

R.C. Palmer Secondary School



GRADE 8 WELCOME GUIDE The R.C. Palmer Grads of 2031

Welcome to your first year of high school at
R.C. Palmer Secondary School!!!

*Palmer Pride: Together
we dream, we strive, we achieve*

A Few Cool Things About R.C. Palmer Secondary

Congratulations and welcome to Palmer! As the grads of 2031, you will be a member of our 35th graduating class!

We have been open since September 1959... as a Junior High School with 769 students in Grades 7,8 and 9. A fire destroyed part of the building in 1976 and the school was renovated during the next two years AND again in the late 1990's! It was officially reopened in May 2000 and was a full grade 8 -12 secondary school. The first graduating class walked across the stage in June of 1997.

R.C. Palmer Secondary is often referred to as Palmer Secondary. We are the Palmer Griffins and our colours are navy blue and powder blue. The Griffin is part of the original school crest designed by the first art department here at Palmer!

Our Mission Statement The purpose of R.C. Palmer Secondary School is to provide opportunities which will enable all learners to develop their individual potential and to acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to become educated citizens. **Palmer Pride: Together ... we dream, we strive, we achieve.**

A place for learning and growing ... learning and doing well in school is a huge part of being at R.C. Palmer and over the next five years you can explore a diverse range of interesting courses, programs and learning opportunities, inside and outside the classroom.

A Great History The R.C. Palmer Griffins have established a rich history and developed a legacy of excellence – in the classroom, on the playing fields and in fine and performing arts. Palmer PRIDE – share it, show it!

R.C. Palmer offers an Incentive Program this is a cross-grade, cross-curricular program designed to challenge highly motivated and capable students to reach their full potential, so that by the time these students enter Grade 12, they are well-prepared to take on the rigors of Advanced Placement (AP) university preparatory courses should they so choose, and eventually to move on to university or college.

R.C. Palmer Library Learning Commons ... The R.C. Palmer Library supports student learning by providing access to curriculum related materials in many forms. In addition to meeting the needs of students creating projects, undertaking independent study, and reading for pleasure, the Library, through its online catalogue, also provides support for independent scholarly research. Mr. Morley provides technical support for students completing essays and constructing projects.

Get Connected to R.C. Palmer

We want parents and students to connect with us.

- bookmark our website: <http://palmer.sd38.bc.ca>
- follow us on Twitter [@PalmerSecondary](#)
- make sure we have your up-to-date e-mail address - we send a lot of information to students and parents through e-mail.

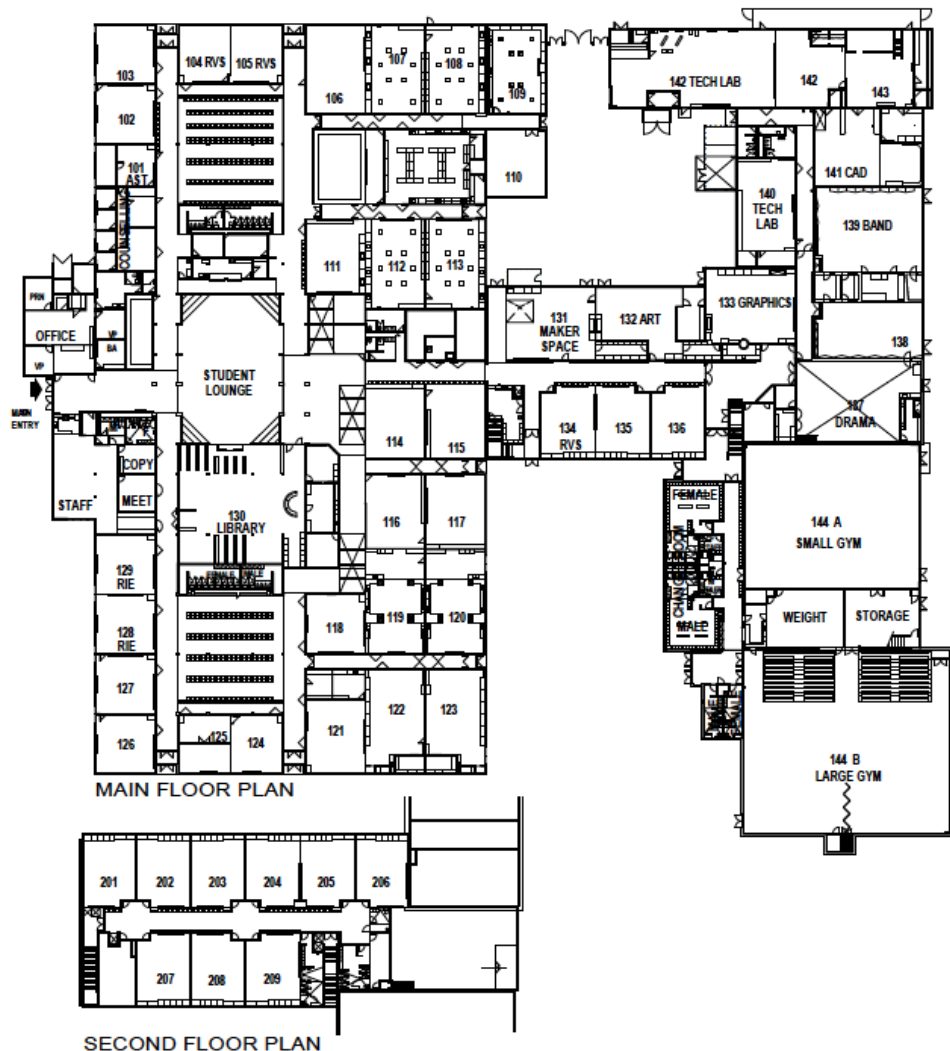


FINDING YOUR WAY AROUND AND OUR SCHOOL MAP

Different Teachers, Different Classmates, Different Classrooms:

You will have different teachers (e.g. a Math teacher, a Humanities teacher, a PE teacher, etc.) and meet in different classrooms. You will also have different combinations of classmates in each of your classes. This is a big difference from elementary school, but it also offers exciting opportunities to meet and learn with many people in different classrooms, labs and specialised spaces. Most Grade 8s really like this aspect of high school!

Finding your way around the school can seem a little scary at first – but our school is not as complicated as most malls! We encourage you to carry a map around for the first week or so and ASK if you need some help. Our hallways can seem very busy BUT you will be fine once you travel to your classes a few times.



R. C. PALMER'S BELL SCHEDULE AND YOUR TIMETABLE

R. C. Palmer's Daily Schedule

Students will take 4 courses each semester.

Semester 1: Sept to Feb

Semester 2 Feb to June

 Student Bell Schedule - 2026/2027				
Monday/Tuesday/ Friday	COLLABORATION DAY (Tuesday) Sept 15 2026; Oct 6 2026; Nov 17 2026; Dec 1 2026; Jan 5 2027; Feb 2 2027; Apr 6 2027; May 4 2027; Jun 1 2027	PALMER LEARNING TIME (Every Wednesday)	PALMER LEARNING TIME (Every Thursday)	PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES Early Dismissal
BLOCK A 8:30 - 9:51	Collaboration Time - 8:30 - 9:25	BLOCK A 8:30 - 9:35	BLOCK A 8:30 - 9:35	BLOCK A 8:30 - 9:35
BLOCK B 9:56 - 11:17	BLOCK A 9:30 - 10:35	Palmer Learning Time - 9:40 - 10:40	Palmer Learning Time - 9:40 - 10:40	BLOCK B 9:40 - 10:45
NUTRITION BREAK 11:17 - 11:29	BLOCK B 10:40 - 11:45	BLOCK B 10:45 - 11:50	BLOCK B 10:45 - 11:50	NUTRITION BREAK 10:45 - 10:55
BLOCK C 11:29 - 12:50	NUTRITION BREAK 11:45 - 12:00	NUTRITION BREAK 11:50 - 12:05	NUTRITION BREAK 11:50 - 12:05	BLOCK C 11:00 - 12:05
LUNCH 12:50 - 1:35	BLOCK C 12:00 - 1:05	BLOCK C 12:05 - 1:10	BLOCK C 12:05 - 1:10	BLOCK D 12:10 - 1:15
BLOCK D 1:39 - 3:00	LUNCH 1:05 - 1:50	LUNCH 1:10 - 1:55	LUNCH 1:10 - 1:55	LUNCH 1:15 - 2:00
	BLOCK D 1:55 - 3:00	BLOCK D 1:55 - 3:00	BLOCK D 1:55 - 3:00	DISMISSAL

It is always a great idea to keep checking the Palmer school website:

<https://palmer.sd38.bc.ca/>

R. C. Palmer's Office

All students are welcome to come to the Palmer office if they have any questions or need help. In the Palmer office you will find our two vice-principals, Mr. Byres, Ms. Lacoumentas as well as Mr. Ghaug, our principal. You will also find Ms. Dowsett, Ms. Ye and Ms. Wang who are the Administrative Assistants and can help you with various requests – feel free to ask us any questions, and if we don't know the answers, we will try and find the person that does! Finally, we have Ms. Henry, the Business Assistant, who is the person to see when you have to pay for sketch books, PE locks and any other school related costs!

SCHOOL EXPECTATIONS

What Does It Mean To Be A Griffin?



Similar to the Richmond School District, we have a Code of Conduct and our school expectations are on our website – please read these.

As a school, we are introducing a way to share what it means to be a part of the R.C. Palmer community and build school connectedness. A way of remembering these expectations involves using our school phrase: **Palmer PRIDE.**

Our most important expectations are that we show Palmer PRIDE:

- P – Positive Attitude
- R – Respect
- I – Integrity
- D – Diversity
- E – Excellence

School-wide connectedness is a strategy for encouraging positive behaviour with all students. School-wide expectations are based on values that we want to see reflected in our students. These expectations enhance connectedness among our students, staff, and community, creating an overall climate and culture in the school that is welcoming and safe. Look out for our PRIDE ambassadors at the next school event.

What About Cell Phones and Other Devices?

All R.C. Palmer students are expected to be thoughtful digital citizens and only use their cell phones and devices in class with the permission of their teacher. If you are old enough to have your own cell phone, you are expected to be responsible enough to regulate your behaviour. We have WiFi in the school and you will be able to connect to the internet.

Remember, the internet is forever – always THINK before you text, post, like or share an image or message. If it is unkind, hurtful, and inappropriate or you would not want your parents or teacher to see it, then DON'T do it! The staff and school are not responsible for any loss, theft or damage to your cell phone.



PERSONAL DIGITAL DEVICES

The Richmond Board of Education passed a motion to update Policy 105: District Code of Conduct, effective July 1, 2024. This update includes the addition of language restricting the use of personal digital devices by students to enhance online safety and ensure a focused learning environment. Students' use of personal digital devices at school will be restricted, including during instructional time or learning related activities, to promote online safety and a focused learning environment, unless use is permitted by supervising staff. We will support the acceptable use of student personal digital devices for accessibility and accommodation needs, medical and health needs, and to support equity of learning outcomes. Students and parents are encouraged to review these policies by visiting the school website: [NEW Policies: Personal Digital Devices](#)



Your First Day of High School – September 8th 2026!

We hope your first day of high school is exciting, positive and enjoyable! To be best prepared for your first day, make sure that you check the school website at the end of August. On the Friday before school starts, you will find your name posted on a list outside of the school doors at the front of the building and it will tell you where you have been assigned to go on the first day. This information will be posted on our website on Friday too! Grade 8s will be directed where to go on their first day and will be welcomed by student leaders.

Assembly → Homeroom → Home

After the welcome assembly with all the other Grade 8s you will be led to your homeroom classroom by our Leadership students. Here, your homeroom teacher will share important information before dismissing you. Your first day is shorter and you should be done for the day by 10am.

Your Locker (if you want one!!):

Locker use has steadily declined in recent years. To help us allocate lockers more effectively, please discuss with your parents/guardians whether you really need a locker and will use it! Listen for further information. Locker sign up will be determined in early September but please note that higher grades are allocated lockers first. Stay tuned for more information, **SHOULD** you want one. Your locker is safe, but it is not a bank vault, so do not leave really valuable items in your locker. Learning how to use a combination lock can be tricky – but with some practice you will soon become an expert!



We suggest that you **NEVER** share your locker combination with **ANYONE!!!** We pride ourselves on having an awesome community of learners here at R.C. Palmer – but as the saying goes – it is better to be safe than sorry!.

Please see a graphic below showing you how to open your lock!



1. Turn right two or more whole turns and stop at the first number (8)



2. Then turn left one whole turn past the first number and stop at second number (29)



3. Now turn right directly to last number (42), pull down to open

What will the rest of the first week look like?

The first FULL day of school starts on Wednesday September 9th 2026. We will start the day with your homeroom teacher distributing any important information and asking you to hand in any forms and fees that are due. You will have a ten-minute homeroom EVERY day for the first week of school.

What Will I Need For Class?

The first day in all your classes will be a welcome and introduction to the course and the teacher. You will get a course outline that describes what you will learn and do in the class, the expectations of the teacher and any supplies you will need. Listen to each teacher as they may have specific requirements for class materials, but here some helpful suggestions for Grade 8s:

- Use separate binders with dividers for each “core” subject such as English, Math, Science, Social Studies & French (unless otherwise requested by the teacher) and LOTS of lined paper!!!
- Have a pencil case with pens, pencils, highlighters, erasers, a ruler, a glue stick, and post-it/sticky notes.
- Have a PE strip – for hygiene reasons, you should change from your school clothes into shorts or sweats and a t-shirt or hoodie and running shoes on the days you have for PE. It is a very good idea to take your PE strip home regularly to be washed too!
- **Always use your first and last name** – and write this on your pencil case and everything you hand in to the office and all of the work you hand in to your teachers. It's is very helpful to know and learn your student ID as you will need this from time to time.



Student Username:

Students in the Richmond School District require a username and password to log in to all accounts, class portal sites and Microsoft Office 365. Students may also use their username and password to login to a secure account on a district iPad or laptop. Students should keep their passwords secure and not share them. These can be reset by staff and the office.

Personal email address:

It is a good idea for all students to have and be able to access a personal email address. This allows students to reset passwords and use 2 factor authentication for district sites such as PLT.

MYEDBC:

Students should have access to their own MYEDBC account so that they are able to log in and see important information such as Schedules, report cards and grades. Log in and passwords will be sent to students in early September.

Students will also use their 365 login to access sites for booking PLT sessions – see next page

Palmer Learning Time (PLT) at Palmer Secondary

What is PLT?

Palmer Learning Time (PLT) is a dedicated period during the school day designed to help you become a more independent and self-directed learner. It's your opportunity to take ownership of your learning by choosing what you want to focus on—whether that's catching up on assignments, diving deeper into a subject you love, or collaborating with classmates on a project.

Why is PLT important?

PLT gives you the flexibility to:

- Focus on the learning that matters most to you
- Access support from teachers and staff
- Work with peers in a structured, productive environment

When does PLT happen?

PLT takes place every **Wednesday and Thursday**, scheduled **between the first and second block** of the school day, 9:40-10:40 a.m.

What's expected of you?

All students are expected to attend PLT. Use this time wisely to support your academic growth and personal learning goals.

How can I sign up?

Students will use their Teams login in to sign up for PLT. Instructions will be shared at the beginning of the school year and will also be posted on the Palmer website.





COUNSELLING SERVICES

What do high school counsellors do? Do I need an appointment?

One of the great things about high school is that *all students* are assigned to a school counsellor – these are teachers with master's degrees in counselling. We encourage our students to visit the counsellors as they are here to help all students in many different ways over the time you will spend at R.C. Palmer Secondary School. The counselling center is located down the hall from the office. Please book an appointment by emailing your counsellor.

Counsellors will be assigned by last name. Please check the website or Counselling Office door to determine who you should see. If you need to speak with your counsellor and it is during class time, you can ask your teacher if you can go and see them. The counsellor will give you a note to take back to your teacher. Most students come to see their counsellor at breaks and at lunchtime, PLT, or after school, but if something is really bothering you, just go see them right away as they are here to help students be successful! If possible, please make an appointment by emailing your counsellor.

What kinds of things do counsellors help with?

Counsellors are available to help you select your courses for next year, explain graduation, college and university requirements and to help you decide what your post-secondary plans may be. They are also specially trained in counselling and can talk to you about other topics, and this can include personal or family situations or issues with friends. They are here to support Palmer students to be balanced, healthy and happy people.

F.A.Q.s – FREQUENTLY ASKED GRADE 8 QUESTIONS

TEACHERS:

Q. What are the teachers like at R.C. Palmer?

A. Every teacher at R.C. Palmer is focused on helping you learn. While your teachers may have different teaching styles and personalities and you will be expected to listen and participate, all staff care about you and want you to be successful!

Q. How can I ask for help from my teachers?

A. Teachers will explain when they are available outside of class, but you can always speak to your teachers during class or just before or after class. Teachers also have email addresses posted on the school website if you or your parents want to ask a question about school or request a meeting.

HOMEWORK:

Q. Will I get a lot of homework?

A. Homework is a part of life in high school. It will vary from teacher to teacher and generally increase as you move from Grade 8 to Grade 12. The important thing is to stay on top of what you need to do and finish it in a timely manner (stay organized and use your agenda) and if you do this, you will manage all your homework just fine. Also, if you use class time wisely, you will have a lot less homework!

Q. What happens if I forget my homework?

A. Different teachers have different policies, so be sure to know your teacher's expectations. Again, being organized means knowing what's for homework and having your homework done on time.

ABSENCES AND BEING LATE:

Q. What happens if I'm late to class?

A. Attendance is important at R.C. Palmer and we expect students to be in class, before the bell goes. However, sometimes being late is unavoidable – so please don't freak out! Generally, if you are late, report to the office for a late slip that you will then hand to your first block teacher. If you are late for any other blocks, head straight to class and ensure your teacher is aware that you have arrived. If you are late frequently, you can expect the teacher to speak with you and make a phone call home to speak with your parents.

Q. What if I have to leave school before the end of the day?

A. Go to the office, and if you have a dentist or other appointment, we will phone a parent to confirm or you can bring a signed note from a parent/guardian and our office staff will "sign you out". Don't forget to let your classroom teacher know that you are signing out and show them the note as well. If you feel sick, come to the office and we will call home to be sure your parents say it is okay for you to go home.

Q. How do you phone the school if you are sick?

A. Your parent/guardian should call the school at 604-668-6288 and press 1 which directs you to our Early Warning Line. Students CANNOT phone in for themselves.

Q. What happens if I'm sick?

A. First of all, don't worry, people get sick sometimes and we want you to stay at home and get better! Please be sure that your parent/guardian phones in to 604-668-6288 and leaves a message on our Early Warning Line. When you return, it will be your responsibility to find out what you missed, when you can make it up, and submit any missing assignments. If you think you will be sick for more than a couple of days, your parent can email your teachers or phone the office to request a homework package.

Q. What happens if I'm going away for a family trip or a tournament?

A. We do not recommend that you miss school for an extended period of time. However, if you are going away, your parents must let both the office and your teachers know, in writing, before you leave. Although teachers may be able to accommodate your homework requests ahead of time, it is expected that you will make up the work missed when you get back. It will be your responsibility to find out what you missed, when you can make it up, and submit any missing assignments. It helps to let your teachers know ahead of time if you know you will be absent from school.

CLASSES:

Q. Where are my classes? Will I get lost?

A. You will only have classes in four rooms in each semester. Finding your way in a new place takes a little time, but you will quickly get used to it. If you're unsure of where a room is, just ask an older student or any staff member and they will help you!

Q. What if my classes are too difficult for me?

A. This year, 99% of Grade 8 students said that when they attended class and did their work to the best of their ability, high school was "about what I expected or easier than I expected". At R.C. Palmer, we expect our students to be actively engaged in their own learning. However, if you are having difficulties, speak with your teacher as soon as you can about your concerns. If you continue to have issues, talk to your parents and see your school counsellor to discuss further opportunities for support. *We want all R.C. Palmer students to be successful and we will help you!*

Q. What happens if I lose my textbooks?

A. Please take care of your textbooks as you will need to pay the full replacement cost if you lose or damage yours. If you do lose a textbook, please tell your teacher!

Q. Can I change my courses?

A. Grade 8s have similar schedules and rarely need to change their timetables. If you have a question or concern about your timetable (or there is an error – for example, you seem to have Math 12), you will need to see your counsellor and they will help you.

Q. Will I have lots of tests and exams?

A. Just like elementary school, R.C. Palmer teachers will use a variety of formative and summative assessment formats to assess what you know, understand and can do (e.g. creating and answering questions, doing projects, presentations, posters, charts, paragraphs, role plays and quizzes and tests). Teachers will clearly explain the criteria before you begin and you will know all test and due dates ahead of time and be given opportunities to review.

FRIENDS:

Q. Will I make any friends?

A. Making friends is one of the most rewarding parts of high school. At first, you will be meeting new people and it can feel a little overwhelming. Please take part in our Grade 8 Day activities whether they are in person or online, this is a great way of meeting students! And remember, being a friend is the best way to make a friend. Try saying hello, socializing between classes, joining a club or team, and being a part of the R.C. Palmer community as these will be your best way to find others with similar interests.

OTHER RANDOM PALMER QUESTIONS:

Q. Is there Wi-Fi?

A. Yes. There is a Wi-Fi network for students and visitors called SD38_Guest. You will get the password when you arrive in September.

Q. How do you open a locker?

A. All students will be given the opportunity to sign up for a locker with a 3-number combination lock. Practice opening a lock before school starts – it is not complicated, but it takes a little practice. Your lock will look like this one.





Q. Where do I eat lunch?

A. Most students bring lunch from home and find a place in the school where they and their friends like to eat. We have socially distanced tables for students, but you will often see students eating in front of their lockers or outside when the weather is nice.

Q. What does the Griffery food taste like?

A. Most students say the Griffery food is delicious and the prices are reasonable! Fresh hot and cold food is available daily with a good selection of items!

Q. Are the line-ups long for the Griffery?

A. While there may be a line-up at the Griffery, it moves efficiently and quickly.

Q. Can I ride my bike or skateboard to school?

A. Yes, you can. We ask you to be safe and, if riding your bike or boarding, wear a helmet and follow the laws of the road. If boarding or rollerblading, be careful around traffic and other pedestrians and do not board or blade inside the school! As you would anywhere else, it is very important to lock your bike with a high-quality lock.

Q. What are the people at R.C. Palmer like?

A. The people at R.C. Palmer are caring and kind. Whenever you need help (whether it's with homework or finding your way around), there are many students (and teachers and support staff) that are willing to help you.

Q. How do I act towards older grades?

A. You treat the older grades with respect, as you should with every other student and teacher at R.C. Palmer Secondary. The Grade 11s and 12s are role models, and if you ever need advice, they're a great source as they've had the experience and have been at the school the longest. You should never be afraid of older grades. We all have a mindset that we're in this high school journey together, and we help each other along the way.

Q. How can I join a sports team/club?

A. We want every R.C. Palmer student to feel that they belong at our school. The best way to do this is to join a positive group, club or team. We will have a "Clubs Day" where all clubs share lots of information about what they do. Students can investigate and see what's available and what they would like to sign up for. We have dozens of clubs to choose from, and there's always at least one club out there for everyone. For R.C. Palmer sports, there will be a sign up and many announcements saying when there will be try-outs or open gyms, so you will always be notified when try outs are for all teams and sports!

Q. Is there bullying?

A. We expect students to treat one another with *kindness, care and respect* every day and also grow into resilient, independent people. Bullying is not normal at R.C. Palmer; it is uncool and it is **not** welcome. If you ever feel bullied or see it happening to others (in person or online), the best thing to do is to talk to a trusted adult - a teacher or your counsellor, the vice principal or principal. Everything you tell a teacher or a counsellor will be confidential – and we will take it seriously and we will help!

BEST HIGH SCHOOL ADVICE EVER?



Almost every R.C. Palmer Secondary School student is interested in doing well. They go to class regularly and keep everything they do for each class organized in a binder and then, once a test is announced or a project is due, they spend time catching up, researching, studying and preparing. This is normal. However, if *every day* you spend just a little time reading over and re-writing some of your notes, keeping up with all of the assigned pages/chapters and reading maybe a few pages ahead, an amazing thing happens. When you go to class next, you will understand what your teachers are talking about. You will be able to ask and answer thoughtful questions and you will actually learn more deeply. Studying for tests will be easier and school will be more enjoyable. Your friends and classmates will think you're "really smart", but really, it's about being a better student. *Go ahead – try it – see what happens.*

Developing Strong Habits of Study: At R.C. Palmer, we believe the primary focus for students should always be achieving as much academic success as possible; however, students must be allowed to maintain a balance between studying and other activities and pursuits. Success in school relies on the strong and effective partnership between the student, the school and the home. Active support from parents/guardians in the completion of homework is necessary, recommended and encouraged. Make these top 5 “study habits of successful students” part of your school/homework routine:

1. Go to class prepared to learn.
2. Complete your work.
3. Ask questions and get help.
4. Be organized.
5. Practice homestudy regularly.



PALMER PRIDE

*As Palmer Griffins, we share what it means to be a part of the Palmer community through
Palmer P.R.I.D.E.*

***Palmer P.R.I.D.E** represents our values that we want to see reflected in our students. These expectations enhance connectedness among our students, staff, and community, creating an overall climate and culture in the school that is welcoming and safe.*

P	<u>Positive Attitude</u> We approach challenges believing we can succeed.	1. We give and receive encouragement. 2. We learn from our struggles and are proud of our successes. 3. We are engaged, active Griffins in school and our community. 4. We greet and treat visitors politely.
R	<u>Respect</u> We value each other, our learning, our Environment and ourselves.	1. We treat others kindly and politely. 2. We listen carefully to others. 3. We value our learning and the learning of others. 4. We leave the place better than we found it: we pick up garbage, recycle and compost. 5. We have healthy, well-rounded lifestyles. 6. We respect the safety of all members of the school and outside community. 7. We take care of school property: equipment, supplies and grounds.
I	<u>Integrity</u> We take responsibility for our actions.	1. We give credit for all work that is not our own. 2. We take ownership for our behavior and the associated consequences. 3. We are role models: we are honest, kind and fair. 4. We do the right thing, even when no one is watching.
D	<u>Diversity</u> We are proud of the differences in who we are, where we have come from and where we are going.	1. We are able to work in diverse groups and are open to other opinions and new situations. 2. We include newcomers in activities. 3. We respect all cultures, religions and sexual orientations. 4. We learn from others who are different from us. 5. We stand up against intolerance.
E	<u>Excellence</u> We do our best to achieve our goals.	1. We set realistic goals and work to achieve personal growth. 2. We plan ahead and are determined in our efforts. 3. We attend class on time and are prepared for learning. 4. We recognize when we need help and ask for it appropriately.

At the start of Grade 8, these are my thoughts about coming to high school...something fun to read again when I get to Grade 12!

