

Grand Forks Secondary School

1331 Central Ave | Grand Forks BC | V0H 1H0 | Phone: 250 442 8285 | Web: gfss.sd51.bc.ca

Principal: T. Eccleston | Vice Principal: J. Dowswell

October 2025

Principal's Message

Welcome to the fall season. GFSS now has 400 students and 57 staff members.

Our Extra-curricular activities (ECAs) are in session! We have hundreds of students involved with volleyball, global citizenship, student council, swimming, soccer, Warhammer, mountain biking, and more. Check out our [ECA Directory](#) for sponsors, dates, and times.

GFSS's **Feeding Futures** program is now in full operation. Students can access free healthy breakfast each morning and have free lunch options in the bistro. Every student deserves a strong education, and we are grateful that every student has access to nutritional meals while at GFSS.

For every student, the student activity fee is \$22. It helps pay for Spirit Week, Pumpkin Carving Supplies, Gingerbread House Making, Seasonal Decorations, Spirit Day Supplies, Dances and many more things that students engage in for fun at GFSS. There are other reasonable fees to pay for course consumables such as food, fabric, wood, etc. Individual teachers will let students and families know these fees. If there is any financial hardship, please contact the office or me directly.

On Monday, our school will gather for an assembly to mark the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. Together, we will honour the experiences of Indigenous peoples, reflect on the legacy of residential schools, and think about the role we can play in building respect and understanding in our country. Thank you to Indigenous Education staff members, and students for organizing the assembly.



Our school's code of conduct prohibits smoking and vaping on or near GFSS. If a student is found in violation, parents will be notified, and consequences will be assigned. Please support us in reducing vaping among youth. Learn more about [the risks associated with vaping](#).



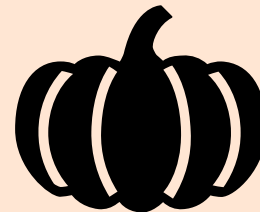
Please reach out to our teachers and administration team if you have questions for us.

~ Tom Eccleston, Principal

[link to previous weekly principal's reports and monthly newsletters](#)

Important Dates

- Sep 29 Truth and Reconciliation Assembly & Orange Shirt Day
- Sep 30 National Day for Truth and Reconciliation (school closed)
- Oct 2 Terry Fox water balloon fundraiser
- Oct 3 School in Session, Terry Fox Run
- Oct 7 Early dismissal (2:30)
- Oct 8 Early dismissal (2:30) + Family Conferences (2:45-7:00)
- Oct 8 Welcome back BBQ (Bistro, 4:00-6:00)
- Oct 13 Thanksgiving Day, School Closed
- Oct 14 Post Secondary Liaison Day (Gr. 12s, 8:30, Gym)
- Oct 17 School in Session



New Staff

We are pleased to welcome Jamie Roshinsky as an Education Assistant on our Inclusive Education Team.

Welcome!

Family Conferences

Ongoing communication with families is critical to your child's success. In October we offer all families an **Informal Learning Update**. Learn how things are going and share ideas you and teachers have for further growth

We invite parents and guardians to book online appointments with your child's teachers for a face-to-face (or telephone) informal update. A link to book your appointment will be emailed in the week of Sep 29. If you are unable to meet, you may be receiving an email from our teachers instead.

Welcome Back BBQ

We believe in creating a culture of connection and we're excited to kick off the new school year together with an invitation to our welcome back BBQ. On October 8th, (4pm-6pm) please join us for our informal Welcome Back BBQ in the bistro.

This will be a fun time for students, families, and staff to reconnect, share a meal, and celebrate the start of another great year at GFSS. The BBQ coincides with our Family Conferences, where families can meet teachers, learn about classroom expectations, and set a positive tone for the year ahead.

There is no registration for the BBQ. We look forward to seeing you there and working together to ensure every student thrives. Please email us if you would like to volunteer to help with the BBQ.



What's our School Vision and Mission?

We envision GFSS as a thriving community where every student discovers and develops their unique gifts with creativity, compassion, and courage to make a meaningful impact in the world. Our vision develops an exciting future and gives a sense of direction to work students, staff and parents do to move us forward in education.

GFSS prepares students for the future by nurturing curiosity, empathy, and resilience. Together, we create a culture of connection that builds respect, values every voice, and ignites purposeful action. Our mission is our fundamental purpose. It establishes our priorities, and those priorities guide our decisions.

Our vision and mission are aligned with the district's strategic plan and co-developed in consultation with students, families and staff. We are excited about working together for student success.



Student Council

We believe that students are the centre of all that we do at school. Students' thoughts, opinions, and involvement matters to individual and collective success.

To raise the voice of students in school activities, we promote [Student Council](#). Our hope is that Student Council will represent the perspectives of students and advise school administration and faculty on issues that concern them.

Additionally, the Student Council helps make school fun and promotes school spirit through organizing special events by helping model an inclusive, positive culture. Every student is welcome to join.

School Growth Plan 2025-2026

Our school plan focuses on creating a school where students feel safe, well, and inspired to learn in ways that matter to them and their families. Guided by input from surveys, forums, achievement data, and staff and parent feedback, the school plan centers on three priorities:

- building a positive learning culture grounded in fairness and belonging,
- strengthening student engagement so that learning feels relevant and purposeful
- promoting health and wellness by addressing challenges such as stress & healthy choices

Terry Fox

On October 3, our entire school will be out in force to participate in the run, raising awareness about the ongoing need for cancer research and honouring the people we love who have been impacted by this disease. Together, we'll be showing both our commitment to hope and our support for those still fighting.



A big thank-you goes to Mr. Mace, Ms. Jonat, and the Career-Life and Outdoor Education students for leading the way in organizing this important fundraising campaign.

Supporting all Students

We are deeply grateful for the generosity that continues to strengthen our ability to ensure that every child can participate in school activities.

This year, thanks to the generosity of the **Valley Cornerstone Community Fund** and the support of the **BC Government Ministry of Education and Child Care**, we are able to provide direct help to students and families facing financial challenges accessing education.

On behalf of our GFSS students, staff, and families, we extend our heartfelt thanks for this meaningful support. It is a reminder that when community come together, every student benefits. These contributions help ensure that every student has opportunities to be part all aspects of their education.

Please reach out to the GFSS office or the principal (tom.eccleston@sd51.bc.ca) if you are in need.

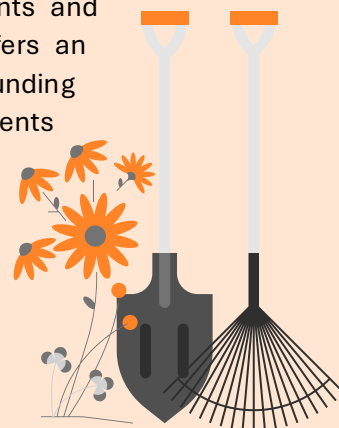
Bussing & Student Drop-off/Pick-up

All students taking the bus must be registered. All families need to fill out the forms to take the bus. If your child has never been registered on a bus, please fill out the Bus Registration form. Please access the [Bussing Protocols, Bus Registration forms and Bus Route information](#) online and return to the school office (gfss@sd51.bc.ca).

Reminder that student drop-off and pick-up must happen in the east or west parking areas. There should be no parent cars nor bicycle traffic through the central bus lane.

PAC

The GFSS Parent Advisory Council (PAC) is here to ensure that parents and caregivers have an organized voice in their child's education. PAC offers an opportunity to be involved in the student experience (e.g., by providing funding for some extracurricular activities, field trips, clubs) while providing parents with a place to voice concerns and issues and receive direct feedback from the school administration and School Board Trustees.



Health and Students' Absence

We remind everyone to be aware that no one should come to school if they are sick and unable to participate fully in routine activities. It is each of our responsibilities to practice health awareness.

Please advise the office (not just classroom teachers) if your child is going to be absent for any reason or any duration of time.

24hr Attendance Line: (250) 442-0954

The absentee Auto-Dialer system is in place again this year. If your child has missed a block during the day and we have not been notified, the system will phone and email you. The system will not call if students are late for class, only for missed classes. Please let the office know if your contact information has changed so we can update it in the system.

Security Cameras at GFSS

We are pleased to share that the Parent Advisory Council (PAC) has conditionally approved the activation of internal security cameras at GFSS. Like security cameras in other public facilities, they are intended to enhance student safety and school security while also helping to reduce costs associated with vandalism and willful damage to school property (over \$10,000 in recent years).

As a public school in BC, our privacy practices are regulated by the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA). The installation and use of security cameras will be in accordance with these regulations and district policies. The cameras will be located only in hallways (not classrooms nor washrooms nor changerooms). They will ideally be activated in October. As such, the cameras will not be monitored live but will provide video-only recordings that will be stored for up to 90 days before being automatically deleted. The recordings will only be reviewed by authorized school district staff and only if a concern is raised.

The PAC and school administration both want to ensure that our school community has an opportunity to share thoughts or concerns before moving forward. If you have more questions, please [check out the FAQ](#), to learn more. If you would like to provide input, please share your comments with the PAC (GFSSPACCommunciations@gmail.com), who will ensure they are presented to the school administration.

Thank you for your continued support as we work together to make GFSS a safe and welcoming environment for all.



Other Extra-curricular Activities coming this Fall

We are fortunate to have dozens of educators and community members that give their time and talents to enhance our student's years while at high school. We are proud that our extra-curricular activities (ECAs) cover a wide range of interests (sports and clubs).

View our [ECA directory](#) to learn about all the extra fun at GFSS. Most clubs will welcome new members at any time. Speak to the sponsor or office staff to learn how to get involved.



Emergency Guide for Parents

We encourage all parents and guardians to take a few minutes to read through our new [Emergency Guide for Parents](#). The guide provides important information about our safety procedures, things **to do** and **not do**, communication methods, and what to expect in the event of an emergency at GFSS.

Please share the guide with your child because staying informed helps ensure that, together, we can keep our students safe and supported.

Have you moved or updated your phone number?

Communication with families is very important for student success. Please let us know of any changes to your address, phone number or email address.

A form was sent home on the first day to be sent back to school with any corrections. Please check that your student knows of any changes to your contact information.





Students and Families of GFSS,

Welcome to October at Grand Forks Secondary School. After a successful start to the school year we are in full swing in both our academic and extracurricular worlds. From time to time students may find themselves struggling with some of their courses, activities, or projects. Keep in mind that mistakes and challenges are all important parts of learning.

In schools, we often celebrate success, and rightly so. High grades, well-developed projects, and successful tests and quizzes are worth celebrating, but behind every success is a journey that involves setbacks, trial and error, and mistakes. At GFSS, we recognize that learning isn't just about getting the right answer, it's about developing the skills, mindset, and persistence to achieve goals, even when things get hard.

Struggling is not a sign of failure, rather it's a sign that *learning is happening*. When students encounter something difficult, they are being pushed beyond what they already know and can do - this is *productive struggle*. Although it can be uncomfortable or frustrating at times, this struggle develops deeper understanding of material, builds resilience and problem solving skills, improves learning retention, and increases student confidence when facing new challenges.

Teachers and support staff at GFSS develop structured rigour in their classrooms through high expectations for thinking, exploring big ideas and complex problems, and encouraging independence for their learners. As a staff, we are committed to challenging students appropriately, modelling growth mindset, and differentiating instruction. We don't remove the challenge, but we learn alongside our students as they learn to navigate the challenges.

As parents and caregivers, you can help support your students as well. Recognize and praise persistence and effort, not just the results. Normalize setbacks by sharing your own stories of learning through mistakes. And, encourage your child to ask questions and ask for help, not as a last resort, but as a part of everyday learning.

If you have questions or concerns, never hesitate to reach out to your child's teacher or school administration. We have a terrific Learning Support team that can help students with their learning, both in the short term as well as developing learning strategies they can apply to all of their learning experiences.

Enjoy the first days of autumn in this beautiful area we are so privileged to call home.

Sincerely,

Jon Dowswell, Vice Principal
Grand Forks Secondary School
Walker Development Centre
gfss.sd51.bc.ca
wdc.sd51.bc.ca

Teddy Bear Picnic!

for National Children's Day

Date: Thursday November 20th, 2025

Time: 4:00pm – 6:00pm

Location: Grand Forks Secondary School Gymnasium

Come join us for a Teddy Bear Picnic in Celebration of National Children's Day, hosted by the Early Intervention Team. We will have Teddy Bear themed games and activities, food, and service provider information. Hope to see you there!



CAMPUS TOUR WEEKS NOVEMBER 2025



**Book a tour at our Castlegar,
Tenth Street, or Silver King
campus in November!**

An opportunity to check out campus life, get your program questions answered, and score some sweet swag! Use the QR code to book a time slot at one of our campuses.

selkirk.ca/events



TOUR DETAILS

CASTLEGAR
NOV 10-14, 2025
10 AM & 1 PM

**TENTH STREET OR
SILVER KING**
NOV 24-28, 2025
10 AM & 1 PM
Book here

Discover a Career in Rural Health Care



AN EVENING WITH RURAL PRE-MEDICINE

NOVEMBER 19, 2025

6-7:30 PM

**SELKIRK COLLEGE,
CASTLEGAR CAMPUS**

Option to attend virtually!



Interested students and their families from around the region are invited to an information session about the Rural Pre-Medicine Program. We hope you join us!

RSVP Today!



selkirk.ca/events





Open House

Meet faculty
Take tours
Win prizes

Thursday, November 6, 2025
10 am–2 pm in The Pit, Castlegar Campus

Ready to explore your educational journey? Whether you're considering applying or already have plans in motion, our Open House is the perfect opportunity to dive into what Selkirk College has to offer.



**Selkirk
College**

**[selkirk.ca/
open-house](https://selkirk.ca/open-house)**





"I never realized how easy it was to access support through an app on my phone. I accessed Foundry's app from the comfort of my bedroom and spoke with a counsellor the same day. I left my session with resources and a follow-up appointment with a primary care provider. For the first time in a long time, I feel hopeful."

- Youth accessing Foundry Virtual BC services.

Foundry Virtual BC

We offer free same day and scheduled counselling & peer support, substance use services, groups, primary care and employment services for young people ages 12-24 across British Columbia.

All services are free and confidential, no referrals are needed. We offer video, audio and chat options.

Scheduled appointments: Book counselling, peer support and other virtual services for the same day or ahead of time.

Groups & workshops: Connect with peers, learn coping strategies and life skills.

Primary Care: Speak with a nurse practitioner about substance use concerns, sexual health, medication, gender affirming care or other medical/health-related concerns.

Employment services: Explore employment opportunities, educational/certification programs or discuss other job or school-related options.



**Download the app or
use in a browser**

Hours:

Mon-Fri, 10am-9pm

Sat/Sun 10am-6pm

To learn more, please call 1-833-308-6379,
email online@foundrybc.ca or visit www.foundrybc.ca/virtual

• F O U N D R Y •

*Free and confidential mental health & social services for young people and caregivers

Foundry is Coming to Kootenay Boundary

And we need you!

Your input will help create safe &
inclusive spaces for youth

Take Survey
Here




Finish the survey &
enter the draw to
win a \$100 gift card



• F O U N D R Y •

KOOTENAY BOUNDARY

foundrybc.ca/kootenayboundary




Rotary Youth Exchange


Virtual Information Sessions for 2026-2027

Register in advance for one of these meetings:


Registration Link For September 24th Virtual Meeting



Registration Link For October 1st Virtual Meeting



Registration Link for October 6th Virtual Meeting




Parents are encouraged to attend .

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

Questions?
Bill Erickson
Event Coordinator
bill@wallawallarotary.org

Sept. 1, 2025



Are you ready for the experience of a lifetime?.

- *Are you ready to add Scholar and Ambassador to your resumé?*
- *Are you ready to immerse yourself in a new culture and language?*
- *Are you ready to make lifelong friends with students from all over the world?*

District 5080 Youth Exchange is hosting three virtual information presentations on:

Wednesday, September 24, 2025, 6:30 p.m. Pacific Time
Wednesday, October 1, 2025, 6:30 p.m. Pacific Time
Monday, October 6th, 6:30 p.m. Pacific Time

The meetings will highlight a great opportunity for students 15-18 years (on Sept. 2026) to study abroad in a foreign country on a long-term basis (6-12 months) or on a short-term basis (summer, 3-4 weeks) for those who are 15-18 years of age (Sept. 2026)

Right now, we are looking for applicants for the 2026-2027 school year. Exchange students are provided room, board, tuition, and a monthly stipend during their exchange year, a value of up to \$24,000.

Initial Long-Term and Short-Term applications are due **October 10th.**

Rotary District 5080 has exchange agreements with Argentina, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, and Taiwan.

Use these links to learn more:

District 5080 Youth Exchange
Rotary Youth Exchange Guide

Join us in gathering for

**Honouring
NATIONAL DAY
for Truth and
Reconciliation**

For the child taken,
For the parent left behind.

September 30th—9 am
Boundary Museum & Archives, Grand Forks, BC

FREE

9:00	Tipi Raising	12:00	Traditional Lunch
10:00	Opening Prayer & Drumming	1:00	Jigging
10:15	Speakers	1:30	Youth Pow Wow Dance
11:00	Drum Circle	2:00	Friendship Dance
11:30	Art Projects (continue in afternoon)	2:30	Drumming & Closing Prayer

BRING YOUR DRUM AND LAWN CHAIR

Contact Boundary Métis Community Association
boundarymetiscommunity@gmail.com or 250-666-0284

A DAY OF
EDUCATION AND
FOSTERING
CONNECTION.

