



SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 73
(Kamloops-Thompson)



French Immersion Parent Handbook

COMMENÇONS



What is French Immersion?

Students in French Immersion follow the BC Ministry of Education curriculum, which is an authorized alternative program. French Immersion programs have been developed throughout Canada for anglophone students or students who speak other languages at home.

Students become functionally bilingual in French by the end of secondary school. Over the long term, this can be done without loss in other subject areas or in personal and social growth. In fact, both languages help the student develop better skills in all of these areas.

In the Kamloops-Thompson School District, we provide early 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.
- Students of all abilities can benefit from learning a second language.
- Learning a second language improves a student's skills in their first language and improves learning in all areas.
- Students who are enrolled in French Immersion will be reading and writing as well in English as their English program friends by grade 5 or sooner. Results from the Foundation Skills Assessment in SD73 are consistent with this research.
- Early reading and writing skills transfer between the French and English languages.
- Students who have delayed language and/or literacy skills will achieve at the same level whether attending French Immersion or an English program.



Progressing in French Immersion

French Immersion students are taught entirely in French from kindergarten to the end of grade 2.

Developing a French-only environment is a two-year process. In kindergarten and grade 1 English can be used as needed to respond to personal or safety needs of students.

By the end of kindergarten, children should understand many common phrases and words. Children will be speaking some French.

By the end of grade 1, children should be able to speak mostly in French. Reading and writing skills are developing, though not quite as rapidly as those children in the English program.

By the end of grade 2, children should be able to speak and read short simple texts, find information in simple material, and express simple ideas in written French.

By the end of grade 3, children should be comfortable working in French. They will begin English Language Arts, transferring literacy skills from French to English, and catching up by the end of grade 4 or 5.

By the end of grade 5, children should have the basic communication skills in French. Greater fluency is achieved in the K-12 French Immersion Program.

By the end of grade 12, most students graduate with a Double Dogwood that includes the B2 Diplôme d'études en langue française (DEL F), an internationally recognized assessment of French proficiency.



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 English 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. Support is available for students with diverse learning abilities.

How will my child communicate with and understand the teacher?

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

What kind of French will my child learn?

Your child will speak standard French in a French Immersion class.

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

Yes, the curriculum for French Immersion has the same expected learning outcomes 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, 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) and your school's website.

How will I know how my child is doing?

Through formal report cards 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. All 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.

What is Canadian Parents for French?

Canadian Parents for French (CFP) 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.



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2021

Where *do you* want to go?
We'll get you there.

