



Columneetza Junior Secondary School

September 2025 Newsletter

Columneetza Junior Secondary School (Gr.7-9)

1045 Western Ave, Williams Lake, BC

V2G 2J8

250-392-4158

[Home - Columneetza Junior Secondary](https://cjs.sd27.bc.ca)

(<https://cjs.sd27.bc.ca>)



Important Dates

Sept 2	District Planning Day No students, staff only
Sept 3	School Opens ½ Day
Sept 4	Full Days begin
Sept 9	School-Wide Assembly (Terry Fox, Code of Conduct & Columneetza Cares Kick-off)
Sept 11	School Pictures in the afternoon
Sept 18	Terry Fox Run – C Block
Sept 22	PAC Meeting 6:00pm Columneetza Junior
Sept 22	Orange Shirt Week Activities
Sept 29	Pro-D Day (no school)
Sept 30	National Truth & Reconciliation Day (no school)
Oct 10	Gr. 3-7 Cross Country Run – Boitano Park
Oct 13	Thanksgiving (no school)
Oct 21	Photo Retakes
Oct 21-22	Early Dismissal Days
Oct 24	Pro-D Day (no school)
Oct 29	Parent Teacher Night 5-7pm

Welcome back (...or welcome to the) Falcon Family! My name is Holly Zurak and I'm excited to be Columneetza's new Principal. On behalf of all of us, I'd like to offer a special welcome to our new students and staff. Let's start off in a good way!

First Day Procedures:

1st Day of School is Wednesday, September 3rd (½ day)

8:45am-11:30am New students/registrations, please report to the office. a special welcome to our new students and staff. We would like to remind everyone to remain calm and patient while we get everyone organized. Undoubtedly, there will be some unforeseen challenges, but we will get them resolved as quickly as possible.

Grade 7's – All Grade 7 students will go to the gym and take a seat in the bleachers and the principal and vice-principals will conduct a 'Welcome Back' assembly. After the assembly, class lists will be called out and Grade 7 teachers will then take their students to their classrooms for the remainder of the day to get organized.

Grade 8's and 9's All Grade 8 and 9 students will need to find their homerooms (A BLOCK) and then go to their homerooms for the remainder of the morning. Alphabetical homeroom lists will be posted inside the main foyer and in front of the library. Once students are in their homeroom classrooms, they will be given their schedules and all other necessary information to start the year. Grade 8's and Grade 9's will be called to the gym for grade specific 'Welcome Back' assemblies. *Note A BLOCK Hockey and Aquatics are located at the school this week. Can't find your name? Head to the Library.

Please update your child's Verification form, sign the Media Consent, Computer/Privacy Consent and Walking Field Trip forms and return to school.

Students will be dismissed at 11:25am. BUSES will arrive at 11:30am to take students home

We acknowledge that Columneetza is situated on the unceded, traditional territory of the Secwepemc People.

School Schedule (Begins Sept. 4th)

A cartoon illustration featuring a spiral-bound calendar for the month of June, a round red alarm clock with black hands, and a yellow pencil with a pink eraser. The items are set against a background of green and blue circles.

Bus Schedule 2025 – 2026 Students going to the Memorial Complex in the morning for Hockey or Aquatics will take the bus to the WL Campus and walk over to the Complex once classes begin (this will not happen on the first day or week of school as the teachers will be at Columneetza—more information from your teachers will come).

Newsletters - School newsletters will be sent out at the beginning of each month and posted to the school district website. That's where you'll find We also have a Facebook page that I would encourage you to join as it is used regularly for reminders. Please ensure you contact the schools to ensure we have your most up to date email address and phone numbers.

Website: [Home - Columneetza Junior Secondary](https://cjs.sd27.bc.ca) (<https://cjs.sd27.bc.ca>)

Facebook: Columneetza Junior Secondary School – School Page

Breakfast for Learning - Our school offers some quick and simple breakfast food options to get the day going from 8:05am-8:30am every morning starting on September 6th. Options include toast, fruit, yogurt, granola bars and tea. This grab and go breakfast opportunity is open for all students.

Lunches

Lunch Schedule:

Monday - sandwiches, \$3/half

Tuesday - PB & J, fruit, yogurt, granola bars, hard boiled eggs

Wednesday - pizza, \$2.00/slice

Thursday - PB & J, fruit, yogurt, granola bars, hard boiled eggs

Friday – wraps, \$2/half a wrap

This will begin on Monday, September 8th. Financial assistance for lunches is available. Students or parents can ask any staff member or the office how to access support. Every day of the week, additional snack food will be available in the Cultural Room (Room 144) for all students to access if needed.

Verification Forms & Medical Information - Student verification forms will be sent home in the first week of school. It is very important that we get your child's up-to-date information as soon as possible including contact information so that we can call home if your child needs you.

For parents of students with severe allergies/anaphylaxis, Public Health now recommends that 2 EpiPens are always kept at school. Please check with the office to make sure that we have an EpiPen for your child and that it is up-to-date. If your child wears a Medical Alert bracelet, please make sure the school knows they wear it at school. For students with a seizure condition or Type 1 Diabetes, please make the school aware so that we can plan for safety and complete safety planning promptly.

Calling in Absences - At Columneetza we feel regular attendance is a crucial component of academic performance. Students are expected to be on time and attend every class. If students are ill or cannot attend for other reasons, **it is up to the parent or guardian to notify the School Messenger system** at 1 (833) 582-6944, using the phone app, website login or calling the school.

<https://go.schoolmessenger.com> All undocumented absences will be considered unexcused absences. Poor attendance may result in a file review and a meeting with the student and guardian(s).

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Noon Hour Supervision - This year we will have 4 Noon Hour Supervisors and 3 Administrators providing supervision inside the school and outside the school (on school property). Noon hour supervision occurs from 11:35am to 12:35pm. If you are interested in joining our team or helping out, please call 250-392-4158.

Parent Advisory Council (PAC) - A strong relationship between the school and parents is very important in a child's education, and one way of being involved with the school is to be a member of the PAC. Last year's PAC was a very dedicated group, which was really appreciated. We are hoping that the same will be true this year, and with your help, this can come true. Columneetza parents are invited to attend Columneetza Junior Secondary School PAC meetings. The meetings are usually held on the third Monday of each Month starting at 6:00pm in the Library. **NEXT MEETING: Monday, September 22 @ Columneetza Campus Library – 6:00pm**

Volunteering at the School – All volunteers volunteering their time to support school events must have a criminal record check completed before they start helping out. This includes driving students, dry grad, coaching, helping in a classroom, etc. To apply online go to the link below and enter the password:

Online Link: <https://justice.gov.bc.ca/criminalrecordcheck>

Columneetza Access Code: **8ND5W2DD2X**

Code of Conduct - Our [School Code of Conduct](#) is a living document that we continually amend and adapt to ensure our school is safe and student expectations are clear. We encourage feedback from parents to ensure our Code of Conduct is clear and helps guide student behaviour. The Code of Conduct is regularly taught and referenced throughout our school. Please become familiar with our Code of Conduct and contact school administration with any questions or comments. The full COC for 2025-2026 can be found on our school website, and may be updated throughout the year. Students may also wish to bookmark the [ERASE](#) (Expect Respect & Safe Education) Anonymous reporting tool for students.

Steps to Resolve Concerns

If you have concerns with a situation at the school there are steps to follow to ensure your concern is dealt with efficiently and properly. Please refer to [Steps to Resolve Concerns](#) for more information.



Student of the Week Student of the week is selected by a different staff member each week based on positive actions of the students that contribute to our school's culture. Student of the Week pictures will be posted on our Facebook page and in the WL Tribune. *Thanks to Red Tomato Pies for donating student prizes for this program!*

Picture Day – is **Thursday, September 11th** for **Columneetza students in the morning starting at 8:45am**. There will be a reminder with suggestions for a good photo session. These are the individual portrait photos. If your child is away, retakes are Tuesday, October 21.



School Sports Teams and Clubs



Sports teams, and other student extracurricular activities will be up and running. Students are asked to listen carefully to announcements for information. Sports teams and clubs include: Rugby, Soccer, Volleyball, Wrestling, Basketball, and Track and Field. School clubs include Fit Club, D&D, Anime, LGBTQ+, League of Legends, Yearbook, and Student Voice. Volleyball starts right away, stay tuned!

Many others may develop – keep your ears open for announcements 😊. If we don't have the club you are hoping for, tell a staff member about your idea and maybe we can start one!

Terry Fox Run

This year the annual Terry Fox Run at Columneetza is scheduled to be held on Wednesday, September 18th during C Block. I'd like to thank everyone in advance for their participation and support for the run!

Parking

Please use the drop-off and pick-up loop that is located in between the dorm(daycare) and shop buildings. Please do not block the bus lanes at the front of the school or the small bus turnaround at the back of the school, or the Nesika lot. Thank you for your understanding.

Salmon Trip (Open to Grade 9s)

September 17th-19th. The goal of this trip is to involve young people in activities that help them appreciate how a watershed works—the animals, the plants, the water, the geography, and the role of human interaction. Space is limited and students must complete an application (email: nara.riplinger@sd27.bc.ca for the application). Some of the activities will include: monitoring salmon health, identifying stream invertebrates, hiking, learning the importance of salmon and healthy watersheds from First Nation leaders, and working with UNBC researchers. The cost is \$50 but see Ms. Riplinger, Mme Vachon or Mr. Cook if this is prohibitive. Activities on this trip can also be incorporated into a capstone project or Independent Studies credits.

Administration Team Holly Zurak, Principal Matt Cullum, Vice-Principal Alina Cameron, Vice-Principal	Clerical Team Liz Crosina, Office Front Desk Tassie Giroday, Office Records & Registration Ann Bailey, Office Finance
Columneetza Indigenous Support Workers George Fraser Jordy Moise Katrina Wilde	Counselling Team Jon Harding Tara Burtenshaw Youth Engagement Worker Courtney Mailhot

FAIR NOTICE

Student Threat Assessment - Fair Notice for Students, Parents & Caregivers

Fair Notice can be given through letters to parents & caregivers, brochures, media releases, parent meetings, staff meetings, new student orientation, or all of the above. Schools may also advise students and families by including a brief 'Fair Notice' statement in emails, student agendas, in assemblies, on the school website, and/or in student and family meetings.

What behaviours initiate a student threat assessment?

A student threat assessment will be initiated for behaviours including, but not limited to:

- Serious violence or violence with intent to harm or kill
- Verbal/written direct threats to harm/kill others (clear, direct, plausible)
- The use of technology or writings that suggest that the SOC has engaged in threat-related behaviours or has demonstrated unusual interest in other instances of mass casualty
- Online threats to harm/kill others
- Indicators of suicidal ideation as it relates to fluidity (intent to harm/kill self or others)
- Possession of weapons (including replicas)
- Bomb threats and fire setting
- Sexual intimidation, extortion, or assault
- Ongoing issues with bullying behaviours and/or harassment
- Gang related intimidation and/or violence
- Targeted hate incidents motivated by factors including, but not limited to race, culture, religion, and/or sexual orientation

Duty to report

To keep school communities safe and caring, staff, parents & caregivers, students, and community members must report all threat-related behaviours.

What is a threat?

A threat is an expression of intent to do harm or act out violently against someone or something. Threats may be verbal, written, drawn, posted on the Internet, or made by gesture. Threats must be taken seriously, investigated, and responded to.

What is a Threat Assessment Team?

The school has a Threat Assessment Team that includes the principal(s), counsellor(s), teachers and a member of the police agency.

What is the purpose of a student threat assessment?

- To ensure the safety of students, staff, parents, caregivers and others
- To ensure a full understanding of the context of the threat
- To understand factors contributing to the subject of concern's (SOC) behaviour
- To be proactive in developing an intervention plan that addresses the emotional and physical safety of the person of concern

"Learning, Growing, and Belonging Together"

FAIR NOTICE



- To promote the emotional and physical safety of all

What happens in a student threat assessment?

All threat-related behaviour by a student shall be reported to the principal, who will activate the threat assessment process for the initial response. Once the team has been activated, interviews may be held with students, the SOC, parents, caregivers, and staff to determine the level of risk and develop an appropriate response to the incident. Intervention plans will be developed and shared with parents, caregivers, staff, and students as required.

Can I refuse to participate in a threat assessment process?

It is important for all parties to engage in the process. However, if for some reason there is a reluctance to participate in the process by the student or parent/caregiver, the threat assessment process will continue in order to promote a safe and caring learning environment.

Collection Notice

The school district is subject to personal information privacy laws and will undertake the collection of this information in compliance with the requirements of such laws, including by limiting collection to information that is relevant and necessary to address a risk or threat and by ensuring that information is collected from publicly available open-source social media sites. The school district will not collect information as part of a threat assessment unless there is reason to believe that a risk exists. Information collected as part of a threat assessment may be provided to law enforcement authorities in appropriate circumstances.



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