us. KSA has a few other details that make it distinctive:

● **Safe Arrival Program**

If your child is going to be absent or late, it's important to either call **1-844-350-2647** and follow the prompts or visit <http://go.schoolmessenger.ca> and/or download and use the App. To ensure the school has the proper information about your child's whereabouts to start the day, the call needs to be placed prior to 8:25, or the system will call your contact numbers to notify you of the absence. Check-in your students at the office when they arrive late, even after calling ahead through the system. Details on this system are available from the office.

● **Bell Schedule**

The warning bell for both elementary and secondary students rings at 8:20, all students begin at 8:30. Recess for elementary students is from 9:55-10:10, lunch is from 11:30-12:10 outside and then inside to eat until 12:30. Elementary students are dismissed at 2:41. Secondary students have a long break (10-10:20, W 10:38-10:58), and lunch (11:25-12:13, W 12:02-12:50) and their final dismissal is at 2:57. Secondary classes rotate in blocks, and Wednesday's classes are modified to accommodate grade-specific classes before lunch. There are limited spare/free blocks for senior secondary students. The block rotation for the day can be seen on the office windows and on the digital marquee on 9th.

● **Drop Off/Pick Up**

Please check with the school and watch for emails regarding Covid policies and changes. Students should be dropped off before the first bell at 8:20. Elementary students report to their appropriate door, where they're met by their teachers at 8:20. Secondary students enter when they arrive. In extreme winter conditions, elementary students may be permitted to enter upon arrival. Unless otherwise specified by the teacher, Elementary pick-up is at 2:41 outside their entry doors (they use these doors for recess and lunch, too.) There is no drop off/pick up or parking on 9th in front of the school, nor in the staff parking lot (parking passes are arranged for families requiring close access.) There IS parking along Fraser St. and on some of the side streets off of Fraser and 9th. Watch for posted no parking signs and curbs, and bus zone signs so that you



know which spots to avoid. A drive around and walk around is recommended to get comfortable with the street parking and time it will take to walk your students to their doors.

- **Pods**

The elementary students are organized into 'pods'. Within these pods they rotate through the Arts classes (Music, Visual Art, Drama, and Dance). Each of the teachers within the pod specializes in one of the Arts so the kids learn the subject from someone with great interest and insight in the area. The children also have the benefit of getting to know and learn from several teachers in a school year rather than just their own. In addition, the entire pod comes together for choir, which fosters interaction between students from other classes. Each elementary class also has designated times with the PE and library teaching staff. (KSA Elementary students sometimes have instruction from over six different teachers in a week!)

The pods are organized this year as: K-Pod (the two Kindergarten classes), Pod 1-grades 1-3, Pod 2-grades 3-5, Pod 3-grades 5-7. The overlap in grades comes from the split classes, and therefore, students can return to a pod the following year based on their class placement. As parents, it's important to understand that split classes and Pods don't define a student's abilities, but based on the new curriculum requirements and learning accommodations, students are chosen for their age-appropriate class based on many reasons including the best teacher to fit their needs.

A couple of times a year, families are invited to attend pod-sharing showcases where you'll see all the Arts skills your child has been learning in their Pod based on a theme. Watch for announcements of these performances, which often include a dress-code announced well in advance. Traditionally, black pants, socks (and shoes where possible) are the standard for performance wear at KSA, tops and accessories may be a variety of requirements, depending on the event.

- **Secondary Art Majors**

Having been exposed to all of the Arts from K-7, KSA secondary students are required to choose an Arts major (Visual Art, Dance, Music, Drama, Media Arts) when they get to grade 8. This selection will be their Arts focus straight through to graduation. Grades 8 & 9 students are exposed to all the arts options besides their chosen major in 10 week rotations. Grade 11 and 12 students also prepare and present a juried portfolio based around their chosen Arts specialty. Watch for dates of presentations from the secondary majors. They are quite an experience!

- **School Performances**

All pod performances, choral (choir) presentations, secondary performances, including secondary coffee houses, exhibitions and open houses are open to everyone! They are amazing opportunities to see what others at KSA are learning.

- **PAC Food Fundraisers**

PAC offers weekly healthy popcorn and monthly hot lunches from local businesses, pre-ordered using the district-approved Munch-a-lunch online ordering, or popcorn can be purchased each Thursday for \$1. These are all organized, purchased and created by volunteer PAC members. Watch for ordering/purchasing information and dates, and volunteer whenever you can. It is a lot of fun, a great way to stay connected with the school and the other kids yours go to school with. There is strong evidence that increased parent involvement in the school results in increased student achievement, accomplishment, satisfaction, and bonding!

- **Canteen Orders for the school meals program**

Cafeteria/canteen 'hot lunch' meals are part of a district menu, and partially made on-site. Elementary students pre-pay and pre-order through an online system called Munch-a-Lunch, all organized by the school office. They can order by date, or all of the dates available for the upcoming month. Secondary students can make food purchases at the canteen. This program is completely separate from PAC; All payments, questions and issues can be addressed to the school.

- **Question/Concerns**

Of course, if you have questions or concerns you can always email your child's teacher or call the school. Teacher emails are listed on the KSA website www.ksa.sd73.bc.ca and the school phone number is **250-374-3200**.

**Once again, welcome to KSA!
Kamloops School of the Arts Parent Advisory Council**