

2022-2023 - Year 3

School Learning Plan

1. GENERAL SCHOOL STORY:

General Wolfe Elementary is a vibrant learning community of students supported by passionate educators and engaged families grateful to be located on the unceded, traditional lands of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliwətaʔ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

A diverse student population of 365 students is divided into 16 divisions with almost even numbers in primary (K – 3) and intermediate (4-7) grades. Wolfe students include Indigenous children and children with citizenship from 23 different countries. While most students speak English at home, the Wolfe community also speaks 26 other languages. Wolfe welcomes all people and, in particular, has warmly greeted children from homelands immersed in conflict.

As envisioned by the *Vancouver School Board Education Plan 2026*, goal one (*the Vancouver School Board will improve student achievement, physical and mental well-being, and belonging*), the Wolfe staff is committed to the development of all learners through active and engaged learning. Student learning is supported both in and outside of the classroom. Up to date library resources, learning through technology, a music program, field studies, and outdoor learning spaces, all support curriculum learning. Students are encouraged to follow their passions and explore their interests in open-ended activities such as choosing their own science fair projects, composing rhythms and melodies in music, deciding how to use their time on Play Days, writing personalized Land Acknowledgements for the daily announcements, and leading monthly school assemblies. Extra-curricular sports and clubs, sponsored by staff, provide additional learning opportunities. This year, student initiative led to a Climate Action Fair and the formation of a Newspaper Club. Ongoing staff professional development, which included sessions on outdoor learning, Indigenous art, and math, provide staff with opportunities to enrich their practice to support student learning.

Wolfe students take on leadership roles in the school by volunteering as Kindergarten Monitors, PA Announcers, Office Monitors, Library Monitors, and Hand Sanitizer Monitors. Many divisions have a buddy class where intermediate and primary students work together to build community bonds throughout the grades. A monthly assembly is student-led and an opportunity for all classes to share their learning with one another.

Student learning is supported by an active and generous parent community. The Parent Advisory Council (PAC) events create a larger sense of community and raise funds for school activities and resources. Community events this year included a Welcome Back Night, a Halloween Dance, a Walkathon, and a Movie Night. PAC fundraising has supported activities such as skating at Hillcrest for the entire school, school performances, digital literacy presentations for intermediate students and all parents and caregivers, and additional technology resources. This year the PAC also sponsored a parent education night focused on anxiety and another on anti-racism. The PAC and Wolfe staff worked together in past years on a plan for outdoor learning spaces to be funded from the PAC Legacy Fund. This spring saw the implementation of the plan with the addition of picnic tables, new concrete and wooden benches, and replaced wooden benches in the forest area.

Many Wolfe alumni stay connected to the school and come back to volunteer. This year alumni helped at Sports Day, provided leadership for the Climate Action Fair, and volunteered in classes.

In addition to the PAC, the school community is supported by the Hamber Community Schools Team and Spare Time Child Care Society which provides out of school time care before and after school and during school breaks.

The Wolfe School Code of Conduct is taught as **PAWS**, which reminds students to be **Polite**, **Accountable**, **Welcoming** and **Safe**. Direct teaching as well as posters, a school song, a hand sign, and a PAWS pathway outside all support students in understanding and remembering **PAWS** and the overall behaviour expectations.

The school facility was seismically upgraded in 2019-2021. In September 2021, the school community returned to the Ontario Street site after two years at the South Hill Swing site.

Inquiry Question

Our school inquiry question, recognizing that the school community is resettling after the seismic mitigation and Covid-19 disruptions, is “How can we cultivate more care and personal responsibility in our classrooms and school community?”

We are focusing on all areas of learning for this inquiry including during class, extra-curricular activities and unstructured break times (recess and lunch).

2. WHAT DID WE SEE?

In year one of the school plan, staff developed a number of successful strategies to cultivate more care and personal responsibility in the classrooms and school community which were again implemented this year.

In the classroom, this included the teaching of social emotional learning (SEL) through the use of the Spot Book series and other resources such as Open Parachute, implementing more outdoor learning, and learning about mindfulness and self-care.

In the school community, most classes had a buddy class (students in an older division working with and supporting students in a younger division). Staff created an opportunity for grade 4-5 students to provide service to the school community, teams and clubs were supported by teacher-sponsors and community coaches, the daily announcements had personalized student Land Acknowledgements and social responsibility messages, monthly assemblies took place, and student monitors were again active in the school. At the beginning of the year, teachers taught the school Code of Conduct motto PAWS to all students. New activities this year were creating an art gallery space in a spare classroom and classes taking turns to do a weekly grounds clean-up.

In the community, Wolfe School continued its December tradition of providing hampers to others, maintaining the boulevard garden, garbage pick-up in the community, making cards for seniors and community outreach activities by the Humanitarian Club.

Teachers were supported with professional development in the areas of mindfulness, self-care, new SEL resources for classrooms, outdoor learning, and Indigenous learning.

At Wolfe, a number of important themes stand out with respect to the school inquiry question of how to cultivate more care and personal responsibility in our classrooms and school community? These themes illuminate significant strengths within the school community as well as some continuing needs.

Using an appreciative inquiry approach, staff identified a key strength of the learners at Wolfe School as the bonds between the older and younger students. It is a formal structure at Wolfe through planned and facilitated activities between buddy classes and student leadership activities such as the Kindergarten Monitors. As these relationships are part of the culture at Wolfe, informally on the playground, in the hallways and at break times, older students and younger students greet one another, play together, and care for one another. It is common at Wolfe to see an older student supporting a younger student who may need a bandage, checking in on their “little buddy,” and playing with them at recess and lunch. These relationships connect the students to the school community, provide important opportunities for older students to participate as leaders in the community, and help everyone see themselves as valued members of the community.

Next, there is a high level of student participation in extra-curricular activities and student service to the school, particularly by students in the intermediate grades where there are more opportunities. In 2022-2023, sixty students participated in sports teams (cross country, soccer, volleyball, basketball, badminton, ultimate, and track and field). Many students were on more than one team during the year.

Participation in sports teams spills over into unstructured school times as it gives students the skills to organize their own games. The playground activities often hint at the current sports season as students practice volleyball, badminton, basketball or ultimate skills during recess and lunch times. Sixty students participated in clubs (Humanitarian Club, Kilometer Club, Newspaper Club, SOGI Club). Clubs allowed students to pursue a passion, explore a new area, or experience the fun of sharing a common activity with others. Ninety students were monitors (Kindergarten, Hand Sanitizers, Library, Office, PA Announcers) providing valuable service to the school community. Student participation in many of these activities is supported by the parent community through PAC financial contributions such as buses for large sporting events and materials for club activities.

Additionally, when given opportunities, more students contributed in positive ways. This year a new opportunity for grade 4 and 5 students to contribute to the school community was created. Students in those grades have been Hand Sanitizer Monitors providing hand sanitizer to students at the lunchroom entrances. In the spring, some grade 6 and 7 students with a passion for hockey and basketball led drop-in lunch time “camps” for their peers and younger students.

Most Wolfe students are able to identify the school Code of Conduct in the form of the PAWS motto. They also understand the Zones of Regulation and the school expectations to have safe and expected behaviour. They can identify what is kind and unkind and understand the difference between being a bystander and an upstander. This understanding is apparent in staff and student conversations, in student created posters in the hallways, and student classroom assignments. An excellent student led assembly on mean behaviour, bullying and the difference between being an upstander and a bystander took place in February.

Finally, the new outdoor learning resources available to teachers build on the work and professional development staff have already been doing. In addition to the new and improved spaces, new outdoor learning books have been added to the library. As well, new teaching resources and activity materials have been purchased and created.

Several student and community needs have also been identified.

While most students understand PAWS, the Code of Conduct motto, the need to take care of the community, and the importance of contributing to the school community in positive ways, many students

need guidance and practice in transferring that knowledge to action. The B.C. curriculum follows a “Know-Understand-Do” model (curriculum.gov.bc.ca/rethinking-curriculum). A need at Wolfe is for more students to regularly “do” the actions of “PAWS behaviour,” make consistent positive contributions, and care for the school space and the people in the community.

The Middle Years Development Instrument (MDI) is a strengths-based tool that gathers children’s voices during the middle years period (ages 9 – 14) (discovermdi.ca) and is conducted by the Human Early Learning Partnership (H.E.L.P.) at UBC (earlylearning.ubc.ca). The needs of learners in the Wolfe community, as seen in the MDI, mirror those of learners in other parts of the province. The *MDI Data Highlights and Trends 2020-2021 Report* says, “Children in older grades reported lower levels of well-being in 2020-2021 as compared to previous years” (page 3). The Wolfe 2022-2023 MDI data also shows a decline in overall student well-being. The MDI identifies four assets that help promote children’s positive development and well-being: adult relationships, peer relationships, nutrition and sleep, and after-school activities. Wolfe Staff will continue to cultivate more care and personal responsibility in our classrooms and school community to create an environment where students can continue to create positive adult and peer relationships and continue to participate in extra-curricular activities. Staff will continue with the direct teaching of SEL tools and strategies.

Parent feedback regarding a need for timely information about school based extra-curricular activities resulted in a new school-family communication channel, the Wolfe Wednesday Weekly. This weekly email provides up-to-date information to families on, among other things, school events and opportunities for students, allowing families to encourage their children to try new things and participate in the school community beyond the classroom.

3. WERE WE SUCCESSFUL?

The school has been successful in engaging students in school activities. This is seen in the large number of students participating in sports, clubs and service to the school. It is also seen in the strong bonds between students in different grades. Student initiatives such as the Humanitarian Club’s Climate Action Fair and Student Newspaper show that some students feel empowered to take action to make positive contributions.

At the same time, staff observe that there is still a need for many students to consistently transfer their knowledge of school expectations to action.

Cultivating more care and personal responsibility in our classrooms and school community is still a worthwhile inquiry focus and goal for the Wolfe School community.

4. HOW HAVE WE SHARED?

Students

Students are aware of the school focus through information provided in class by teachers, daily announcements, a social responsibility bulletin board by the library, and student-led assemblies. A student newspaper has students communicating and highlighting for their peers what they think is important and relevant in the Wolfe School community.

Staff

Wolfe staff participate in ongoing professional collaboration regarding the School Learning Plan through formal meetings and informal conversations. Staff discuss the School Learning Plan at Staff Meetings, and at Primary and Intermediate team meetings. Staff engage in learning more about social emotional learning on Professional Development Days.

Parents and Caregivers

The students' parents and caregivers are aware of the school activities and initiatives through a monthly newsletter sent by email (Wolfe e-News) and weekly emails (Wednesday Weekly).

Families are also invited to attend school events, both those planned by the staff and those planned by the PAC, to broaden student learning and the connections in the school community. Parents are invited into classes to participate in activities such as family reading times, project presentations, and field studies. Parents receive regular updates about their child's learning through written reports, conferences, and other communications.

The school administration provides regular updates to the parents at PAC meetings and through monthly meetings and ongoing communication with the PAC Chair.

5. WHAT ARE OUR NEXT STEPS?

The next steps at Wolfe will be to deepen and build on the successful strategies in place. The school will continue to support student leadership, in particular, encouraging students new to leadership to participate. Staff will continue to work with students to apply and enact the strategies for creating a caring community. In particular, staff will continue to support students in making decisions for themselves and not following peer pressure. Staff will continue to teach community skills such as audience behaviour, moving safely through crowded spaces, and sharing community resources.

Staff will begin to use and incorporate into their teaching the new and improved outdoor education facilities at Wolfe and newly created outdoor learning resources.

Next year, the school will work to improve communication to the families and broader community through better use of the school website as a timely source of Wolfe School information.



District-wide Indigenous Focus (worldviews): To increase knowledge, acceptance, empathy, awareness and appreciation of Indigenous histories, traditions, cultures and contributions among all learners.

6. WHAT HAVE WE DONE AT OUR SCHOOL TO SUPPORT ALL LEARNERS IN REGARD TO THIS FOCUS?

Wolfe continues to work to incorporate Indigenous understandings into the school's learning culture. This is in alignment with the *Vancouver School Board Education Plan 2026*, goal three (*the Vancouver School Board will continue its Reconciliation journey with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit*).

Wolfe's daily announcements begin with a Land Acknowledgement that includes a student's personal reflection on what it means to be living on this land. All meetings and school assemblies also begin with a Land Acknowledgement.

New resources to support Indigenous learning continue to be added to the library collection. Staff continue to participate in the District Indigenous Learning Day and in additional workshops at Wolfe. This year Coast Salish artist Charlene Johnny (<https://charlenejohnny.com/>) provided a workshop for staff.

Wolfe School is located in an urban environment and staff are striving to incorporate more outdoor learning in their teaching. The Wolfe School grounds has a small, wooded area. Garden areas have been created and maintained by staff and students. The PAC has supported these garden areas by providing financial support for tools and plants. The PAC Legacy fund provided the financial means for improved outdoor learning spaces installed in the spring of 2023. The staff participated in a workshop with Megan Zeni, an outdoor learning educator (meganzeni.com). Outdoor learning resources, inspired by the workshop with Megan, have been created and are ready for staff use. These outdoor learning spaces and resources will support connecting students to the land, an important value in Indigenous cultures.

Staff continue to strive to bring in different world views to their teaching, including Indigenous ways of being and knowing. This is supported by regular book displays and curated collections by the teacher-librarian. Staff are using a multicultural calendar to increase awareness of both Indigenous and other community's cultural celebrations.

The Orange Shirt Day Assembly in September and National Indigenous People's Day Assembly in June provided opportunities for students to share their learning and understanding of Indigenous peoples and the experiences of Indigenous peoples.

7. HOW WILL WE SUSTAIN AND ENHANCE OUR UNDERSTANDING OF INDIGENOUS PERSPECTIVE AND KNOWLEDGE?

Staff will continue to broaden their understanding through ongoing professional development, which includes both group workshops and professional studies. These understandings will then support the ongoing inclusion of Indigenous ways of knowing and being in the curriculum.

Staff will be exploring and working in the new outdoor spaces and with the new outdoor resources to build connections to the land and environment.

Staff will continue to use the growing collection of library resources. These resources are selected with a focus on materials with an authentic Indigenous voice.