

Student Assessment and Evaluation

- Individual teachers may have different requirements and expectations for assignments.
- Junior high marks are given in percentage or letter grade format and teachers include comments as appropriate or necessary.
- Alternative forms of assessment are used (portfolios, self-assessment).
- Junior high schools acknowledge students who achieve excellence through honour rolls or rolls of merit.



Other Differences in Junior High

Your designated junior high will provide full details on these other important items:

- Bus transportation to and from school.
- Reporting periods and parent-teacher interviews.
- School support programs include in-school resources and counselling.
- Dress codes and codes of conduct.
- Use of lockers and backpacks.
- Cafeteria food services and school snackshops.
- Increased opportunities for extra-curricular and co-curricular activities, including extramural and intramural sports and interest-specific clubs and groups.

How Parents Can Help

The most successful students are those whose parents are involved with the school.

Junior high teacher Linda Goodrich says "It's part of modelling - showing that school is important."

- Talk to your child before Grade 7 starts about the differences from elementary school and what to expect.
- Junior high schools hold orientation sessions for incoming students. Representatives go to the elementary schools, or a special day or evening activity is held at the junior high. If you miss orientation, follow up to receive important information that you may have missed.
- Volunteer, meet teachers, attend school meetings or events and read school newsletters.
- Encourage the use of agenda books for homework and check them for assignments.
- Set a regular time and place for homework to be done. Give and reinforce clear expectations.
- Adolescence is a time when children begin to define themselves for themselves. Teens need to feel independent from traditional decision makers.
- Teens seldom appreciate direct advice. Instead, listen to what they have to say and try to guide them to their own solutions.



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Transitions: Moving to Junior High

A Guide for Parents
www.cbe.ab.ca



Physical, Mental and Social/Emotional Changes in Adolescents

Your child will go through more changes in the next three years than he or she has experienced since the first three years of life.

- Physical awkwardness caused by bone growth surpassing muscle and tendon growth can affect self-esteem and self-confidence, as can variance in growth. Teens are increasingly sensitive to appearance. Birthmarks, acne and moles suddenly concern them.
- Teens are searching for identity and personality. They have a heightened sense of self-awareness, but they also want to “belong” to a group.
- Arguments may arise as teens try to establish their personal beliefs. They want immediate and relevant answers to their questions and response to their needs.
- Teens switch between a demand for independence and a need for direction and regulation.
- Peer groups become important and their influence over decisions increases.
- The former “oldest and biggest” in the school is once again the youngest and smallest. This may create anxiety for your child.

Junior High IS Different!

Junior High is a big step for your child. It's thrilling to move up and out of elementary school, but some changes can feel overwhelming.

- Often, junior high schools are bigger facilities with a different feel than elementary schools. Students may come from a number of different communities.
- Students will have more than one teacher, and will move in and out of different classrooms over the course of the day.
- Classes will be longer than they were in elementary school - lasting from 40 to 65 minutes per period.
- Most schools have a mid-morning or nutrition break after the second period to allow for a snack or a quick locker visit to change books. Lengths of breaks vary between schools (4 - 15 minutes). Breaks differ from those in elementary schools, as students are not allowed outside.
- Students are permitted to leave the school grounds during the lunch period.
- Individual junior highs operate with different class lengths, start and end times, and breaks. Modified calendars, semesters, trimesters and 10-month schedules, standard timetables and rotating timetables vary among schools as well.
- Most schools have one late entry or early dismissal each week which allows staff to hold meetings or attend professional development sessions.
- Regardless of how they are organized, all schools meet the Alberta Education requirements for a minimum of 950 hours of instructional time per year.

Academic Curriculum

- Student workload increases - homework expectations are heavier than those in elementary schools and may vary from 1/2 to 2 hours per night.
- Options that allow for exploration and development of individual interests and skills are introduced. Although choices range from school to school, options fall into four main categories:
 - **Fine Arts and Music**
 - **Career & Technology**
 - **Physical Education**
 - **Language Studies**
- Options selected in junior high school do not usually have a direct impact on post-secondary education, but it is valuable to give them careful consideration if a student hopes to specialize in a certain area, such as music, robotics or drama.

Special Junior High Programs

A number of junior high schools have certain programs designed to meet specific alternative learning needs. Program details are available on the CBE website at www.cbe.ab.ca/programs/prog-choice.asp Information is also available directly from the schools. Call our Public Information Centre at **294-8255** for listings.

Options to consider include:

- Late French Immersion
- Alberta Ballet School of Dance
- Sports Programs
- Canadian Studies
- Science School
- Arts-Centred Learning
- All Girls' School
- Traditional Learning