

The Flexible Studies Program is designed for students interested in a structured inquiry-based approach to education, where students engage with their peers, teachers, community and environment as they pursue their academic potential.



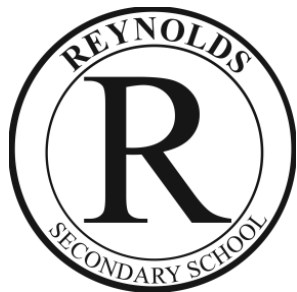
The Flexible Studies Program Reynolds Secondary School



Information Guide

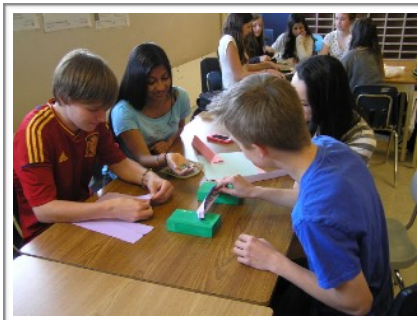
Thank you for your interest in learning more about the Flexible Studies Program at Reynolds Secondary School. In this information guide you will find many answers which will hopefully lead to even more questions and ideas; we look forward to those conversations. Don't hesitate to e-mail Reynolds Secondary School, reynolds@sd61.bc.ca or call the school at 250-479-1696 to speak with a Flexible Studies Program teacher or to one of our school administrators.

A Greater Victoria School District Program of Choice



The Flexible Studies Program Reynolds Secondary School

Voice & Choice
Outdoors & Nature
Inquiry & Innovation
Community & Culture
Environment & Relationships
Service to others



"The heart of education is what happens in the hearts and minds of individual learners. You cannot make anybody learn anything that they're not interested in learning, if they don't see and feel the relevance of it . . . What we have here is, an opportunity to really engage kids' imaginations by giving them education . . . to enhance and properly develop collaboratively and creatively."

- Sir Ken Robinson

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THE FLEXIBLE STUDIES PROGRAM – A HISTORY

The Flexible Studies Program came into existence in 1988 as a result of a group of parents who advocated for a more relationship-based education for their children during their high school education. Over the next three years, these parents worked to create the program that would be known as Flexible Studies. These parents were able to find both a home for their vision at Reynolds Secondary School, and supporters of their vision in the Greater Victoria School District. The Flexible Studies Program worked to meet the diverse needs of learners in a way that honoured their individual learning style and pace while creating a 'school within a school' so that students would have an opportunity to create close relationships with the adults with whom they were working. The Flexible Studies Program was originally an English only program; however, with the inclusion of French Immersion at Reynolds, the program developed a second, French Immersion option. The Flexible Studies Program is part of the fabric of the culture and community at Reynolds Secondary School. There is an emphasis on service to the community, as well as a focus on achieving students' individual potentials, both in academics and other pursuits. The current Flexible Studies Program has stayed true to the vision of its founders: to be a place where students are able to learn and express their learning in a variety of ways, and where relationships are cultivated over multiple years, so that everyone's learning needs can be met.

THE FLEXIBLE STUDIES PROGRAM – TODAY

The Flexible Studies Program is a School District #61 Program of Choice, which provides students an opportunity to more deeply explore their interests alongside teachers who will guide and support them, using a structured inquiry-based approach. A focus of the program will be to provide students opportunities to engage with their community (school, local, global) throughout their entire process of learning the process of learning. To aid our students as they deeply pursue their inquiries, the Flexible Studies Program has established working relationships with the Songhees First Nation, the University of Victoria, the Royal BC Museum, City Harvest Coop, Ocean Networks Canada, the Parliamentary Education Office of the Legislative Assembly of BC, CFUV 101.9 FM, with local businesses, artists, and NGOs, as well as with our Reynolds parents and alumni. Each of these groups of people have expressed an interest to help mentor young people who share in their passions and are excited to work in concert with Flexible Studies teachers, creating a diverse team to support our students' learning. We believe that providing opportunities for students to engage with content in meaningful and relevant ways, to explore their own ideas and questions, and to share all of this with our community, will result in students who are highly engaged in their educational experience.

The Flexible Studies Program is unique in its team approach to teaching. The teachers work together to support students beyond the specific subject areas being taught. We believe that a strong team approach helps young people entering high school find a place where they feel welcome and safe, recognized, and respected, much like "a family within a larger family."

THE FLEXIBLE STUDIES JUNIOR PROGRAM

Grades 9 & 10

ENGLISH OPTION

The English option offers multigrade learning opportunities. Students in the English option have flexibility to work through grade nine and ten Learning Outcomes (www.curriculum.gov.bc.ca) over two years. They will complete three of their “core” courses – English, Social Studies, and Science – in a structured inquiry-driven model of learning. For instance, the Reynolds timetable is semestered (divided into two 5-month portions); however, in the English option of the Flexible Studies Program, students take the aforementioned courses throughout the entirety of the year. In this environment, traditionally blocked classes are replaced with teacher-directed lessons for foundational concepts in each of the subject areas, thematic units in which a concept is explored from a variety of viewpoints and through different subject areas (i.e., the theme of Blood would be explored through scientific, historical, cultural, and literature lenses), and through student-driven inquiry (where Learning Outcomes are linked to student developed questions and/or passions). This timetable structure allows time for students and teachers to learn about one another, both in terms of academic and learning needs, as well as personal interests. Similar to their peers in the French Immersion option, English option students will take Math with a Flexible Studies teacher in a course that runs in the morning for one semester.

Students in the English option of the Flexible Studies Program take their three of their “core” courses in the afternoon (and they complete their Flex service course outside the timetable). For an English option Flexible Studies student, the morning of each day is filled with their other courses, some required, such as P. E., and some electives, like art or tech ed. courses (students enrolled in other programs of choice, like the Centre for Soccer Excellence or the Reynolds Band program will have those courses as part of their timetable and may have a reduced number of elective courses as a result).

The Flexible Studies English option schedule follows below:

	Block	Semester One	Semester Two	Outside timetable
AM	A	Flex Math	Course	Flex Service
	B	Course	Course	
PM	C	English/Socials/Science/Planning/Environment and Sustainability/Independent Directed Study		
	D			

FRENCH IMMERSION OPTION

In order to fulfill the requirements of the Double Dogwood Diploma, students in the French Immersion (FRIM) option of the Flexible Studies Program take two of their four “core” courses—English and Mathematics—in the Flexible Studies Program (and they complete their Flex service course outside the timetable). FRIM/Flex students take their remaining two “core” courses—Sciences and Sciences Humaines—in the Reynolds French Immersion program (please see the [French Immersion website](#) for complete details on the full French Immersion program at

Reynolds). Students enrolled in other programs of choice, like the Centre for Soccer Excellence or the Reynolds Band will have those courses as part of their timetable and may have a reduced number of elective courses as a result.

An example schedule for the the Flexible Studies/French Immersion option **could** look like this:

	Block	Semester One	Semester Two	Outside timetable
AM	A	Course	Course	Flex Service
	B	Course	<i>Français Langue</i>	
PM	C	Flex Math	<i>Sciences</i>	
	D	<i>Sciences Humaines</i>	Flex English	

THE FLEXIBLE STUDIES SENIOR PROGRAM Grades 11 & 12

Once students enter the senior Flexible Studies Program, both English and French Immersion students take classes together. The senior program is to be an extension of the junior program in that students will be engaged in big ideas through their course work and, optionally, working on a two-year Senior Flex Inquiry Project. Course work includes Humanities 11 (English 11 + Global Studies 11) and Humanities 12 (English 12 + a course to be determined), Math 11, as well as the Ministry of Education Planning course requirement. As previously mentioned, the Senior Flex Inquiry Project is an optional aspect of the Flexible Studies Program in students' senior years. The expectation is that the Senior Flex Inquiry Project is in an area or field that the student feels passionately about and that they engage experts in our community to support them in said inquiry (these connections will be supported by Flex mentor teachers). At the time of their graduation, students involved in a Senior Flex Inquiry Project will present their completed project to a public audience in a manner of their choosing.

The courses for the senior Flexible Studies Program (grade 11 and grade 12) are listed in the table below. Please note that students in French Immersion are required to take Français Langue 11 and Sciences Humaines 11 in grade 11 and Français Langue 12 in grade 12.

Grade 11	Grade 12
Humanities 11 (English 11 + Global Studies 11)	Humanities 12 (English 12 + TBD)
Human Physiology and Biochemistry (Chemistry 11/Biology 12; either Grade 11 OR Grade 12)	
Flex Math 11	Senior Flex Inquiry Project (optional)
Planning (if they are in FRIM)	Flex Service (outside timetable)
Senior Flex Inquiry Project (optional)	
Flex Service (outside timetable)	

THE FLEXIBLE STUDIES PROGRAM COMPONENTS – VOICES

Voice & Choice
Outdoors & Nature
Inquiry & Innovation
Community & Culture
Environment & Relationships
Service to others

The Flexible Studies Program has always endeavoured to be a space where students were at the centre of their learning. The acronym VOICES reflects the manner in which the Flexible Studies Program will put its underpinning philosophies into practice.

Voice & Choice

At the heart of learning is the ability to pursue topics and ideas that intrigue and challenge us. In the Flexible Studies Program, we strive to nurture the natural curiosity that exists within all of us. We look to do this by giving students voice and choice in how they demonstrate their understanding of concepts, through using a structured inquiry-based approach to learning where and when applicable, and by shining a light into the corners of the minds yet unexplored by our students.

Outdoors & Nature

The future of our planet and the future of our children are directly tied together. In order for us to be leading healthy and happy lives, we need to be conscious of our connection and impact to the natural world. In order to help facilitate this connection, it is our plan for the English option to have two outdoor education trips each year. For our FRIM option and our senior program, the timetable is more restrictive and we will endeavour to involve outdoor education opportunities where and when possible.

Inquiry & Innovation

We are looking to create a space where students can begin to develop the ability to be critical and creative thinkers. The following definition of Inquiry Based Learning comes from Alberta Education, and articulates our beliefs well:

Effective inquiry is more than just asking questions. Inquiry-based learning is a complex process where students formulate questions, investigate to find answers, build new understandings, meanings and knowledge, and then communicate their learnings to others. In classrooms where teachers emphasize inquiry-based learning, students are actively involved in solving authentic (real-life) problems within the context of the curriculum and/or community. These powerful learning experiences engage students deeply. (from Education Alberta – education.alberta.ca/teachers/aisi/themes/inquiry.aspx)

Community & Culture

To aid our students as they pursue their inquiries, the Flexible Studies Program has established partnerships with the University of Victoria and Camosun College, with our local First Nations groups, with local businesses, NGOs, artists, as well as with our Reynolds parents and alumni. Each of these groups of people have expressed an interest in mentoring young people who share in their passions and are excited to work in concert with the Flexible Studies teachers, creating a diverse team to support our students' learning.

Environment & Relationships

The Flexible Studies Program is often referred to as a family. The environment is one that is welcoming to everyone. The relationships that are formed in the Flexible Studies Program are authentic and help to create a space where students, teachers, and mentors alike are empowered to take risks in pushing themselves to become their best. This environment is created through open dialogue between students, teachers, and parents, assessment practices that support students, and the cohort model whereby students and teachers get to know each other over the course of a number of years.

Service to others

The Flexible Studies Program values service to others and thus students are given the opportunity to develop positive character attributes and a sense of social responsibility through participating in organized service projects and volunteer work within the school and surrounding community every year. Here are 10 reasons why we value community service (adapted from UC San Diego – <https://students.ucsd.edu/student-life/involvement/community/reasons.html>).

#10: It's good for you.

Volunteering provides physical and mental rewards. It:

- Reduces stress: Experts report that when you focus on someone other than yourself, it interrupts usual tension-producing patterns.
- Makes you healthier: Moods and emotions, like optimism, joy, and control over one's fate, strengthen the immune system.

#9: It saves resources.

- Volunteering provides valuable community services so more money can be spent on local improvements.

#8: Volunteers gain professional experience.

- You can test out a career.
- You can develop your work ethic.
- You can make connections to community members for future employment or references.

#7: It brings people together.

As a volunteer you can assist in:

- Uniting people from diverse backgrounds to work toward a common goal.
- Building camaraderie and teamwork.

#6: It promotes personal growth and self esteem.

- Understanding community needs helps foster empathy and self-efficacy.

#5: Volunteering strengthens your community.

As a volunteer you can help:

- Support community members (babysitting, helping elders, community projects).
- Improve school tone & culture as well as other needed services (tutoring, tours, grounds clean up).
- Support younger children in the school district (coaching, reading buddies, crafts).
- Improve Environmental Sustainability (beach and park cleanups, tree planting, gardens).

#4: You learn a lot.

Volunteers learn things like these:

- Self: Volunteers discover hidden talents that may change your view on your self-worth.
- Government: Through working with local non-profit agencies, volunteers learn about the functions and operation of our government.
- Community: Volunteers gain knowledge of local resources available to solve community needs.

#3: You get a chance to give back.

- People like to support community resources or programs (like sports teams you might be on or organizations like the BC Cancer Agency) that they use themselves or that benefit people they care about.

#2: Volunteering encourages civic responsibility.

- Community service and volunteerism are an investment in our community and the people who live in it.

#1: You make a difference.

- Every person counts!

ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING

Students will be assessed using a variety of assessments and ways for students to demonstrate their understanding of learning outcomes. The following ideas summarize the Flexible Studies Program's approach to assessment:

- teachers provide opportunities for students to build their skills and knowledge by revising assignments and/or tests to encourage mastery learning;
- teachers consider a variety of assessment strategies and alternatives for students to demonstrate the achievement of mandated learning outcomes;
- cumulative grading is used in Flex, meaning that the mark a student receives reflects her/his overall mark to date in the course, not a term grade;
- a zero is not an option; learning behaviours are handled separately from assessing curricular learning outcomes;
- Flex students write final exams and/or provincial exams along with their grade peers in Math, English, Social Studies and Science.
- as per Ministry guidelines, percentages are provided on report cards for each subject;

Flex teachers also issue regular interim reports on student progress and, when requested, can provide a “snapshot” of a student's progress at any time throughout a course. Students will receive traditional report cards at each reporting period and the assessment will be based on work completed to that point.

THE FLEXIBLE STUDIES PROGRAM EXPECTATIONS

The Flexible Studies Program works as a four-way partnership of students, parents, teachers, and our community. These relationships are maintained through mutual respect and communication. To this end, there are expectations of each member of the relationship. The following expectations are meant to be read as philosophical rather than prescriptive.

Students

Students are expected to recognize the responsibilities that come with the additional opportunities offered in the program. For example:

- with the many opportunities provided to personalize one's learning comes the responsibility to take initiative in order to maximize learning potential;
- with the opportunity to work within a learning community comes the responsibility of treating everyone with respect;
- with the opportunity to interact with our community comes the responsibility to represent both oneself as well as our school in a way that helps to develop and strengthen relationships.

Ultimately, the atmosphere of Flex depends upon respect between people, respect for the learning objectives and methods of achieving them, and respect for the physical environment of the Flexible Studies wing.

Parents

Recognizing that parents and guardians of our students are very busy people, there is an expectation that parents will:

- Engage with your child about their work and their interests. Engage them in conversation about ideas and projects, questions and possible answers. In asking and conversing about your child's learning, we are strengthening the bonds between home and school, between interests and learning.
- As best as you can, engage with what is happening in the Flexible Studies Program through electronic means via our blog (www.flexiblestudies.blogspot.ca), our twitter feed (<https://twitter.com/flexstudies>), through participation in Flex volunteer opportunities, or being a mentor for our students by sharing your own interests and passions.
- Be patient and supportive with your child as he/she adapts to the Flexible Studies Program and to secondary school in general. Be aware that time and support is necessary as students find their places in the program and in the school. There is much written about how a student's persistence and grit in the face of challenges is a stronger indicator of future academic success than IQ. Supporting the fostering of these traits, both at school and home, is very powerful for your child.
- Where possible, provide a quiet place for your son/daughter to work in your home. Success at school is developed through positive habits; help students form these habits early by creating a space at home for students to continue the work they are engaged in at school.

Teachers

Teachers in the Flexible Studies Program believe that it is their responsibility to:

- learn about and know our students;
- challenge students to strive for the best within themselves;
- be exemplary teaching and life-long learning role models;
- provide clear expectations for students regarding performance and behaviour;
- give students the opportunity to be creative in ways in which they meet curricular goals;

- maintain clear communication with students and parents regarding student progress in the program.

Community

The community members that will support the learning of our students are expected to:

- share their expertise and passion with our students;
- engage students in a manner that continues to foster the desire of our students to be life-long learners;
- to challenge our students to have their ideas and projects positively contribute to the larger community.

THE APPLICATION PROCESS

The Flexible Studies Program application package can be picked up at Reynolds Secondary School (3963 Borden Street) or completed online at the school website at reynolds.sd61.bc.ca. The completed application package must be received (either online or delivered to the Reynolds office) by **Friday January 27th by 1pm.**

The student must:

- **complete the Student Demographic Form**
- **complete the Student Questionnaire**
- **include a copy of their most recent report card**
 - *please note that report cards are not being used to rank applicants but will provide the Flex team with more information to help determine if the Flex environment is the best learning fit for the applicant and initiate further conversations as needed*
- **submit the completed package to Reynolds Secondary School**

Please note: The application deadline for the 2017/2018 school year is Friday January 27th, at 1pm. All applications must be received by the Reynolds Secondary School office by that time. Late applications will be considered if there are still seats available in the program.

We look forward to a wonderful working relationship with both the students and the parents who become part of the Flexible Studies Program and will strive to provide our students with the educational opportunities that meet their learning needs and goals.

Please refer to the *Flexible Studies Program Application Package* for further information on applying to the program.

FURTHER READING/VIEWING

The Flexible Studies Program's educational philosophy has been shaped in part by the following...

Sir Ken Robinson

Sir Ken Robinson, PhD is an internationally recognized leader in the development of creativity, innovation and human resources in education and in business. He is also one of the world's leading speakers on these topics, with a profound impact on audiences everywhere. The videos of his famous 2006 and 2010 talks to the prestigious TED Conference have been viewed more than 25 million times and seen by an estimated 250 million people in over 150 countries. His 2006 talk is the most viewed in TED's history. In 2011 he was listed as "one of the world's elite thinkers on creativity and innovation" by Fast Company magazine, and was ranked among the Thinkers50 list of the world's top business thought leaders.

- Changing Education Paradigms - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zDZFcdGpL4U>
- Educating the Heart and Mind - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I1A4OGiVK30>

Paul Tough

How Children Succeed: Grit, Curiosity, and the Hidden Power of Character

The story we usually tell about childhood and success is the one about intelligence: success comes to those who score highest on tests, from preschool admissions to SATs. But in *How Children Succeed*, Paul Tough argues that the qualities that matter most have more to do with character: skills like perseverance, curiosity, conscientiousness, optimism, and self-control.

- How children succeed - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mxEbWfu65Ro>

Daniel Pink

Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us

Most of us believe that the best way to motivate ourselves and others is with external rewards like money—the carrot-and-stick approach. That's a mistake, Daniel H. Pink says in, *Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us*, his provocative and persuasive new book. The secret to high performance and satisfaction—at work, at school, and at home—is the deeply human need to direct our own lives, to learn and create new things, and to do better by ourselves and our world.

- Drive: The surprising truth about what motivates us - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u6XAPnuFjJc>

Dr. Carol Dweck

Mindset: The New Psychology of Success

Mindset is a simple idea discovered by world-renowned Stanford University psychologist Carol Dweck in decades of research on achievement and success—a simple idea that makes all the difference. Teaching a growth mindset creates motivation and productivity in the worlds of business, education, and sports.

- How not to praise your kids - <http://nymag.com/news/features/27840/>

Dr. Noam Chomsky

American linguist, philosopher, cognitive scientist, logician, political critic, and activist

- The Purpose of Education - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DdNAUJWJN08>

Pasi Sahlberg

Pasi Sahlberg is Finnish educator and scholar. He worked as schoolteacher, teacher educator and policy advisor in Finland and has analysed education systems around the world. His

expertise includes international education policies, educational change, future of schooling, and classroom teaching and learning.

- GERM that kills schools - http://youtu.be/TdgS--9Zg_0
- *Finnish Lessons* - <http://pasisahlberg.com/finnish-lessons/about-finnish-lessons/>

Dr. Martin Brokenleg

Co-founder of Circle of Courage; Ph.D in psychology and Director of Native Ministries and Professor of Native American Theology and Ministries at the Vancouver School of Theology

- About Circle of Courage - <http://www.reclaiming.com/content/about-circle-of-courage>

Diane Gossen - Restitution

Diane Gossen is an educator who has worked extensively in corrections and addictions. She used her learnings from the Aboriginal communities in Northern Canada as well as her instructor experience in Reality Therapy to create the program Restitution Self Discipline.

- <http://realrestitution.com/>

Dr. Dylan Wiliam

Dylan Wiliam, PhD, is a consultant who works with educators in the United Kingdom and North America to develop effective, research-based formative assessment practices. In addition to a doctor of education, Dr. Wiliam holds numerous degrees in mathematics and mathematics education.

- Assessment for Learning - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B3HRvFsZHoo>

Dr. Stuart Shanker

Stuart Shanker is Distinguished Research Professor of Philosophy and Psychology at York University and Director of the Milton and Ethel Harris Research Initiative at York University (www.mehri.ca). He was educated at the University of Toronto, where he won several awards, including a scholarship to study at Oxford, where he obtained a First in PPE and won the Marian Buck Fellowship at Christ Church, where he obtained a First in a B Phil in Philosophy and a D Phil with Distinction in Philosophy.

- Self-Regulation and Learning - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HTbAFmOdImY>

Dr. Allison Hadwin

Dr. Hadwin teaches in the Learning and Development and Measurement and Evaluation programs. She teaches graduate and undergraduate courses about learning, self-regulation, learning technologies, and research methods.

- Faces of UVic Research - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gu8OtVZzAl4>

Alfie Kohn

Punished by Rewards

Alfie Kohn writes and speaks widely on human behavior, education, and parenting. The author of twelve books and scores of articles, he lectures at education conferences and universities as well as to parent groups and corporations.

Kohn's criticisms of competition and rewards have been widely discussed and debated, and he has been described in Time magazine as "perhaps the country's most outspoken critic of education's fixation on grades [and] test scores."