



New Parent Orientation Guide

Welcome to the Van Horne community! With the help of the school administration, the PAC created this guide to help parents who are new to Van Horne by answering common questions and outlining some of the school's key programs, guidelines and events.

What is the PAC?

The Parent Advisory Council (PAC) is the collective voice of a school's parents. All Van Horne parents and guardians are automatically members of the PAC and are encouraged to attend meetings. A PAC, through its elected officers, may advise the school respecting any matter relating to the education of the students and the school. The PAC Executive is comprised of elected officers (Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer) and supporting executives who coordinate communications, fundraising, inclusivity, parent education and volunteers. More informally, the PAC is a community of parents and guardians who support the school's teachers, administration and students through funding and events. The aim of our PAC is to facilitate communication to support each other and to enrich the students' learning environment. For more information about PACs, see bccpac.bc.ca or vancouverdpac.org.

Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

What are "divisions"? A division number is assigned to each class. It identifies one class and often two grades, since many classes are split between two grades. In recent years Van Horne has had 17 or 18 divisions, but that number changes each year depending on enrollment, funding and other factors as determined by the school board. It is important to know your child's division number; you will usually be asked for it when you contact the school and when you fill out school forms.

How many students attend Sir William Van Horne Elementary? Approximately 400 students.

Does the PAC offer hot lunch? Yes, currently on Tuesdays and Thursdays. In the Spring, the Grade 7 Grad Committee may offer hot lunch on Fridays. vanhornepac.com/hotlunch

Where do I pick my child up after school? Kindergarten students are usually picked up at their classroom door. All other students make their way out to the front of the school.

What are school hours? The first bell is at **8.55 a.m.** and signals students to begin entering the school. Students must be in class by the second bell at **9.00**. Recess is **10.30-10.45**; lunch break is **12.00-12.47 p.m.** The school day ends at **3:00**. The school provides supervision 20 minutes before school and 20 minutes after. Students should not be on school grounds outside those hours unless attending a program or being supervised by their teacher, a staff member, their parent or a parent-approved supervisor.

Do I need to notify the school if my child will be absent? Yes, you must inform the office by calling the Safe Arrival Line at **604-713-5159 School Code: 90** the day before or by 10 a.m. on the day of absence to leave a message with your child's name, division, and date(s) of absence. If you do not call, the school secretary will call you. It is not sufficient to only inform the classroom teacher. If your child is late for school, you must sign him or her in at the office.

Do I need to sign my child out if I am picking her/him up for lunch or an appointment? Yes. Use the Student Sign-In/Out binder in the office to sign them out when you leave & sign them in when you return. This is a safety requirement, especially in case of an emergency.

Can I volunteer at the school or with the PAC? Absolutely! There are many ways to get involved. Visit vanhornepac.com/opportunities to learn more about volunteering at PAC events, hot lunch etc. If you are interested in joining the PAC Executive, elections are held at the May PAC meeting. Your child's classroom teacher may also be looking for volunteers from time to time.

As a parent/guardian, do I need to sign in at the office? If you are in the school for an extended period of time (e.g. volunteering in the classroom, for hot lunch, etc), you must sign in & out. Use the Visitor Sign-In/Out binder in the office. It is for the safety of the children that the school asks all adults to follow this process.

What type of events does the PAC host? The PAC is involved in hosting various events throughout the year, such as family movie nights in the gym, a BBQ or potluck in the Fall, holiday breakfast and Foodbank fundraiser, school carnival in the Spring, outings to Whitecaps or Canadians games, and Van Horne team entry in the RBC Run for the Kids. The PAC occasionally hosts parent-only nights as well.

Do parent volunteers require a background check? Parents who volunteer to drive or accompany children on a field trip will be asked to complete a background check form. The school covers the cost.

Are there parking restrictions around the school during pick up and drop off? Please obey the no-stopping and no-parking signs around the school. Note that directly in front of the school is a no-stopping zone to enforce traffic safety around the crosswalk.

How do I find out about school closure dates? The school is not in session on statutory holidays and professional development/non-instructional days. To find these dates, see the VSB Van Horne calendar www.vsb.bc.ca/schools/sir-william-van-horne/About-Us/Calendar

What educational resources are available at Van Horne? In addition to the teachers, Principal and Secretary who support the students on a daily basis, there are Resource & Reading Recovery Teachers, Student Support Workers (SSAs), Area Counsellor, Aboriginal Enhancement Worker, Gifted Coordinator, Deaf & Hard of Hearing District Resource Teacher, and Speech & Language Pathologist who support our school. Contact your child's classroom teacher or Principal Leung for more information.

What sports and extra-curricular clubs are offered at Van Horne? Typically, Van Horne offers basketball, volleyball, choir, track & field, cross country running, floor hockey, Destination Imagination and other STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math) clubs.

What are the playground rules at Van Horne? During school hours, Kindergarten students may only play in front of the school. Students in Grades 1-7 can use both the front and back playground areas.

Does Van Horne have an after-school care program? The YWCA runs a before and after-school care program in the basement of the school, as well as Summer Break day camps. Waitlist in effect. <https://gv.ymca.ca/Locations/Area-One/East-Vancouver/The-Y-at-Van-Horne-Elementary>.

Where are the parent washrooms in the school? Parents can use the washroom beside the gym entrance (north side of school) or across from the office. The Boys and Girls washrooms in the basement and on the top floor are for student-use only.

Does the school have a lost & found?

Yes, the wood cabinet outside the office houses lost & found items. Items are donated by the school if not claimed within a month or two.

How do I stay connected to what's going on at school? Meet with your child's teacher, or visit www.vsb.bc.ca/schools/sir-william-van-horne and www.vanhornepac.com. If you're at the school, check out the PAC bulletin board in the school lobby where we post a calendar of events, PAC meeting minutes, upcoming event flyers and other information. You will also receive emails from the school and occasionally the PAC.

Does the Vancouver School Board offer student insurance and is it mandatory?

The VSB does offer *Kids Plus Accident Insurance*. Though not mandatory, it may be of interest to families who don't have medical/dental plans or to supplement limited plans. For more information visit kidsplus.ca.

What's the best way to ask questions and connect with other parents? Attend a PAC meeting or event, join the PAC's active Facebook community (@vanhornepac), or reach out to the PAC Chair: chair@vanhornepac.com.

When are PAC meetings held and what topics are covered?

- PAC meetings are held one evening per month (with some exceptions) throughout the school year in the school library. Free childminding is provided by our Grade 7 students.
- 2019-2020 PAC meeting dates will be posted in September on our site vanhornepac.com.
- At every meeting we hear from our Principal about what's going on at the school and parent questions are answered.
- We discuss PAC initiatives and parent issues to support our school and community.
- Occasionally we invite guest speakers to talk to us about hot topics, such as internet safety, social & emotional learning, and engaging emerging readers.
- We vote on how to spend PAC money. Recent PAC-funded initiatives have included installing an outdoor classroom, purchasing high-quality home reading books, investing in new school jerseys, and hosting family events.

What does the calendar of events typically look like at Van Horne?

September/October

Welcome Back Potluck & Meet the Teacher Night
September PAC Meeting
Scholastic Book Fair
Parent Teacher Conferences
October PAC Meeting
Halloween Movie Night

November/December

November PAC Meeting
Pancake Breakfast & Foodbank Fundraiser
Holiday Movie Night
Holiday School Concert

January/February

January PAC Meeting
February PAC Meeting
Term 1 Report Cards

March/April

Parent Teacher Conferences
Usborne Book Fair
Spring Break (2 weeks)

May/June

May PAC Meeting & Elections
Grade 7 Graduation Events
School Carnival
Term 2 Report Cards

Please join us:

School Carnival – Fri June 21
@3 p.m. behind the school