



Welcome to SMUS: Webinar Q&A with Ms. Morrice, Mr. Humphries, Adrian Simor, Sophia Niewerth and Glen Keough

Thanks for attending our recent online Q&A session. Here's a summary of the questions you asked and the answers we gave, as well as additional questions that other students have asked in previous orientation sessions.

If you have any more questions leading up to your arrival at SMUS, don't hesitate to get in touch with us:

Janet Morrice, Admissions Associate: janet.morrice@smus.ca or by phone at 250-519-7345.

Roommates

How many roommates will I have?

Each boarding room accommodates two students, so you will have one roommate, but you will live in a house with about 40 other students.

How are roommates chosen?

You will be receiving an email from the Admissions office asking you to fill out a questionnaire about your habits and preferences. Your parents will also fill out a similar form on your behalf. In addition, we ask new boarders to send us a short video in which they talk about themselves. The questionnaire and the video will help our house parents assign roommates. In general, house parents try to pair students who are in the same grade and who have similar study and sleeping habits, and they also to pair people who are from different places in order to encourage cross-cultural friendships.

How do we get placed in houses?

The school assigns new students to boarding houses with the objective of creating a balanced and diverse community in each house. For example, we try to have similar numbers of each grade in the houses and we also try to create a vibrant mix of cultures and interests. If you participated in a Discover SMUS event and stayed overnight in one of the houses, we try to assign you to the same house.

If I am in the ESL program, would my roommate be someone whose native language is English?

We make a particular effort to match our ESL students with English-speaking roommates. However, living in boarding provides ESL students with a number of activities that help to reinforce their English-language skills, which is why we require ESL students to live in residence.

When will I be able to find out who my roommate is and will I have time before school starts to get know him or her?

You will find out who your roommate is when you move into boarding on September 7. The first week of life in boarding will be very busy with activities that help you get to know your roommate very quickly, as well as your housemates and house parents, who make up an equally important part of your new community.

What if you do not get along with your roommate? Can you change them?

Living with someone can be challenging, especially for students used to having their own space. We encourage students to make every attempt to find a balance with their roommate and to directly address any issues that arise. Our house parents often help students work through such difficulties. We have made other arrangements for students in the past, but we work very hard to resolve all issues that come up.

Rooms

What furniture is provided in my room?

Each room has a private bathroom, shared between roommates, with a shower, sink, mirror and toilet. Your room's furniture includes two sets of the following (one for you and one for your roommate): a twin bed (also called a single bed), a desk and chair, a closet, bookshelves and drawers for storage. Our beds are extra long and you can order bedding online that will be delivered directly to the school through

www.heirloomlinens.com/stmichaels.htm

Where can I find a list of things to pack?

The [Boarders' Handbook](#) contains a list of things to bring (as well as things not to bring) in the section called "Final Preparations."

Security

How secure is the campus?

Boarding house main entries are locked 24 hours a day with students gaining access to the building with a swipe card. There are at least two sets of adults living in each boarding house to ensure students' safety. Additionally, SMUS has a security guard patrolling the campus from the end of the school day until 11:30 pm, when campus gates are locked.

Registration

Do new boarders need to attend the orientation starting on September 2?

The [new boarder orientation that starts on September 2](#) is completely optional but highly recommended. We surveyed the families that attended for the last two years and found that this weekend provided a great deal of confidence to both the parents and students. Note that you will not be moving into boarding early if you attend the orientation, but you will be staying in accommodations that you arrange until move-in day on September 6. Families who attended the orientation last year found that it was helpful in getting new boarders familiar and comfortable with the city and their new surroundings. If you would like to attend the orientation, your family should register no later than August 17.

On what day are new boarders expected to arrive?

All new Grade 12 boarders are expected to arrive on Sunday, September 4 between 12:00 and 5:00 pm for student leadership and orientation. All new Grade 9 boarders will need to be on campus on Tuesday, September 6th at 7:45 am for the Link Lead Orientation. All new Grade 8, 10 and 11 students are expected to arrive on campus on Tuesday, September 6 between 12:00 and 4:00 pm, ready to register and then move in to the house, where you will spend your first night in residence. There will be signs directing you to registration in the gym. When you're done registration, one of your Grade 12 housemates will show you to the boarding house and help you move your things. All returning boarders in Grades 9-11 will arrive the following day, September 7, between 9:00 am and noon.

When is the earliest time for boarders to arrive?

The boarding houses will be ready for new students to move in on Tuesday, September 6, starting at noon. If you are arriving in Victoria early, the school has favourable rates with a number of Victoria hotels (see page 5 of the [new student orientation weekend registration package](#) for more information).

Will we get a day off to buy school supplies and things for our room?

The [new student orientation weekend](#) includes a day of shopping for school supplies, bedding and other necessities. If you are not able to arrive until registration and move-in day on September 6, you can pick up some of your supplies and uniform from the Campus Shop and go to nearby Hillside Mall for other supplies.

Will new boarders get help going through the registration procedure?

Registration can look like a daunting process when you first arrive, but you will find that there are friendly students and staff at every station to help you through it. If you come early for the Orientation Weekend you will find that most of the registration will be completed on Friday and Tuesday morning allowing you to move into your room earlier on Tuesday afternoon.

Is the registration week schedule different for Grade 8 boarders?

Grade 8 boarders arrive on campus at the same time as other new boarders, which is Tuesday, September 6, starting at noon. Your schedule starts to diverge the following day, Wednesday, September 7, when you will start classes at the Middle School at 1:00 pm. Your first full day of classes at the Middle School will be on Thursday, September 8, starting at 8:00 am.

What if I can't be there until September 7?

If you are not able to arrive at school on Tuesday, September 6, you must inform the Admissions office of your plans as soon as possible by emailing admissions@smus.ca or calling 1-250-370-6170.

What information will I receive about boarding and when will it arrive?

A package containing the Boarders' Handbook and the Parent Handbook and Calendar goes out in the mail the first week of July. You should be receiving your package no later than the third week in July. In the meantime, you will also be receiving email information from Admissions for things that need to be completed as soon as possible, like your course and outdoor trip selections as well as your registration forms.

Boarding Rules

What are the rules about leaving campus?

Boarding students have leisure time after school and on the weekend, when they are permitted to leave the campus, providing all their other school commitments have been met. During the week, students in the Senior School are permitted to leave campus between 3:30 and 6:30 pm for a local leave to one of the nearby malls. On weekends, any student (Grades 8-12) wishing to sign out must speak to the house parent on duty. Grades 8, 9 and 10 students are allowed to go downtown under special circumstances if accompanied by an approved senior student at the House Parent's discretion. You can find more information about off-campus leave in [the Boarders' Handbook](#).

What activities are compulsory for boarders?

All boarders must participate in at least one extracurricular activity each term. This can include sports teams, arts activities, intramurals etc. All activities will be listed in the leadership guide. Last year's guide is available [on our website](#). In addition, you will have fun activities such as house games in which you will be expected to participate.

Are boarders allowed to go off of the campus at weekends?

Besides closed weekends, which typically occur once a month, boarders are allowed to leave the campus during the day, or for a weekend if they make the necessary arrangements well in advance. See [the Boarders' Handbook](#) for more information about the different types of leave.

Am I allowed to leave on weekends to visit friends or family?

If you are traveling with your family, another family or have a family to visit in another country, it is possible to make such a trip so long as you make the arrangements and notify the right people well in advance. There are also [many international travel opportunities through the school](#) at Christmas and Spring Break.

Am I allowed to spend the night at a friend's place?

Many of our boarders develop friendships with day students and are invited to stay overnight or for a long weekend. This is allowed if you make the appropriate arrangements in advance with your house parents. Refer to the section on "Overnight Leave" in the [Boarders' Handbook](#) for more information on the steps to arrange an overnight leave.

Is there a zero tolerance policy for alcohol, smoking and drugs?

Students at the school are not allowed to smoke at any time or in any location, on or off campus. Smoking in any school buildings is considered an especially serious offence. Students must not be under the influence of alcohol while involved in any school activity and it is against the school rules for any student to consume, purchase or bring alcohol on campus. A written warning (including confinement to campus for boarders) will be issued for a first major offence. A second offence will likely result in suspension and any subsequent offence could result in expulsion. Use of illicit drugs is considered a more serious offence and is subject to expulsion or suspension with mandatory drug testing on the student's return. At all times we are working with students, their families and our counsellors in order to educate students about the choices they make and the inherent risks.

Am I allowed to have a car on campus?

Boarders are not allowed to have cars; however, there are many other means of transportation available, including a very efficient bus system that runs by campus, as well as many stores and coffee shops within walking distance. We also have a bicycle co-op available on campus or you are welcome to bring your own bike.

Are we allowed to have computers in our rooms?

Grade 8 and 9 boarders are not allowed to have computers in their rooms, but can use the computers in the common rooms as well as the computers in the library or computer labs. Returning Grade 10 students can bring a computer with them in September if they have previously arranged permission from their house parents. New Grade 10 students should not bring a computer with them, but may be granted permission to have one as early as Thanksgiving break. Personal computers are considered a privilege, not a necessity, so students must maintain high academic standings and actively participate in their community to have a personal computer. Computers can be temporarily taken away if these requirements aren't being met. All Grade 11 and 12 students may have personal computers in their rooms.

Do we have access to the internet in our rooms?

All students with a personal computer can have internet access set up in their dorm room, provided they have parental permission. Internet access in rooms is restricted during prep time and after lights-out time each night (you can get more information about lights-out in the [Boarders' Handbook](#)). Included in your registration package is a Network Access form, which must be returned to computer services during registration on the first day. Please note there is a charge for this service.

How can I keep in touch with my parents during school time? What's the schedule for calls to parents?

We encourage students to maintain a close connection to their families while they are at SMUS. There are some restrictions about when you can call your family – not during class time or evening prep for example – however, most students communicate daily with their families by telephone, email, text or Skype.

Can I bring my bike?

Our boarding houses have some storage facilities available for bicycles and there are bike racks around campus for students to use as well. Be sure to bring a sturdy lock for your bicycle (and a helmet, which are mandatory in Victoria) and if it is especially valuable, consider storing it inside your house storage areas rather than outside.

Are cell phones allowed? Are there any restrictions?

Cell phones are allowed on campus, but their use is slightly restricted. Boarders cannot make calls during classes, during prep time or after lights out. Cell phones may be confiscated if they are used improperly. Also, bills should not be sent to the school unless they are sent under the student's name.

What about iPods or gaming systems?

Handheld devices are allowed but may not be used during class time, prep time or after lights out. We will also monitor use to make sure that these devices are not interfering with social or group activity time. Gaming systems such Xbox, PlayStation, etc. are not allowed.

How do students get pocket money and how much is allowed?

The amount of spending money is largely a choice of the parents and they will have a chance to give the school instructions about pocket money during the registration process. Most students need small amounts of pocket money for basic supplies, some shopping, and the occasional off-campus meal or activity. Families are encouraged to open a local bank account so that the students can use a debit card to access cash. The amount allowed is between the parent and the student although we suggest a very limited amount of cash as it is not required on campus or for any school activity.

Uniform

Does the uniform dress shirt have to have the school crest on it and do I need to buy shirts through the Campus Shop?

All items of the school uniform – shirts, pants, skirts, jackets, sweaters and ties – must be purchased through the campus shop or the Parents' Auxiliary used uniform shop.

Is there a charge for the uniforms?

Uniforms are not included in tuition and must be purchased when you arrive on campus. The Parents' Auxiliary offers a used uniform shop that sells cleaned and pressed uniform items for discounted prices.

When do we wear No.1 and No.2 uniform?

Students wear Number One uniforms every Friday as well as on school outings and special occasions. On all other occasions, students will wear Number Two uniforms. At least once a month, the Senior School holds a service day, on which students have the option of dressing in casual clothes in return for a donation to a charity.

When and how do we get our uniforms?

New students are allowed to appear out of uniform on their first day on campus. When they go to register in the gymnasium, they will be able to buy new and used uniform items (and make arrangements for tailoring if necessary). During the school year, the campus shop sells new uniforms items and the Parents' Auxiliary operates a used uniform shop a few blocks from campus.

General

How many new boarders are there this year and where are boarding students from?

Each year we welcome about 100 new boarders to Grades 8 through 12 from over 22 countries. The number of new boarders per grade varies from year to year. Of our approximately 245 boarders, half are from North America and the rest are from various countries around the world, including Argentina, China, Congo, France, Germany, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, Poland, Russia, Switzerland, and Thailand.

Will I see any of my home culture reflected at SMUS?

We have an International Council that celebrates all the cultures represented in our school population through various activities and events. You will find more about this council in [the activities and leadership guide](#).

How many students in Grade 8 are boarding students?

There are about 20 Grade 8 boarding students admitted to SMUS each year.

Extracurricular

How do I join school clubs or sports teams and when does recruitment to school sports team take place?

You can find [a list and schedule of Senior School competitive sports](#) and when they take place on our website. You will meet with the Director of Athletics on Wednesday, September 7. At that time you learn the athletic schedule for the year and the registration or try-out process for teams.

What kind of intramurals does SMUS have and when do they take place?

All of the sports, intramurals, clubs and councils will be listed in the activities and leadership guide that will arrive with your summer mailing. In the meantime, you can refer to last year's guides for [Senior School activities](#) and [Middle School activities](#).

Can we take lessons off campus and if so, how will we get to them?

You are welcome to register in programs and activities off campus as long as the activities don't affect your performance at school. Off-campus activities need be arranged with your family and house parents. When at all possible we will arrange for you to go with a day student who is attending the same activity.

What is boarding life like? Are there lots of activities, house meetings, etc?

Boarding life is full of opportunity to be busy both during the school week and on the weekend. There are regularly scheduled house meetings to help you stay informed about the many opportunities at SMUS.

Can you be part of team if you've never played a particular sport?

You will be encouraged to take some risks and try new things by participating in activities and sports that you haven't played before. We offer many different levels of teams at each grade as well as intramurals to make sure that everyone has an opportunity to try out new sports.

Besides the teams and Physical Education classes, are there other fitness programs on campus for boarders?

SMUS has an excellent [fitness facility on campus](#) that is open for drop-in during the evenings and for most of the day on weekends. There are also several intramural fitness programs that run during the year for boarders.

Is there a girls' rugby team?

SMUS does not have a girls' rugby team right now, but we are always willing to start new teams if enough students express interest.

Academic

What is the deadline for choosing my courses?

You should make your course selections as soon as possible – there are grade advisors available to help you make some decisions about your course load and which courses you will need:

Grade 9 AdvisorMr. Eliot Anderson (eliot.anderson@smus.ca)

Grade 10 AdvisorMr. David Kerr (david.kerr@smus.ca)

Grade 11 AdvisorMr. Jake Humphries (jake.humphries@smus.ca)

Grade 12 AdvisorMs. Alison McCallum (alison.mccallum@smus.ca)

If you make your course selections before the summer, you are very likely to get all the courses you request. You will receive your timetable on registration day in September and you have until September 30 to make any final adjustments to your schedule.

Do Grade 8 students need to fill out a course selection form?

Middle School boarders make their course selections during the interview process and, for exploratory session, during the school year.

If I am in Grade 10, how can I register for Mathematics 11?

If you do not already have credit for Mathematics 10, you must get special permission from your grade advisor and the Mathematics 11 teacher before you will be allowed to register in that class. If you do already have credit for Math 10, simply inform either Mr. Humphries or Admissions (by email or phone) that you wish to have Math 11 added to your course list.

Do I have to take Planning 11 or 12 if I've already done Planning 10?

SMUS has developed its own Planning 11 and 12 courses that are required for all SMUS students. Planning 11 and 12 take place once in each 10-day cycle throughout the year and focus on career and university research as well as scholarships and applications to universities.

Is dance available as part of the arts curriculum?

We do not have any courses in dance as a part of our regular arts curriculum; however, we offer dance as an intramural and there are many places near the SMUS campus where you can take dance lessons after school.

Is music theory taught as part of the music curriculum?

Music theory as it applies to particular pieces and genres is incorporated into our strings, band and choral classes, which focus primarily on technique.

How many courses do students take in a term?

SMUS is not a semester school, but rather we follow a linear schedule where you follow the same subjects from September through to June. Each grade has a different number of courses required. Please refer to the [course selection guide](#) for the specifics for your grade.

What is the maximum number of AP courses you recommend taking?

Students in Grade 11 can usually take one or two AP courses and students in Grade 12 take as many as five or six. The number of AP courses you can handle depends on what other courses and activities you are trying to fit into your schedule. Consult with your grade advisor for advice on your workload.

What does a typical day's timetable look like?

A typical daily schedule in Senior School looks like the following:

Wake-up	
7:00 – 7:50	Breakfast
8:05 – 9:10	Period 1
9:10 – 9:45	Assembly, Chapel or Homeroom tutorial
9:45– 10:50	Period 2
10:50 – 11:10	Break - Snacks
11:10 – 12:15	Period 3
12:15 – 1:05	Lunch in Brown Hall
1:05 – 2:10	Period 4
2:15 – 3:20	Period 5
3:20 – 5:00	Intramurals/Sports or free time
5:00 – 6:30	Dinner
7:00 – 9:00	Prep
9:00 – 9:30	Snacks in Brown Hall
9:30 – 10:45	Sign-in (depends on grade)
9:45 – 11:00	Lights out (15 minutes after sign-in)

Do I have to take the acting class in order to be in the school play?

The yearly musical and the productions put on by the SMUS Student Theatre Society are extracurricular activities. Auditions are held for each part and previous acting experience or training is not required.

Is it possible to take an academic course instead of art or PE?

There are no exemptions from PE 9 or 10. It is only possible to be exempt from PE 11 with the permission of the Director of Senior School. Commonly, exemptions are only allowed for students playing on provincial and/or national teams, but even this does not guarantee an exemption. The exemption process begins with a discussion with Mr. Humphries, Grade 11 advisor. All students are required to take a Fine Arts rotation in Grade 9, an Art 10 course and a Fine Art 11 course in either Grade 11 or Grade 12, although students can gain the Fine Art 11 credit outside the classroom (for example, through Royal Conservatory music exams).

How many students take the experiential program in Grade 10?

About 40 students take part in the experiential program each year. We are hoping to expand it to accommodate the great amount of interest.

What is it like participating in the experiential program?

The best way to get a sense of what the experiential program is like is to [watch this video created by Grade 10 experiential students](#) about the program.

Do I have to have my own instrument if I choose band or strings?

If you have your own instrument, it's great if you can bring it. If not, you can lease or rent an instrument from local company called Long and McQuade. This will be done directly through your band teacher, you do not need to go and do this on your own.

In the Grade 10 course selection form, "science 10" is missing, I thought it was a required course?

Required courses are not included in the course selection form as you are automatically registered for these courses.

If I want to go over the text books ahead of time, where can I find them?

It is not necessary to review text books before arriving at SMUS. Your teachers will make sure you are working at the appropriate level. If you have a specific need or request please contact your Grade Advisor as per the contact information below.

I have been in French immersion, could I continue with that?

We do not have French Immersion at SMUS, but we do have many students who have joined us out of a French Immersion school. Therefore, we offer advanced French in each grade.

Is there a beginner's French course?

Yes there is beginner French, Japanese, Spanish and Mandarin at various grades. Please refer to the course selection guide or your Grade Advisor for more details.

Is the school known for any courses in particular?

We are very lucky at SMUS to offer excellence in the all areas with specialist teachers in all subjects and at all grade levels. One area we are particularly strong is in our offerings of Advanced Placement courses. We offer 23 AP courses in all subject areas. You can read more about all of our courses in your [course selection guide](#) or you can visit the AP pages on our website at: www.smus.ca/academics/ap.

I am thinking of finding an English tutor, I am wondering who I should talk to and where I should go to find one?

All tutors will be arranged by Tutor Director here at SMUS. All tutorial sessions take place on campus in a safe and secure environment with thoroughly vetted teachers. The fee will be charged to your school account.

Do I receive marks or credits for my grades? How does the grading system work?

You will be marked by letter grade and percentage.

Holidays

What do boarders do during long weekend holidays?

The four-day weekends are designed to provide students and staff with the well-needed break that is required when living in the 24-hour-a-day, 7-day-a-week environment of boarding. Students are expected to leave campus during these weekends, either going home or staying with nearby friends or relatives.

What happens on long weekends if I have nowhere to go?

In the event that no accommodation can be found for one of the four-day weekends, Boarding Services has a very limited number of homestay options available. There is a homestay fee of \$40 per day and the boarders are expected to integrate into their host family structure and adhere to the clearly established guidelines while visiting. We recommend that students think of using the home stay option for only their first long weekend and after that work within our school community with friends, peers and team mates to find a place to stay.

Campus Services

Is medical service available at SMUS?

The Health Centre is located on campus and can provide overnight accommodation for boarding students who are not well. A nurse is on duty in the school's Health Centre or on call at all times. The school also has its own doctor. If students are not well enough to attend classes, they will not be allowed to remain in their rooms, but must instead be admitted to the Health Centre and will have evening leave suspended. There is no charge for the Health Centre.

Do we have medical insurance while we're at school?

All international students are required by BC law to be enrolled in the British Columbia Medical Services Plan regardless of health insurance coverage in their home country. When you arrive on campus on Registration day you will be asked to show proof of temporary health insurance to cover the three-month waiting period to be eligible for the BC Medical Services Plan. Temporary Health Insurance can be purchased from your travel agent. If you are a permanent resident of another Canadian province (with the exception of Quebec) you will be covered by that province's health plan.

If I buy a telephone SIM card in Canada, can I top up the phone at the school?

We sell phone cards in our campus shop.

Are there religious activities at school?

We do not have specific religious activities but we do have chapel twice every week as well as a special Boarder's Chapel twice per month. We celebrate and recognize all religious beliefs and welcome your input on our Chapel Team.

Do students go to church on Sundays?

Students are welcome to attend the church of their choice on Sunday with the permission of the house parents.

What if I have more questions?

Start by contacting Ms. Morrice:

Janet Morrice, Admissions Associate: janet.morrice@smus.ca or by phone at 250-370-6170

Also, refer to the following publications on our website for more information:

[2010-2011 Boarders Handbook](#) (New handbook will be mailed in June)

[2011-2012 Course Selection Guide](#)

[Senior School Activities Guide 2010-2011](#) (New guide will be available in July)

[Middle School Activities Guide 2010-2011](#) (New guide will be available in July)

[Parents' Handbook 2010-2011](#) (New handbook will be mailed in June)

[2010-2011 Middle School Parent Handbook](#) (New handbook will be mailed in June)

[May 18, 2010 Welcome to SMUS Webinar Recording](#)