



Early French Immersion

École Élémentaire Colletville & Merritt Secondary School



Why French Immersion?

Given the strong support for bilingualism in Canada, French Immersion has become an important component of efforts to recognize the individual and society-wide benefits of second language acquisition. Second language skills are a passport to the world, the key to a rich professional, personal and cultural life.

French Immersion programs are designed to provide non-francophone children with a high degree of proficiency in the French language. In Immersion programs, French is not only a subject, but a language of instruction and a means of communication. In Immersion programs, much of the regular school curriculum is taught in French. Immersion goes beyond learning about French, to learning through French.

Immersion students retain their own language and culture while gaining an appreciation and use of another. Research confirms that knowledge of a second language strengthens first language skills and that the ability to speak two or more languages generally enhances problem-solving, and reasoning skills, the capacity for creative thinking, and the ability to respect and understand other cultures.

Frequently Asked Questions

Do parents of children in French Immersion programs have to be able to speak French?

The program is designed for children who do not normally speak French at home. It is not expected that parents will be able to speak French. Communication between the school and home will be conducted in English. (e.g. newsletters, memos, report cards, etc).

Is French Immersion delivered in an inclusive environment?

French Immersion students will range from gifted to those with behavioral, emotional, physical or learning challenges. Our French

Immersion program is offered in an inclusive environment where every child will be able to access the learning supports they require to be a successful second language learner. A child requiring reading, writing or other classroom interventions will receive these no matter the language of instruction. Each student will be supported to develop competence in French while enhancing their English language skills.

What will my child learn in French Immersion Kindergarten?

A new language is acquired by listening to and reproducing the models introduced by the teacher.

How does French Immersion Work?

French Immersion programs follow the same BC Education curricular guidelines as the English program. Only the language of instruction differs. From Kindergarten to Grade 2, students experience 100% of their core instructional time in French. Through repetition and role modeling, students are provided with positive encouragement to try out this new language; through watching and listening, students absorb and learn to respond appropriately in French. Beginning in Grade 3, English is introduced as a core subject and continued every year thereafter along with those taught in French: Math, Social Studies, Science and French Language Arts.

Early French Immersion continues through to Grade 12. Students enrolled in French Immersion follow the same prescribed BC curriculum as they would in the English-language school program. Graduates receive a bilingual Dogwood certificate.

Your child will learn French letters and their sounds, read names of their peers and basic sight words, sing French songs and understand poems, be able to respond in sentences and ask questions and so much more!

How much French is spoken in Kindergarten?

100% French ...eventually!
The amount of French spoken in September is very different from the amount spoken in June. Educators use gestures and visual cues, rather than translating, to help with comprehension. English is used at the outset to establish routines, and in the event of safety issues.

Will my child start speaking French in Kindergarten?

Yes! Educators use a variety of instructional elements that allow children to comprehend and communicate in French quickly.

Will my child learn the same things as students in English classes?

The curriculum must follow the guidelines of the BC Ministry of Education. Teaching and learning resources in French cover the same basic program as in English, although perhaps in a different sequence. Students work toward the same academic goals regardless of the language of instruction.

Frequently Asked Questions continued...

Will my child be behind in English if he or she takes French Immersion?

Evaluations of Immersion programs across Canada have indicated that the English language skills of French Immersion students meet or exceed those of children in regular English language programs. There is often an initial lag in English skills development, however, this is not unexpected in a predominantly French language learning environment. These same studies have demonstrated that the gradual introduction of English language instruction

skills gap by the end of elementary school. In fact, given that roughly half of all English words have a French or Latin root, knowledge of French can aid in building English vocabulary and spelling.

How can I help my child?

From the early stages of the program, parents can be of great assistance by being supportive of the program. You can read regularly to your child in English or simply talk frequently to your child about new experiences. Reading for pleasure should be encouraged in both French and English. In

this way, your child's English vocabulary will be enriched and their self-confidence will grow. At a later stage, certain portions of the program are conducted in English, and parents can be of assistance here. Most often, if a child is experiencing difficulty in a particular subject area, the confusion may lie with the concept, not the language.

The following are suggestions for parents with children in the French Immersion program:

- be positive about the program and the teacher;
- show interest in your child's daily activities;

- check newsletters for special events;
- check backpack or agenda for homework;
- communicate your concerns, questions or suggestions with teachers;
- listen to your child read in French and English;
- read daily to your child in English;
- provide access to French books, subscriptions, tapes, games, software, videos, televisions and radio;
- purchase a French/English dictionary for home;
- volunteer to help out at the school.

French Immersion Kindergarten Registration

French Immersion is a District program with no specific catchment areas. It is offered at École Élémentaire Collettville and Merritt Secondary School.

Registration for French Immersion Kindergarten students will take place from February 16 - February 27.

Register online at www.sd58.bc.ca

Assignment will be based on the following:

1. Priority is granted to siblings of French Immersion students continuing in the program.
2. Any remaining spaces will be assigned on a lottery basis if the number of applicants exceeds space.
3. Students, who missed the registration dates, may still apply to the program, but will be placed at the end of the waitlist.

How does the lottery system work?

We have not had to use the lottery system since its implementation in 2019. However, it does remain in place to ensure equal access to our French Immersion program.

If applications exceed the number of available spaces a lottery system will be used in accordance with the district's selection process set out below.

If required, available spaces will be allotted through a randomized lottery draw conducted by the School District Office.

Parents will be notified by email of the outcome of the lottery, within one week of the lottery draw.

Applicants not offered a space will be placed on a wait list. The lottery will determine the order of the wait list.

Those put on the wait list must register their child at their catchment school as placement in the program is not

Schools and Contact information

École Élémentaire Collettville

Grades K-7

615 Lindley Creek Road

Merritt, BC V1K 1L4

250-378-2230

Merritt Secondary School

Grades 8-12

1561 Chapman St,

Merritt, BC V1K 1B8

250-378-5131