



SelfDesign High Distributed Learning Program
Learner & Parent Handbook



“The world in which you were born is
just one model of reality.
Other cultures are not failed attempts
at being you;
they are unique manifestations
of the human spirit.”

Wade Davis

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School Information

SelfDesign High is a learner-directed, enthusiasm-based educational methodology supporting learners, families and mentors through an amalgamation of integral and modern learning tools and models. At its core, SelfDesign High seeks to co-inspire wonder, joy and integrity in all learning experiences and relationships through authentic self-discovery and respect for learner rights.

SelfDesign High Liberal Arts Approach

Our high school graduation program is based on curriculum developed from a liberal arts sensibility, which considers humans and humanity from an integrated, holistic perspective. Each of our courses is designed to cultivate critical thinking, self and social awareness, and to engage problem solving.

Learners will learn to value their own ideas, perspectives, questions and analyses - as well as those of others - as they develop their skills of examination and evaluation. It is not so much about the end result as the process of inquiry, exchange and experience.

To Nurture the Love of Learning

SelfDesign High nurtures human curiosity and our innate quest for truth through its liberal arts and peace-oriented programs and courses. Our goal is to deepen the understanding and acceptance for cultural, generational, philosophical and religious differences in the world around us. With this in mind we have designed our programs to invite learners of all ages to develop the initiative, self-confidence and practical skills needed to bring their unique gifts to the world.

SelfDesign High Mentors/Staff

Mentors employed by SelfDesign High are certified by the BC College of Teachers, or the Office of the Inspector of Independent Schools, B.C. Ministry of Education. As the representing educators of SelfDesign High they are responsible for supporting the learning of each learner. SelfDesign High mentors are interested in learners' individual learning styles and needs, and respond to these in the learner learning plans and learning activities. Mentors are responsible for learner course assessment via a portfolio method, which allows the different learning styles of each learner to be supported.

SelfDesign High Philosophy

“If you study to remember, you will forget, but if you study to understand, you will remember.”

At SelfDesign High learning is natural human behaviour and education is about life – about having the confidence and curiosity to approach new challenges and questions about oneself, others and the world we live in with an open heart and mind that reaches both into the past and stretches invitingly toward the future.

Our Approach

We know two things: as human beings we all want to be engaged in meaningful ways and that we are by nature learners. From infancy onwards, we are actively decoding our worlds and experiences, participating creatively in ways that shape these experiences as we build awareness of them. At SelfDesign High this dynamic and curiosity-driven process never stops. To encourage this we have developed rich learning resources which are accessible in a variety of media formats, and we have a wonderful group of mentors ready to connect with learners. In order for learning to be holistic and dynamic we see mentors sitting shoulder to shoulder with learners, both looking ahead, one with more experience and resources and the other curious about the questions that arise and how they make sense of these questions in their world right now.

We know that our learners value mentors who are knowledgeable and enthusiastic about their subjects. They understand that learning is a whole bodied experience in which they can engage creatively and investigate what it is they are learning about in a wide variety of ways.

The power of a distributed learning program is that its courses are designed for individual learners. It invites collaboration between Mentors and learners who can converse about the many ways to approach assignments and projects. Learners have the freedom and support to sculpt the course to meet their unique interests and learning styles.

At SelfDesign High we believe that learning is a discovery of the spirit and a blossoming of the soul. Through paying attention to what both interests and challenges us and what invites our hearts and minds to open, we can begin to bring the world what we have to offer.

Enrolment and Course Registration

Learners and parents are invited to (apply for omit) enrol and register in courses on our website.

www.iskhighschool.org

Please know that learner information is kept confidential unless requested and/or approved by a learner and/or their parent/guardian. This does NOT, however, include the exchange of learner grades and/or progress during reporting periods with the Ministry of Education, and/or the school with which the learner is registered full time. These exchanges are obligatory.

When a learner registers with SelfDesign High and is also registered at another school, we will request of that school a copy of the learner's personal record card and their most recent report cards.

Courses

We offer courses in two different formats at SelfDesign High: independent/self paced and workshop.

Independent/Self Paced

The mentor supports the learner as they work through course materials on our online learning platform *Moodle*. Regular contact with their mentor via email, telephone, Skype or ichat ensures learner progress and ultimate success. It is recommended that learners meet/connects with their mentor, on average, once a week. Dates and times are to be arranged according to availability of both parties. Beyond weekly meetings, learners are invited to contact their mentor any time (email, phone) with questions, to hand in assignments, and/or for assignment feedback.

Workshop Courses

In workshop courses the mentor meets with a small group of learners in a face to face seminar format. Learners have independent work as well as the work they engage in at the workshop. They will meet with their class and mentor once or twice a week, for 12 to 14 weeks, 1 ½ to 3 hours per day, depending on the course and its Provincial requirements (i.e. additional classes may be scheduled for exam preparation). Start times are often set after 3:45 PM to accommodate learners attending other local high schools.

Mentor/Learner Relationship

When a learner registers for a course with SelfDesign High they will be sent instructions on how to login to *Moodle*, our online course platform, and will be contacted by a mentor within a week. Is this true? I thought we didn't want to promise this?. The first piece of work that learners are asked to complete is called an

Activation Assignment

This assignment asks the learner general questions about desired completion date, communication modes and frequency, about tech experience, about learning styles and then more specific questions pertinent to the course content and previous exposure and interest.

The following information from the mentor is also offered on this first assignment:

The flexible and independent features of our courses ask a high level of personal responsibility of your engagement and completion of the course. I am here to support, guide and offer you feedback on your assignments.

If you find that you don't understand something, don't agree or enjoy the approach or assignment, or wish to explore an idea that is not represented in the course, please communicate this with me. In the words of one of our wise learners, "when I am curious I learn", and we know that curiosity happens when there is connection. If you are not interested or connected with part of a course let's talk about it. There may be another approach, resource or activity that would be more interesting for you.

Assessment

SelfDesign High is interested in providing learners with holistic and integrative assessment activities that reflect both their unique skills and abilities, and their ability to meet the Provincial and authority approved outcomes. SelfDesign High also invites learners to assess themselves and the course. Learners and their families will receive regular assessment and consultation in relation to their graduation plan. Requests for special exemption or absence from any assessment will be documented by SelfDesign High. All Assignments submit their work using Moodle or in person to their mentor and will then have timely and regular feedback on these submissions.

Portfolio

Learners' engagement with each SelfDesign High course is evaluated through a portfolio of activities designed to meet the learning outcomes. Each Learner will also engage in ongoing reflective work through which they respond not only to course materials but also reflect their own particular learning processes. One of our primary goals is to encourage each Learner to develop their self-awareness and personal voice. All of our courses include the following Learner activities:

- a journal
- a variety of assignments (in a range of possible formats)
- an art project
- an Independent Project
- self and course evaluations

We value our flexible and creative approach to each learner's needs and seek to respond to them in ways that capture the imagination and curiosity of each individual. In this regard assignments and approaches can be shifted in negotiation with the Learner.

Learning in a DL environment does not have an hourly allotment per course. Each course's learning activities are distributed among the different units of the course to meet and exceed the assigned Learning Outcomes.

Final Grades

Learners receive final grades after completion of each course in the form of a report card. This mark is included on her/his transcript. Learners also receive feedback on course assignments submitted to their mentor.

When a learner is registered full time with a public or distance learning school board, course grades will be reported back to their registered school for submission.

When a learner is registered exclusively with SelfDesign High final grades will be submitted directly to the BC Ministry of Education for accreditation of course completion on their provincial transcripts.

Exams

Learners taking provincially examinable courses with SelfDesign High may choose to either write their exam at the SelfDesign High Exam Centre or to be registered to write at an independent or public school in BC during the provincially set dates and times. If the learner decides to write the exam at a location other than SelfDesign High, please contact administration to make the necessary arrangements and to obtain a SelfDesign High learner ID card.

Graduating Learners

Learners wishing to graduate within the active school year must complete their course requirements before the allocated Ministry of Education deadline to receive credit and their certification of graduation. However, learners in grades 10 and 11 who are finishing their program after the Ministry's deadline, have a more flexible time frame for the completion of course requirements. It is always recommended that learners, mentors and parents are aware of any deadline well in advance of its arrival.

Policies and Procedures

Role of the Mentor, Learner and Parent Policy

Role of the Mentor

It is the responsibility of the mentor to provide:

Initial and ongoing educational support for learners enrolled in a DL course with SelfDesign High.

Ongoing assessment and evaluation of learner learning and engagement in the course (SelfDesign High uses a portfolio method of evaluation).

- An invitation for both learner and parent input, both during the course and in the final learner course evaluation.

Role of the Parent

Parents/guardians have a supporting role under the direction of the mentor:

Parents completion the appropriate components of the SelfDesign High enrollment.

SelfDesign High mentors encourage parents to help create a supportive learning environment for their learner.

Parents and/or guardians are invited to have ongoing communication with SelfDesign High Mentors.

Parents of full time SelfDesign Learners are invited to participate in a graduation planning consultation.

Role of the Learner

Learners have ongoing communication with the administration and mentors at SelfDesign High. They will:

Complete all required SelfDesign High admission processes.

Participate in the creation of their educational plan.

Be responsible for the completion of all courses enrolled in at SelfDesign High.

Be responsible for communication with their mentors and the community of learners at SelfDesign High.

Contact

SelfDesign High Mentors will have **weekly contact** with Learners and/or parents in order to respond to inquiries and provide feedback on assignments. To support this contact Learners enrolled in SelfDesign High DL courses and their Mentors are involved in two-way communication in a variety of modes:

E-mail

Telephone

Face to face contact

Internet based dialogue

Learner assignment submission

Plagiarism

SelfDesign High urges Learners to be honest in the process of writing their assignments and, therefore, discourages them from copying the work of others. It is considered theft of an idea or words and is unacceptable. Quotations or summarizations of others' words must be properly cited in an academically accepted style. Learners must be encouraged to speak with their Mentor regarding how or when to cite information in their work.

Withdrawal Procedure

Circumstances may arise which necessitate a learner withdrawing from a course. SelfDesign High has a process and a form to facilitate course withdrawal. Learners, mentors and parents and the school principal must sign this form to facilitate the withdrawal. These courses will not be reported on the learner's transcript. Learners may register again in a course that they have previously withdrawn from.

SelfDesign High

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2010 Graduation Program

BC Dogwood High School Diploma

To graduate with The Dogwood Diploma learners must have total 80 credits:

- 48 credits from the required foundation courses (in **Bold**)
- 28 credits selected from available elective courses
- 4 credits for the Graduation Portfolio.

NB: 16 credits must be at the Grade 12 level and 4 of these must be a Grade 12 Language Arts course.

(*) Indicates courses with Provincial exams.

Grade 10

Subject	Credit	Subject	Credit
Language Arts 10 *	4	Planning 10	4
Social Studies 10	4	Fine Arts 10	4
Science 10 *	4	Physical Education 10	4
Mathematics 10 *	4		

Grade 11

Subject	Credit	Subject	Credit
Language Arts 11	4	Fine Arts 11	4
Social Studies 11*	4		
Science 11 or 12	4		
Mathematics 11 or 12	4		

Grade 12

Subject	Credit	Subject	Credit
Language Arts 12 *	4	Fine Arts 11	4
Mathematics 11 or 12	4	Graduation Portfolio	4
Science 11 or 12	4		

Elective Courses

Subject	Credit	Subject	Credit
Physical Education 11	4	History of Art 10	4
Physical Education 12	4	History of Music 11	4
Earth Science 11/Gaiaosophy	4	History of Architecture 12	4
Spanish 10 or 11	4	Philosophy 12	4
BC First Nations 12 *	4		

Workshop courses and new electives are added and determined sessionally. Please check our website www.selfdesignhigh.org for our most up to date course offerings.