



SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 73
(Kamloops-Thompson)



French Immersion Parent Handbook

COMMENÇONS



What is French Immersion?

The French Immersion program follows the same British Columbia Ministry of Education curriculum as the English program; however, it is delivered primarily in French. For the first few months of Kindergarten, a mix of English and French is used in order to build some oral French fluency. By the mid-point of the year, the majority of instruction takes place in French, using English when needed (i.e. safety concerns and complex issues). By January in Kindergarten, teachers are speaking almost entirely in French, and students can communicate most of their basic needs in French and understand most classroom instructions. Students are encouraged to use as many French words as possible, and oftentimes, they use a mix of English and French to communicate with their teacher.

Students in Grade 12 graduate with a Double Dogwood Diploma and have the option to complete the Diplôme d'études en langue française (DELF), an internationally recognized assessment of French proficiency.

In the Kamloops-Thompson School District, we provide French Immersion beginning in Kindergarten or Grade 1 through to Grade 12.





The Benefits of French Immersion

- Learning a second language is an advantage to all learners, regardless of their learning strengths and weaknesses. Because French is an official language of Canada, additional scholarships, fields/programs of study, and employment opportunities are available to students who graduate from the French Immersion Program.
- For many students, learning a second language improves their language skills in their first language because reading and writing skills transfer between French and languages spoken at home.
- Students who are enrolled in French Immersion will be reading and writing in English as well as their English peers by Grade 5 or sooner. Results from the Foundation Skills Assessment in SD73 are consistent with this research.



Progressing in French Immersion

As students progress from grade to grade, more English is introduced:

- Kindergarten to Grade 2 - 100% of instruction is in French.
- Grade 3 to 7 - one hour/day of English instruction.
- Grades 8 to 9 - 4/8 courses (French Language Arts, Social Studies, Science, and Mathematics) are delivered in French.
- Grade 10 - 3/8 courses (French Language Arts, Social Studies, and Science) are delivered in French.
- Grade 11 - Both French Language Arts and Social Studies are delivered in French.
- Grade 12 - Only French Language Arts is delivered in French.



Frequently Asked Questions

Will being in French Immersion affect English language skills?

In BC, provincial Foundation Skills Assessment testing shows that by Grade 4, French Immersion students do at least as well as, their peers who have been learning in only English since Kindergarten.

Will my child be bilingual?

Your child will be capable in two languages. Author André A. Obadia sums it up:

“In French, their reading and listening skills are close to those of native French speakers. Their productive skills, such as speaking and writing, although not at par with those of native speakers, allow them nonetheless to carry out normal conversations. They are generally self confident when they speak French”.

What will happen if my child struggles in Immersion?

Almost all children are able to be successful in French Immersion. French Immersion schools follow the same support model as their English counterparts; support is available for diverse learning needs.

How will my child communicate with and understand the teacher?

Your child will communicate in English until they have the language skills necessary to express themselves in French.

What kind of French will my child learn?

Your child will be exposed to a variety of accents and will learn to speak standard French.

Will my child be learning the same things as in an English class?

Yes, the curriculum for French Immersion has the same curricular and content competencies as the English curriculum.

Is French Immersion appropriate for all children?

French Immersion is a broad-based program appropriate for all. A child will do as well in French Immersion as they would do in an English program. Research continues to show learning in a bilingual setting has more advantages than disadvantages.

I don't speak French. Will this be a problem? How will I help with homework?

If your child brings work home to complete, they should be able to do it independently. Your child's teacher can give you ideas on how you can help your child with homework. Also, see the Canadian Parents for French website (cpf.ca) for tips and tricks.

How will I know how my child is doing?

Just as with the English program, through formal learning updates and informal communications, including:

- interim reports
- emails
- phone calls
- notes in your child's agenda
- parent/teacher meetings

How will I communicate with my child's teacher?

All SD73 French Immersion teachers speak English.

Should I read with my child in our home language?

Yes, reading with your child is particularly valuable in shaping an interest in reading, as literacy skills are transferable. Most children will be reading in both French and English by Grade 3.

Can I transfer my child into a French Immersion program at the beginning of grade 1?

Yes, entry in the French Immersion program is possible in Kindergarten and Grade 1. Students may transfer from a similar French Immersion program in other grades.

Does French Immersion impact the rate of learning for students who have delayed language and/or literacy skills?

No.

If my child requires support, will they still get in in French Immersion?

The same supports offered to students in the English program are offered to students in the French Immersion program. Students may transfer from a similar French Immersion program in other grades.

What is Canadian Parents for French?

Canadian Parents for French (CPF) is a registered charity of English-speaking members promoting the value of French as an important part of Canadian culture.

CPF advocates for young Canadians to learn and use French as a second language and provides publications and videos. One resource is *Yes, You Can Help! Information and Inspiration for French Immersion Parents*, covering diverse topics like why learn French and how to help with homework. Check out their website: <https://cpf.ca/en/>



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