

Welcome to **High School** *A parent's guide*



Rainy River District
School Board

Ready?

**High
School!**

Set?

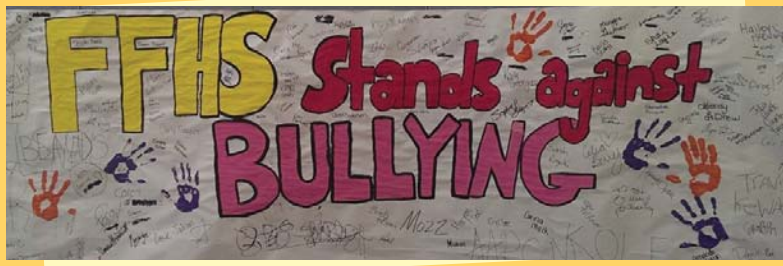
Parent Guide

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Rainy River District
School Board





Welcome to High School

Get ready for what just could be the most exciting and important years your teen spends in school! Teens, with the support of their parents, will have to make choices about what they will study and what career pathway they will choose.

Here's some more of what you can expect in high school:

- more courses and programs to choose from
- greater emphasis on career pathway exploration
- new teachers and classmates
- additional extracurricular and social opportunities
- increased independence and responsibility
- greater need for organization and time management

Whatever path your teen chooses, we want to make sure your entire family is ready to meet the challenges and embrace the many opportunities that await your teen upon graduation.

This guide will provide you with a snapshot of what you need to know to help your teen be successful. Your involvement is welcomed and valued. We wish you and your teen ongoing success.

Visit your school's website often to stay connected

Get involved

As student success is positively affected by parent involvement, why not get involved in your teen's education? When schools and parents work together, students are more motivated and engaged in their school experience. Explore the "Parents" section of www.rrdsb.com to:

- find out more about getting involved and volunteering in schools
- download tip sheets to help your teen succeed in school and beyond
- attend or join the Board's Parent Involvement Committee
- learn about school councils



Stay connected — visit your school website

The school website is a great way to stay connected and up-to-date on school news. Here's some of the information you'll find online:

- calendar and upcoming events
- school hours
- school's mission, vision and values
- career planning information
- subject and program information
- EQAO reports

The Rainy River District School Board's website —www.rrdsb.com— is also an excellent source of information about the school system. Visit the Parents' section for tips to help you boost your teen's success.



Student Handbook

At the start of each school year, high school students are expected to review their Student Handbook, which will be available in print or on the school's website. The handbook includes information about the school's mission, vision and values, introduces students to the school's Code of Conduct, and outlines the role that students, parents and school staff play in students' academic successes. It is expected that both parents and students review the Student Handbook together.

Leaving school property

High school students are permitted to leave school property on their lunch hour and/or study periods. Many students choose to do so to go home or to visit local restaurants and other businesses. Students do not need special permission to leave school property during the lunch hour and/or study periods. Attendance is taken by period in high school; an automated SynreVoice system will call home with a recorded message indicating the period(s) missed during a day.



School year calendar

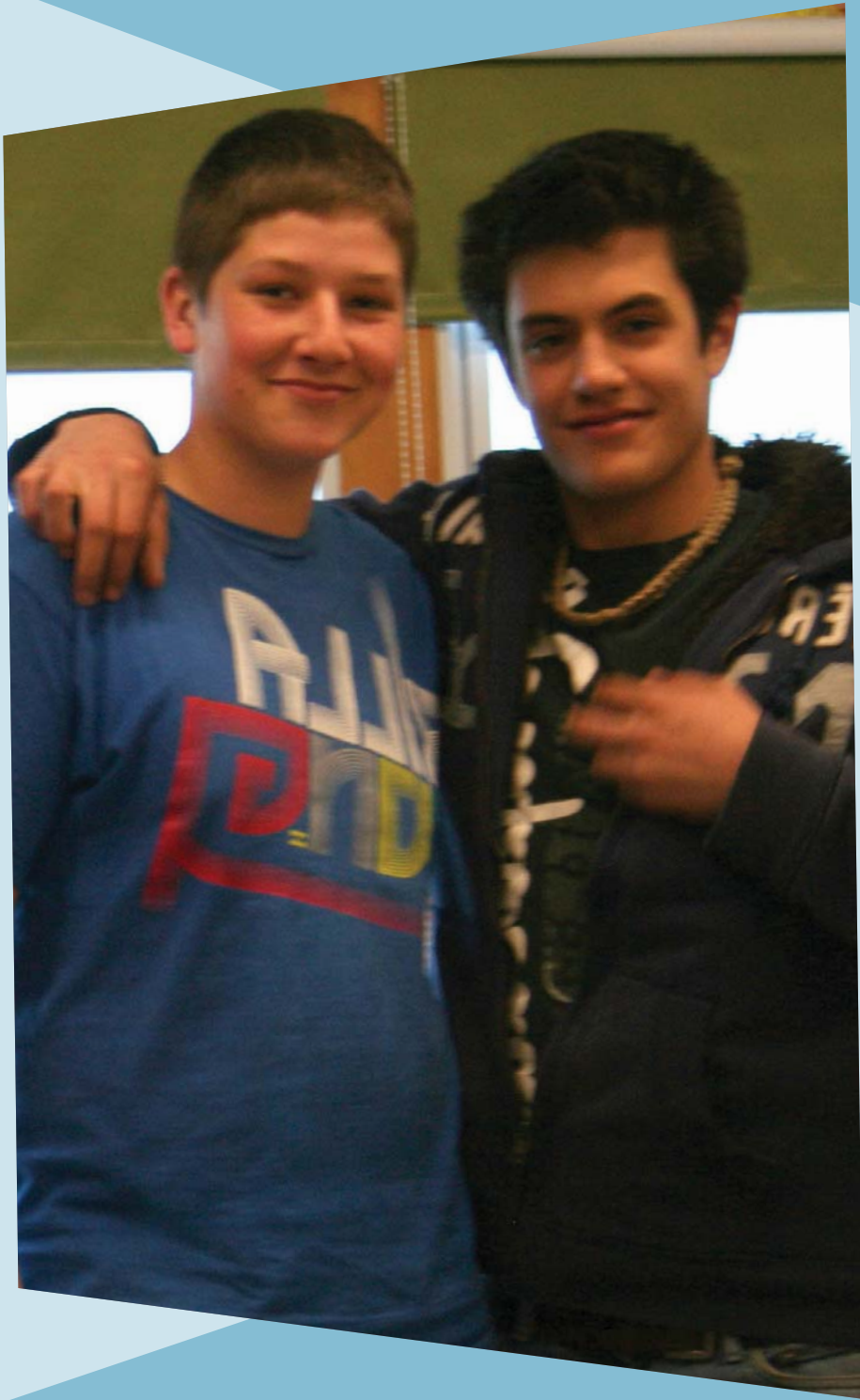
The school year calendar is posted on www.rrdsb.com and includes:

- the first and last day of classes
- holidays, including breaks
- professional activity days
- exam days
- year-end reporting days

School-based activities are sometimes posted on school website calendars. Check your school website.



SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				



Attendance matters

Many things affect your teen's success. One of the most important factors is regular and timely attendance. Getting to class on time and avoiding absences are critical if your teen is to get the most out of school.

To help ensure your teen's regular attendance:

- Ensure your teen is in bed at a reasonable hour.
- Set realistic and consistent schedules at home.
- Set your alarm early enough to avoid running late.
- Have him/her do what you can the night before to save time in the morning —pack lunch, prepare backpack.
- Encourage healthy habits to avoid illness.
- Show an interest in your teen's education.

Reporting an absence

If your teen will be absent, phone the school as soon as you can before the school's start time. Parents will receive a call later in the day if their teen is absent from part or all of the school day.

Parent SchoolHouse Data Portal

Schools provide parents with a login so that they're able to access information about their teen's attendance, credit history and diploma status, as well as course selection and other information. Look for the "Parent Resources" tab, www.rrdsb.com/parent-resources, to find out how you can register. You can also contact your teen's school for more information.

Lates

A student is considered late if he/she is not in the room when the teacher is ready to start teaching. Parents and students should refer to the school's late policy for instructions on what to do if a student is late to school or to class. If a student is frequently late, a parent will be notified.

Vacation planning

When it comes to planning family trips, please save them for scheduled breaks from school. Learning is cumulative, building on the skills and concepts that were introduced before. Missing classes for an extended period of time can make it tough for your teen to relearn classroom concepts and rejoin their peers.

Extended absences

If a student will be away from school for more than three days and less than 15 days, a signed note from a parent/guardian must be submitted to the office before the absence. The note must state the dates of the absence, student's name and what date the student will return.



Safe Schools

The Rainy River District School Board's Workplace Harassment and Violence Prevention Policy #7.75 and Safe Schools Policy #4.16, reflect the Board's commitment to provide and maintain safe and healthy environments conducive to learning and working for all. The policies affect all areas of the Board's programs, guidelines and practices, ranging from curriculum and assessment to religious accommodation, creating a welcoming school climate and preventing discrimination and harassment.

We understand that equity and excellence go hand-in-hand. One of the Rainy River District School Board's core goals in its Strategic Plan, is the "Well-Being of Students and Staff— our working and learning environments are safe and inclusive."

We want our staff and students to be:

- **caring** – showing compassion and kindness towards others
- **cooperative** – working collaboratively with others for a common purpose
- **honest** – being truthful, trustworthy and sincere in your speech and actions
- **inclusive** – treating everyone fairly and equitably
- **respectful** – treating others, yourself and the environment with high regard and value
- **responsible** – being accountable and reliable in your actions and commitments

Religious accommodation

The Rainy River District School Board recognizes and values the religious diversity within its communities.

For some students and staff in Rainy River District schools, there are a number of areas where the practice of their religion may result in a request for accommodation on the part of the school and/or the Board. Examples include prayer/rituals, dietary requirements, religious attire and participation in daily activities and curriculum.

Families should submit a religious accommodation request in writing to their school principal in early September or as soon in the school year as possible.



Safe places to learn

As a parent, nothing is more important than your teen's safety and well-being. We share that priority. We're committed to providing a healthy and supportive learning and working environment for our students and staff.

Schools of the Rainy River District School Board provide a safe environment for staff and students to work and learn. The Board has many procedures to ensure safety — including regular fire drills, lockdown drills, evacuation plans, and criminal records checks for new staff and volunteers.

A focus on safety

The Rainy River District School Board's Safe Schools policy is based on the *Education Act* and the Ontario Code of Conduct. The policy is available from the school or on www.rrdsb.com—Board Information—Board Policies—4.16 Safe Schools.

Code of Conduct

Each school has its own Code of Conduct, which is based on the Board Code of Conduct. The School Code of Conduct is found in the Student Handbook. It applies to all members of the school community including students, parents/guardians, volunteers and school staff, whether they are on school property, on school buses, at school-authorized events or activities, or in any other situation that may impact the school climate.

All members of the school community have a responsibility to respect and honour the school Code of Conduct, to behave appropriately and to take responsibility for their own actions.

Bullying prevention and intervention

Across the Rainy River District School Board, schools use many programs and initiatives to prevent bullying and to intervene when bullying happens. In addition to each school having a Safe Schools Committee, school websites have electronic bullying reporting forms.

Schools take the issue of bullying very seriously. Once a report of bullying has occurred, the Board's Safe Schools policy and the school's Code of Conduct guide appropriate progressive discipline supports and consequences for all students (or individuals) involved. We encourage parents with concerns to contact the school directly.

Student well-being

In the Rainy River District Board, we strive to provide and maintain safe and healthy environments conducive to learning and working for all. Our diverse staff of committed, dedicated and caring people are well-qualified to support all students.

We encourage students to self-advocate—to reach out to an adult at school that they trust—if they find themselves overwhelmed or discouraged. Staff members are open to hearing their concerns and will assist in ensuring the appropriate supports are put in place.

Guidance counsellors, teachers and administrators are also there to help. Social workers, a mental health nurse and student success teachers are available to support students who may be experiencing difficulty or who are struggling.

If you need to speak to someone about your teen's well-being, please contact a school guidance counsellor or speak to the principal or a vice-principal.



Assessment, evaluation and reporting

“The primary purpose of assessment and evaluation is to improve student learning.”

Processes around assessment, evaluation and reporting are governed by Ministry of Education and Board policies. In April 2010, the ministry published *Growing Success*, a policy document that directs the assessment, evaluation and reporting of student achievement in Ontario schools, from Grades 1 to 12. *Growing Success* aims to update, clarify and co-ordinate ministry policy, and achieve fairness, transparency, equity and consistency across the province.

For more information about *Growing Success*, visit www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/reportcard.html.

How are students assessed?

Assessment is the process of gathering, from a variety of sources, information that accurately reflects how well a student is achieving the curriculum expectation in a subject or course. In the classroom, there are three types of assessment: assessment *as* learning, assessment *for* learning and assessment *of* learning.

Term work

Seventy per cent of the student’s final grade is determined by the work they do throughout the term with special emphasis on their most recent and most consistent demonstration of each course’s expectations. This 70 per cent may be comprised of presentations, seminars, projects, tests, quizzes, performance tasks, or other assessment activities.

Some of the assessments completed by students during the term will be formative (assessment *as* and *for* learning), or serve the purpose of informing the student (and teacher) of how closely he or she is meeting the success criteria and what they need to do to improve. Other assessments are summative (*assessment of learning*)—the teacher will evaluate the student’s learning and assign a grade or level.



Learning Skills and Work Habits

Learning Skills and Work Habits allow students to know how to learn more effectively, develop their potential as independent learners and take ownership over their own learning. They are evaluated separately from your teen's achievement of his/her course expectations.

How will my teen be evaluated?

Evaluation is the process of judging the quality of student learning on the basis of established criteria and assigning a value to represent that quality. It is based on assessments of learning that provide data on student achievement at strategic times throughout the grade/subject/course, often at the end of a period of learning.

Teachers gather evidence of student learning taken from observations, conversations and student products (e.g. reports, projects, tests, exams and assignments) over time and use this evidence, along with professional judgment, to determine students' grades. Determining a report card grade involves teacher professional judgement based on interpretation of evidence and should reflect the student's most consistent level of achievement, with special consideration given to more recent evidence. These evaluations form the basis of report card grades or marks, and are made so that progress can be communicated to students and parents.

Exams and summative periods

Examinations occur according to the Rainy River District School Board's published calendar. Information about how each school runs exams will be distributed to families at the start of each semester. The final 30 percent of the student's grade is usually determined during the examination/summative period which occurs in the final few weeks of each semester. During these periods, students are asked to complete tasks which demonstrate the skills and knowledge they have acquired over the entire semester. Students must be present during this time period as these assignments must be done in class under the supervision of a teacher.

Spares/study periods

When students are in Grades 9 and 10, they are generally not eligible for study periods (sometimes referred to as ‘spares’) throughout the day. As the students move into the senior grades, and the pace of their learning changes and becomes more independently directed, they can designate one period as a study period. If students choose to do so, they must use their time wisely, either at home or at school, while managing their workload and accommodating extra-curricular or other responsibilities.

Reporting

Reporting is the process of communicating with parents and students about student learning. Report cards are one part of continuous communication that provides students and parents with descriptive feedback that is clear, specific, meaningful and timely to support improved learning and achievement. Progress reports are issued early, at the start of each course. Mid-term reports are issued once in the middle of each semester. Final report cards are issued at the end of each of the two terms—in February and in June.

Who can I speak to about my teen’s progress?

Report cards are one aspect of ongoing communication between home and school. As always, we encourage you to discuss concerns and questions with your teen’s teachers, guidance counsellor or administration at any time.

We encourage you to attend Parent-Teacher Interview Nights to speak to your teen’s teachers about his or her progress.

Student services

Choosing one's path in life—whether it involves post secondary, participating in an apprenticeship or directly entering the workforce—requires time and planning. All students will develop an Individual Pathway Program (IPP) that will allow them to plan and prepare in making these choices.

Pathways—apprenticeship, college, independent living, university, workplace

As students make their way through high school, it's important to plan what they will be doing after they graduate. There's no right or wrong answer—only the one that is right for each individual.

There are five main destinations to be considered—apprenticeship, college, independent living, university and going directly to work. Each provides valuable skills and experience that will be required in the future job market.

A self-assessment of skills, interests, abilities and preferred learning style will help your teen decide the best path. Students can meet with their school guidance counsellor to discuss their pathway plan. For more information about career/life planning, visit www.edu.gov.on.ca/morestudentsuccess with your teen.

Course selection

Course selection is a continual process and should be based on an individual student's interests, abilities and goals. To assist with this process, students are strongly encouraged to speak to their teachers about proposed classes, read course descriptions online or in the Common Course Calendar (see next section), talk to their counsellors and parents, and speak to students who have previously taken these classes.

Students choose their classes online—a password is required which can be obtained through the school. If students wish to change their courses, they must see their guidance counsellor as soon as possible. Please note that requested changes may not be possible.

Chart Your Course — Common Course Calendar

Chart Your Course is the Common Course Calendar for the Rainy River District School Board. This important document outlines courses available to students in Rainy River District secondary schools—

- some courses are offered through e-learning;
- some courses have class size limits.

We encourage parents and students to become familiar with the general information, rules and regulations in the common course calendar.

Diploma requirements

In order to earn an Ontario Secondary School Diploma, a student must earn a minimum of 30 credits, including 18 compulsory credits and 12 optional credits. Students must also complete 40 hours of community involvement activities and must successfully complete the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test.

Community service – 40 hours

Students must complete 40 hours of community involvement activities to graduate, which they can begin to accumulate in the summer before they enter Grade 9. The student is responsible for finding and completing 40 hours of volunteer work on his or her own. Information and ideas can be found on the Ministry of Education's Youth Connect website at <http://www.youthconnect.ca/htdocs/english/getinvolved/index.asp>. The school will not be directly involved in finding volunteer placements for students or monitoring students while they are completing their volunteer work.

Parents are responsible for checking potential placements before the student begins volunteering.



Student Success

Students who are not earning a credit are eligible to receive assistance through Credit Rescue. Students who have not been successful in earning a credit may be eligible to acquire the credit through a condensed Credit Recovery program. Please contact Student Services or Student Success teachers at your teen's school.

Student Success

www.edu.gov.on.ca/morestudentsuccess offers online resources and tools to help students make informed decisions and explore their options after high school, including:

- jobs of the future
- tips for parents
- careers with links to training
- links to online resources

Programs

The Rainy River District School Board is committed to meeting the needs of all learners. That not only means accounting for the differences between students, but offering innovative programs that extend beyond the traditional classroom. Information about our regional learning choices programs, including e-learning, and where they are offered is available from your local high school.

Scholarships

Scholarships and bursaries are awards of financial aid intended to help students further their education. They are awarded based on various criteria, which usually reflect the values of the donor or founder of the award. For more information, visit the Ontario School Counsellors' Association website at www.osca.ca or the school's Guidance Department.

Resources

Ontario Educational Resource Bank (OERB)

<https://resources.elearningontario.ca>

The OERB gives teachers, students and parents of public school systems (public and catholic) access to thousands of online resources to support student learning. Users can search the database by key word, topic, course and course expectations. Resources exist for students in all grades and in a variety of formats (e.g. interactive, document, pdf, multimedia). The database is continually added to by the Ministry of Education and educators.

*The login/password information below is for use by Rainy River District School Board teachers, students and parents/guardians only. Each board of education has individualized access. To access OERB resources, use **student login: rrdstudent** and **student password: oerbs**.*

Homework Help

Homework Help is free online math tutoring for Grades 7, 8, 9, 10 students who are taking mathematics. Homework Help offers live tutoring sessions in one-to-one confidential online environments. Students can ask questions, use the online tools and improve their math abilities. Homework Help is available Sunday to Thursday evenings, 5:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

Students can access the resource at <http://homeworkhelp.ilc.org> using their Ontario Education Number, which can be found on the report card.





Getting your questions answered

If you have any questions, concerns or suggestions about your teen's education, or about education in general, we're here to help. Here are some of the people you can contact:

- If you have specific questions or concerns about the education of your son or daughter, the first person to talk to is your teen's teacher or your school's guidance counsellor.
- If you need extra help, or have more general questions, your school principal is there to assist.
- If a concern is unresolved after speaking with your school principal, the third contact should be the Superintendent of Education. If the concern is not settled at the Superintendent's level, the fourth contact should be to involve the Director of Education. A person may take the matter to the Board if the concern is not resolved satisfactorily at the Director's level.
- Your local school trustee is elected to represent your interests and is always ready to hear and discuss your suggestions or concerns. If you don't know the name of your trustee, visit the "Board Information/Board Trustees" section of www.rrdsb.com.
- If you have general questions about curriculum, call the School Support Services Department of the Board at 807-274-9855 (or 1-800-214-1753).
- All curriculum material is available in your teen's school. Curriculum documents are also available on the Ministry of Education's website at <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum>.







Key information

School

School phone number

School website

School hours

Principal

Vice-Principal

Guidance Counsellor

Student Number

Ontario Education Number (OEN - found on report card)



Atikokan High School

(807) 597-2703

Fort Frances High School

(807) 274-7747

Rainy River High School

(807) 852-3284



Rainy River District School Board

522 Second Street East

Fort Frances, Ontario P9A 1N4

(807) 274-9855 or Toll Free 1-800-214-1753

www.rrdsb.com