

Niton Central School

Student Handbook 2024-2025



5307 - 50 Street
Niton Junction, AB
T7E 5A1
Phone 780-795-3782
Fax 780-795-3933

Website: <http://www.nitoncentralschool.ca/>

Office Hours: 8:00 am – 4:00 pm

OFFICE CONTACTS

Brandy Benson (Administrative Assistant) - 780-795-3782

branbens@gypsd.ca

Bailey Benson (Principal) – 780-795-3782

bailbens@gypsd.ca

This handbook has been prepared for the use of both parents/guardians and students. Its contents provide general information about the school, its programs, and policies. Information in this handbook is subject to change as the needs of the school shift.

Principal's Welcome

Welcome to Niton Central School!

At Niton Central School (NCS), we believe that small schools can have a big impact. Our mission is to ensure every student reaches their full potential through quality education and active community involvement. Our students' learning and development are our top priorities! We provide an environment where students can take risks, grow, succeed, and work hard. By developing these skills, our students are prepared to pursue their future goals with confidence.

As the principal of NCS, I am honored to lead a school dedicated to fostering growth, resilience, and a passion for learning. We are a rural junior kindergarten to grade nine school that thrives on understanding our individual students and their unique needs, ensuring their learning journey is successful. We offer a diverse range of courses including CTF classes, art, drama, French, music, and athletics, providing our students with a well-rounded education.

Our committed staff at NCS is passionate about creating a student-centered learning environment. We value the collaborative efforts of our community, working together to focus on what is best for our students. We cherish the partnerships with our families, supporting our students and teachers in the pursuit of personal and academic excellence.

If you have any questions, concerns, or comments, please feel free to reach out by email, phone, or visiting the office. I look forward to working with all of you as part of the Niton Central School team!

Mrs. Bailey Benson, Principal

Every Niton Student will achieve their full potential because NCS will provide meaningful education that will prepare students to navigate what comes next.

IN OUR SCHOOL students will learn how to:

- ✓ Think, act and speak positively about themselves and others.
- ✓ Recognize similarities and appreciate differences.
- ✓ Work together cooperatively.
- ✓ Treat each other with kindness and empathy.
- ✓ Be respectful and responsible citizens.
- ✓ Give each other support and encouragement.
- ✓ Develop a **PASSION** for learning.

Niton Central School Staff

Principal

Bailey Benson

Administrative Assistant

Brandy Benson

Teachers

Grade K/1 Morgan Konchakowski
Grade 2/3 Vikki Boyles & Shelley Simmons
Grade 4/5 Brianne Setzer
Grade 6/7 Jovan Kosior / Ethan Jones
Grade 8/9 Jovan Kosior/ Ethan Jones
Flex Leanne DeLeeuw

Learning Support Teacher

Brianne Setzer

Support Staff

Roberta Cave
Carla Konchakowski
Charlie Smigelski
Heather Tregillus

Family School Liaison Counselor

Emily Graham

Bringing Empowered Students Together - Coach

Karen Riggs

Librarians

Toni Smigelski
Nadine Sharman
Maureen Radcliffe
Jill Heintz

Bell Schedule 2024 - 2025**Elementary Schedule**

Time	Period
8:40	School Begins
8:40 - 10:25	Classes
10:25 - 10:40	Recess
10:40 - 11:50	Classes
11:50 - 12:05	Lunch
12:05 - 12:35	Lunch Recess
12:35 - 1:45	Classes
1:45 - 2:00	Recess
2:00 - 3:15	Classes
3:15	Dismissal

Please note: Students are expected to be outside during recess. Please ensure students dress for the weather. Students are allowed inside during the recess times listed above if the temperature is colder than -20 C.

Junior High Schedule

Time	Period
8:40	School Begins
8:40 - 9:30	Block 1
9:35 - 10:15	Block 2
10:20 - 10:55	Block 3
11:00 - 11:50	Block 4
11:50 - 12:35	Lunch
12:35 - 1:05	Block 5
1:10 - 1:45	Block 6
1:50 - 2:30	Block 7
2:35 - 3:15	Block 8
3:15	Dismissal

Notice to our Community

The information contained within this handbook is subject to a variety of external laws and policies, most notably the Education Act and GYPSD Administrative Procedures (AP's). While every effort has been made to ensure compliance with these documents, they supersede our School Handbook in the event that any part of our handbook is in contravention. This may be the case for example, as AP's are amended and updated from time to time. Should any part of this handbook be found unenforceable, all other provisions remain in effect until the handbook can be updated.

Registration

To **register** a student at Niton Central School, parents must complete a Grande Yellowhead Public School Division online registration form. Proof of age documentation, such as a birth certificate, must be provided when registering a student for the first time. Visit <https://nitoncentralschool.gypsd.ca/> under the quick links tab, online registration. Returning students will be sent a snap code in August. Bus students must also register through transportation. Visit [Transportation facts](#) to register your student.

Parent/Guardian Communication

Parent/Guardian Newsletters are sent to families via email and featured on our website at least once per month. Teachers also provide information on our Website, through Learning Management Software (Hapara and Google Classroom), or through Classroom Apps such as Remind101 or Class Dojo. Your student's teacher will provide you with this information in September.

Our school Facebook page is also updated frequently. If you have information that you would like put in the memo, or featured on our website, please contact the school.

Student Instructional Material Fees

Schools in Alberta no longer charge parents/guardians for instructional materials.

Regular Attendance-- It's the Law

Regular and punctual school attendance is a significant contributing factor to student learning, success and maximization of the benefits of effective educational opportunities and resources available in schools. In accordance with the Education Act and related regulations, regular school attendance is required and expected of all students registered for the Division's schools. Specific provisions regulating, monitoring and reporting the attendance of students shall be developed by schools in consultation with students, parents, teachers, school administrators and school councils, as appropriate. It shall be the responsibility of parents to ensure compliance with student attendance requirements and the responsibility of schools to ensure that parents are informed promptly when the attendance of students is unsatisfactory.

Section 7(4) of the Education Act, identifies absences which are excusable, two examples of which are illness and religious holidays recognized by the denomination to which the student belongs. All other absences are deemed to be inexcusable. Student attendance is carefully monitored and letters may be issued to students whose absences are extreme. In cases of chronic absenteeism, the Superintendent will be informed and legal action may be taken.

At Niton Central School, **parents are required to notify the school if their child will be absent. Please telephone (780-795-3782) anytime as we have an answering machine, or email your child's teacher or school secretary.** Where the absence has not been reported a telephone check will be initiated to determine the whereabouts of the student. Your cooperation in notifying the school is greatly appreciated.

Locks and Lockers

- 1) All students will be assigned a locker and junior high students will receive a combination lock. Both items remain the property of the school and must be cared for in an appropriate manner. Locker privileges may be removed if the locker is abused.
- 2) Students are not to make any permanent marking on any locker, including stickers and markings.
- 3) Only the locks that have been assigned to the school are to be used on the school lockers. If a lock is lost, or destroyed (except for regular wear and tear), the student will be required to pay for a replacement.
- 4) Parental inspection of their child's locker is available upon request.
- 5) In keeping with Grande Yellowhead Public School Division's **Administrative Procedure 356- Searches by School Authorities** the principal or designate, maintains the right to open and inspect any locker without consent and or knowledge of the student. In all cases, there will be a second party as witness to the locker search. Ordinarily, locker searches will be conducted in a student's presence and only when there is a reason to believe a school rule or the law has been violated. **Students are encouraged not to bring valuables to school.**

Student Expectations

Students are entitled to, and have the right to an education that: recognizes and meets their needs; occurs in a safe and caring environment; and encourages them to be proud and productive citizens in their community. While no set rules can ever take the place of individual responsibility, students are expected to follow reasonable rules of conduct which have been established by the Provincial government for the benefit of the school and the community. At Niton Central, it is expected that a student shall reasonably conduct themselves in accordance with section 31 of the Education Act.

- Represent our school in an outstanding manner.
- Attend school regularly, be prepared to learn, and use class time appropriately.
- Arrive on time to all classes, with all materials (binder, textbook, writing utensils etc.).
- Complete all assignments, on time, to the best of their ability.
- Have consistent and effective home study habits.
- Show respect for all personal and school property, and refrain from littering, defacing public property, any act of vandalism, or careless/reckless use of school equipment.
- Play Safely: No running in the halls, rough housing, play fighting, or throwing objects.
- Refrain from any form of bullying - physical, verbal, digital or psychological - towards another member of the school community, and to report anyone who is engaging in this unacceptable behaviour.
- Accept responsibility for their own actions and take ownership of their behaviour.
- Respect the right of other students to learn and enjoy the learning experience in a safe environment.
- Respect the authority of any person in a supervisory role.
- Show respect for all school community members by using proper manners, language, and accepting differences in other people.

- Encourage positive attitudes, cooperation and good sportsmanship.
- Dress appropriately following the school dress code.
- Respect all class and school rules and expectations for work and behaviour.
- Report to the office when coming in late or leaving early.
- Conduct themselves so that the noise level is suitable to the location and the activity.

Junior High Cell Phone Policy:

In June, 2024, the Minister of Education implemented a ministerial order on cell phone use in school with the expectation that school authorities, at minimum, limit access to personal devices and access to social media. Cell phone use in class is not permitted unless explicitly stated by the teacher for educational purposes. Cell phones are never permitted in the washroom or changerooms. Students are required to keep their cell phone in their locker or in the classroom storage area on silent or off. NCS developed a cell phone policy and form which is sent to parents at the beginning of the school year. Noncompliance with the school's policy may result in temporary loss of device privileges, please see the policy for more detail. Students are not permitted to take photos on school property. Parents please contact the office, and not your child directly, during class hours.

Elementary Cell Phone Policy:

Cell phones are not allowed in class or outside. If a student brings a cell phone to school, it needs to be kept in their school bag. Classrooms and the office have telephones for contacting parents if students find it necessary.

Lunch Hour Rules:

Elementary students eat lunch in their classes from 11:50-12:05. Lunch hour recess starts at 12:05 and ends at 12:35. For safety reasons, elementary students are to remain at the back of the school during lunch recess, within the designated areas, so supervising staff can see them. Elementary students are not permitted to go to the pump track during school hours; it is not on school property.

- 1) Elementary students are not allowed to leave school property; the pump track is not on school property. If an elementary student is going to leave, special permission needs to be granted by the parent or guardian, the elementary student must be accompanied by a parent or specified adult.
- 2) Grade 7/8/9 students are **ONLY** allowed to leave school property during lunch hour **IF** they have signed the parent/guardian permission form. If there are ongoing issues that occur while a student has left, this privilege will be removed. **The pump track is not on school property, nor is it supervised.**

Smoking & Tobacco Products, Alcohol or Substance Abuse

Tobacco, chewing tobacco, electronic or vapour tobacco substitutes, drinking alcohol or possession of alcohol/intoxicating beverages, or possession or use of marijuana or other illegal drugs in the school or on the school grounds is prohibited. This regulation also applies to all students involved in extracurricular activities for the duration of the activity, whether on school property or not. Transportation to and from that activity is deemed part of that activity. Violation of this policy may result in a student being suspended from school, possible removal from the sports team or club, and/or other disciplinary action.

Energy Drinks

Due to our concern for student health as well as student learning, energy drinks are not permitted at Niton Central School. These products have a great deal of caffeine as well as other stimulants and can make it difficult for students to focus on their studies. Students who are seen with an energy drink, will be asked to leave it in the office. The beverage will not be returned to them however parents are welcome to come and pick it up if they wish.

Dress Code

Dress code expectations will be implemented in a manner that empowers students to make decisions that promote a positive sense of self and contribute to a respectful learning environment. Clothing must be appropriate for the learning activity. Students are expected to dress in a manner that reflects a welcoming, inclusive, safe, and healthy learning environment within our preK - 9 school. School expectations for student attire take into account a student's right to fairness, dignity, and respect and will not discriminate against students based on race, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, cultural observance, socio-economic status, or body type. Clothing that covers the back, chest and midriff is considered appropriate. Clothing that covers undergarments is required.

To maintain a clean gymnasium floor and for student-safety, students **MUST** wear clean and appropriate gym footwear at all times, which will not leave black marks. Junior high students must also have a gym strip available for PE classes.

Additional School Information

Late Arrival/ Early Pick-up

When bringing students to school late, parents must **sign students in**. Likewise, when removing students from school early, parents must **sign out students** when picking them up. Please call the school office, and not your student directly, to arrange signing them out early. Calling the student directly disrupts instructional time before it is necessary, and the student may not have permission to access their phone in that class at that time. The office will have your student come out when you require them. **The sign-in/out sheet is on the front counter in the office.**

Bus Students

The students on the bus are under the immediate supervision of the bus driver and are thus subject to the rules set by Grande Yellowhead Public School Division. Any infractions of these rules by a student will be documented on a School Bus Incident Report, and parents and school administration will be notified. Students who disobey bus rules may be required to make other arrangements for travel to school. **Parents will be responsible for any damage incurred by the misconduct. Parents are also responsible for ensuring that their child gets to and from school if they are suspended off the bus.**

Bus Procedures

- 1) The bus drivers will provide school bus rules in September.
- 2) Bus drivers **must** be informed in writing or by phone if students are not to travel home or to school by bus in the usual routine.
- 3) Parents must sign their children out at the office when they remove their child from the school during school hours. The teacher or secretary will then alert the adult on bus supervision.
- 4) Students may not ride any bus other than their designated bus.
- 5) Students must be dressed appropriately for the weather.

Inclement Weather Policy

Students need to be dressed appropriately for the weather. Once there is snow on the ground, elementary students will be required to wear snow pants, winter coat, mitts, toque, and winter boots. All students should always be dressed warm in the winter in case there is a fire or an emergency that leaves them standing outside. Since most of our students are bus students, we encourage parents to sign up for the Bus Link to be notified of delays or cancellations on buses at www.gypsd.ca/routes.php. We also run a polar bear club on days when it is below -20 and above -35. If students are dressed appropriately and with parent permission, students will be permitted to go outside but are able to come inside whenever they would like.

Lost and Found

School policy stipulates that the school and its staff will not take responsibility for lost or stolen items. We have a 'lost and found' area that is located along the front window of the school. Parents are always welcome to come and look through the pile. A notice will go home prior to these items being removed from the school to give parents time to come in and have a final look (this is usually done twice a year).

Emergency Drills

Fire drill regulations and evacuation routes are posted in each classroom. We will have a number of emergency preparedness drills throughout the year. in accordance with GYPSD policy.

Parking

Parents and visitors may park their vehicles in the staff parking lot to the north of the school. Parents and guardians may also park on the south west side of the school however, they can not park past the Library entrance as this blocks the bus lanes and makes drop off for buses difficult.

School Sports Teams, Clubs and Committees -

School sports teams, clubs, and committees are run based on student and staff interest.

Fees are required for each of the sports teams to help cover bussing and equipment costs. Team sports MAY include and run according to provincial schedules:

- 1) Volleyball - Grade 6 to Grade 9 – September thru November
- 2) Basketball - Grade 6 to Grade 9 -December thru March
- 3) Archery- Grade 3 to 9 – Jan. thru April
- 4) Mini-basketball (Community Run) - Grade 3 -6 -March thru April
- 5) Handball - Grade 6 to Grade 9 -April
- 6) Badminton - Grade 6 to Grade 9 -April/May
- 7) Track and Field - Grade 7 to Grade 9 - May

Students are expected to stay in the gym during games and practices (whether it is a home game or away) unless they get permission from the coach or supervisor to do otherwise.

***No food or drinks allowed in the gym unless there is a home game with a concession.**

Note: Participation in these school teams is subject to the student being and remaining in good standing academically and behaviorally within Niton Central School.

School Programs

Junior High Flex Program

At Niton, we believe that the fundamental purpose of our school is to achieve high levels of learning for all students; therefore, we have implemented the Flex block to help all students excel. The Flex Block is for students to make choices regarding extra time needed with their teachers to get further assistance on assignments, complete reassessments, study, or master concepts.

Junior High Complementary Courses

Various options are offered each term during the school year. They have included art, cooking, outdoor education, technology, book club, wood burning, and leadership. Options will be on the report cards and assigned a grade.

STUDENT ASSESSMENT

Niton Central School's assessment practices are guided by GYPSD AP 360 - Student Evaluation, and will include both formative and summative assessment. Assessments are designed:

1. To give parents/guardians and students an accurate and informative picture of each student's progress.
2. To give students an incentive to persevere and grow academically as well as socially and emotionally.
3. To provide a variety of opportunities for students to demonstrate learning outcomes based on what they know and can do.

Homework and Practice Guidelines

Proper use of class time is necessary to ensure that homework does not become excessive. The purpose of assigning homework is to:

- 1) Complete work that has not been completed during class time.
- 2) To study and review for exams and quizzes.
- 3) All students should be reading for a minimum of 20 minutes a night. Junior high homework should not extend past 60 minutes a night, however a student's own work habits may result in a slower pace.

If students are receiving more homework than listed above or becoming overwhelmed, please contact the classroom teacher to make a plan to assist your student or resolve any issues that may be getting in the way of work completion and/or studying.

Students and parents can keep track of marks and missed assignments – with a password – by accessing their records in the PowerSchool program. Any student that, for whatever reason, wants to improve his or her mark in any class, can talk to their teacher. This may include a redo or replacement work or other assessment, depending on the class and the concept that the student is wanting to improve.

Report Cards

Report cards are issued three times a year. All kindergarten to grade six students will receive their report card via powerschool. Report cards across GYPSD are administered three times a year, all schools will have the same report card dates.

Parent/ Teacher Conferences

There will be two nights dedicated to parent/teacher conferences in the fall, and then two more nights in the Spring. Please be advised that parents are always welcome to make an appointment to see their child's teachers, and can contact teachers or administration whenever they feel the need to.

School Council

The purpose of the School Council is to advise the principal of the school and Board with respect to any matter concerning the relationship between the school and the home and the school community. School council actively supports student projects in the school, conducts information forums and advises the school's administration. It is an important link encouraging open communication among students, parents and teachers. The majority of the School Council shall be parents of students attending Niton Central School, but may also include staff members, students, and members of the community. The council will meet four times throughout the school year, near the end of each month, during the school year and we encourage everyone to get involved.

Committees - New members are ALWAYS welcome!

Hot Lunch Committee

Historically, hot lunch is provided at cost, one day a week, by volunteer parents. This program usually starts in October and runs until the end of April or May. Keep an eye on our Facebook page for details!

Nutrition Program

Niton receives a nutrition grant from the government that allows staff to supply healthy snacks daily to our students. We have also been fortunate enough to receive donations which help us to further enhance the supply of fresh fruits we offer to students. Snacks may include fresh fruit, granola bars, cheese, yogurt, hummus, apple sauce.

Parent Volunteers

Parents are always welcomed and encouraged! Any of the above committees, clubs and school activities require volunteers. If you have any time you are willing to spare, it is always appreciated. The more volunteers we have, the more extras we can offer the students. If you are interested in helping with any of

the above, or have a new idea, please contact the school to receive the volunteer package for you to complete! All volunteer activities in the school are governed by GYPSD AP 490 - Volunteers.

Year-Round Fundraisers

Niton has many year-round fundraisers. We encourage parents/guardians to drop off empty bottles at the Niton bottle depot with a label for the class or cause they would like to donate their bottles to. Sports will also provide the opportunity to order food and other items through Calahoo Meats and Mom's Pantry a few times a year, as well as running a concession at home games.

Niton Library

The library housed in the Niton Central School is a public library (Niton Library), and is operated by the Yellowhead County Library Board. This local library is open Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday from 10:00-4:30, Thursday from 12:30-8:00, and Fridays from 10:00-2:00. It offers FREE membership to county residents! Free Internet, WIFI and e-Resources as well as materials for loan make this library a hot spot! The library hosts two Book Fairs each year, a summer reading program, discarded book sales, as well as numerous evening courses (i.e. games night, sign painting, wreath making, etc.). The library also opened up its Little Pantry For more information, call Toni Smigelski at 780-795-2474 or check out the webpage at www.nitonlibrary.ca

Special Health Services

The local health unit offers school immunizations, dental hygiene and upon referral, speech therapy throughout the year. Parents will always be informed, and must provide written permissions, when their services are provided for the students. For more information, they can be reached at 780-723-4421.

Family School Liaison - Emily Graham

GYPSD School Liaison staff provide additional supportive services for students and families experiencing need or requiring assistance. Contact the school if you require assistance from our FSL counsellor. Your student's teacher may also contact you to discuss ways in which the FSL can support your student.

Green Grove Pool

Niton is very fortunate to have the community pool connected to our school. We are able to incorporate swimming into our physical education programming, as well, they offer swimming lessons for children of all ages. For more information, please call 1-780-795-3746 during the day from May to August.

Yellowhead County Playground

Niton is located right beside the beautiful new playground with a skating rink, pump track and climbing structures. Students, with supervision, will frequently use these facilities. Due to the fact that this equipment is off of school property, parents are asked to complete a permission form when they register their children for school.