

Medicine Hat Catholic
Separate Regional Division #20

STUDENT SERVICES

Program Description



Knowledge and Employability Courses

Philosophy and Overview

Knowledge and Employability courses at McCoy High School are intended to provide students with opportunities to experience success and become well prepared for employment, further studies, active citizenship and lifelong learning. Students who fulfill the requirements will receive a Certificate of High School Completion.

Knowledge and Employability courses include and promote:

- workplace standards for academic, occupational and employability skills
- practical applications through on- and off-campus experiences and/or community partnerships
- career development skills for exploring careers, assessing career skills and developing a career-focused portfolio
- interpersonal skills to ensure respect, support and cooperation with others at home, in the community and at the workplace.

Knowledge and Employability courses are designed to provide entry-level employment skills for students who have expressed a goal of leaving school before earning the requirements for a senior high school diploma. Some students may transition successfully from Knowledge and Employability courses to other courses to achieve a senior high school diploma or to continuing education and training opportunities; e.g., some colleges, some apprenticeship programs. Some students will take advantage of the workplace experiences and transition directly into the workforce. Reviewing each student's learning plans on an annual basis and adjusting their goals and courses as needed are important parts of the process.



Criteria for student enrolment

Knowledge and Employability courses are designed for students with specific needs and goals, including students who:

- have demonstrated and/or expressed a desire to enter the workplace after completing a Certificate of High School Achievement rather than achieving a senior high school diploma
- have expressed goals that include succeeding in school to become better prepared for the workplace
- achieve success through experiential learning activities that:
- focus on reading, writing and mathematical literacy and essential employability skills in occupational contexts
- provide practical applications and connections to the home, community and workplace.

Informed annual written consent

Informed consent means that parents/guardians and students are fully aware that Knowledge and Employability courses have reduced academic expectations and a greater emphasis on occupational exploration and preparation. Informed annual written consent of parents/guardians (if the student is under 16 years of age) and the student ensures that they are in support of continued registration in a Knowledge and Employability course.

Student learning plans

Collaboration is important with each student and his or her parents/guardians to:

- develop and implement a written learning plan to identify secondary, continuing education and training opportunities and career goals
- plan, record and track the courses needed and completed to achieve the student's goals
- monitor, assess and adjust the effectiveness of the learning plan on a regular basis.

Decisions about courses will also involve challenging students at their highest ability levels and preparing them for achieving the requirements for a Certificate of High School Achievement or an Alberta High School Diploma.

Provincial achievement tests

Four new Knowledge and Employability achievement tests that reflect the Grade 9 outcomes for English language arts, mathematics, science and social studies are being developed. To be eligible to write a Knowledge and Employability test, in place of a regular Grade 9 achievement test, a student must have been enrolled in, and received instruction from the Grade 9 program of studies for that course, as per Policy 1.4.2.



Practical applications

Practical applications are included in all Knowledge and Employability courses and may take place on- and off-campus. Practical applications enhance the relevance of schoolwork to everyday living at home, in the community and in the workplace.

Practical applications may include a variety of community partnership activities, such as:

- hosting a career day at the school and inviting community employees/employers to present and share information
- organizing a science fair with the assistance of parents/parent groups
- interviewing members of the business community as an activity in the language arts or health programs
- taking part in community celebrations and special events as a social studies activity
- visiting a local business as a whole-class activity
- individual students job shadowing in a local workplace
- work experiences through Knowledge and Employability Occupational and Workplace Readiness/Practicum courses; Work Experience 15, 25 or 35; Green Certificate placements and/or Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP) courses (senior high school level).

Note: Off-campus activities and/or courses will follow the guidelines outlined in the *Off-campus Education Policy* and the *Off-campus Education Guide for Administrators, Counsellors and Teachers*.

Business and the community have a right to expect that students have the necessary knowledge and skills to become contributing members of society and lifelong learners. Business and the community share a responsibility to assist the school in providing opportunities for students to develop and apply knowledge and employability skills in workplace settings. Practical work site experiences help to reinforce the learning that occurs within the classroom and provide work experiences and community contacts for possible future employment.

When the student's learning plan includes off-campus experiences, business and the community become important parts of his or her learning experiences. For many businesses, this may be their first opportunity to participate in an off-site educational experience with students and staff. Dialogue and planning are essential for successful work-related community experiences.



Referral Process

Referrals may be made by Parents, and Teachers, to the Special Education Facilitator and/or School Administrator. The Classroom Teacher will discuss the referral with student and consult with Parent/Guardian. Eligibility will be determined by greatest need. Careful monitoring of student progress will be ongoing to determine if student placement is still the most appropriate placement. Students, who have reached a level of achievement where they would be successful in a regular program, are not meeting the requirements of the class by poor attendance, frequent incomplete assignments or behaviour inappropriate for the class may exit the program. Parental request may also result in removal from Knowledge and Employability courses. When the student leaves a course for any reason, an Exit from Special Education Program form is completed, signed by Parents and a copy is placed in the student's cumulative file and another copy is provided to Parents.

“In Catholic Education we too will keep the dialogue alive with a new generation by helping them to see the mystery of God’s presence and action in the world and in their lives, even when they are convinced that there is no more meaning to be found.”¹

¹ Canadian Catholic School Trustees’ Association, *Build Bethlehem Everywhere/A Statement on Catholic Education*. (Ontario, 2002), p.4.

