



Learning to Learn

Whytecliff is a unique school. It is a place where every student has the opportunity to learn, grow and thrive. It has been designed to foster talents, and to help youth gain a sense of direction and meet the requirements of high school graduation.

The Whytecliff approach is based on the idea that people learn best when there is a match between their skills and the challenges they face. Our teachers provide the most suitable learning materials and support for each student's current skills and individual learning style. Just as every person is different, so is his or her process of growth.

The program follows the regular British Columbia curriculum, shaped individually for each student. BC Ministry of Education inspections confirm that our

school makes the grade. Whytecliff teachers are provincially certified and have a deep understanding of the many issues students face.

Whytecliff school sites are located in Langley, B.C. and Burnaby, B.C. As well, an accredited Distributed Learning program is offered that allows students to learn from other places. Schools follow a unique timetable and operate 12 months a year.

[WHYTECLIFF AGILE LEARNING® CENTRES ARE PROVINCIALY ACCREDITED, INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS FOR MALE AND FEMALE YOUTH, AGED 12 TO 19, WHO FACE PERSONAL BEHAVIOUR OR LEARNING CHALLENGES. WHYTECLIFF IS OPERATED BY FOCUS FOUNDATION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA, A NON-PROFIT CHARITABLE SOCIETY.]

Growing to a Better Future

By giving young people the opportunity to stay in school, Whytecliff improves their chances for future success. Studies have shown that youth who do not graduate from high school earn on average 50% less in lifetime earnings than their peers. 85% of BC income assistance payments go to high school dropouts. 90% of BC criminal justice costs involve high school dropouts. People who don't finish high school face an employment rate more than 10% lower than their peers who have finished, and 50% of those who have less than a grade nine education are unemployed.

At Whytecliff, success is seen every day. For most students, the program is life-changing. Their success is reflected in high attendance and course completion rates. Most students experience a reduction in personal problems and problems with the law, and are able to become more independent of supporting government agencies. A number of Whytecliff students have gone on to college or university, while many others have successfully returned to public schools, or entered the workforce.

Towards Healthy Adolescent Development

Youth who have not been successful at regular schools find Whytecliff is a positive option. We take a holistic approach that addresses every aspect of a youth's life – from academic and social skills to emotional well-being and family and peer relationships. Students are not pushed to change but do make positive changes when they are ready. Each student follows an Individualized Education Plan that has been designed around his or her potential, capabilities and goals. As a student progresses, plans are adjusted to reflect this growth.

“I just love the school. At the typical assembly-line school my daughter fell between the cracks. Here they gave her self-respect and dignity and fostered her talents and abilities.

- Parent

Whytecliff truly addresses the developmental needs of each student, rather than simply their chronological age. It's a wonderful fit between the students' developmental needs and their school environment.

*- Dr. Kim Schonert-Reichl,
Faculty of Education, UBC*

School is an important thing, like I don't want to end up on the streets. Being here I now realize I want to fulfill that dream.

- Male student, age 15

The teachers at this school say, "You can do whatever you want, you can be whoever you want." People used to call me a little punk kid. Now I think that I can be a doctor, or a social worker because I like working with kids.

- Female student, age 16

OUR VISION

WE ARE A SAFE, RESPECTFUL AND NURTURING COMMUNITY, SENSITIVE TO EACH PERSON AND HIS OR HER UNIQUENESS. WITHIN THIS COMMUNITY, INDIVIDUALS HAVE OPPORTUNITIES TO BUILD THEIR RESOURCES AND DEVELOP NEW SKILLS. THESE EXPERIENCES ENCOURAGE SELF-REFLECTIVE BEHAVIOUR AND A STRENGTHENED RELATIONSHIP TO FAMILY AND THE WIDER COMMUNITY. LIVING THESE PRINCIPLES INSPIRES HOPE AND LEADS TO PROMISING FUTURES.

A Different Way of Learning

The Whytecliff Agile Distributed Learning Centre offers innovative approaches that go beyond traditional school boundaries and include all aspects of a child's development. A blended learning program that combines working at home with onsite learning is offered for students who prefer this way of learning.

This blended approach entails a mix of online, classroom and home-visit experiences, and offers the behavioural supports that many students may need before they can begin to learn. The software that is used allows the educational program to be tailored to fit a student's individual needs.

The program balances in-person learning with remote learning; electronic learning with paper-based learning; and the physical classroom with the virtual classroom.

The Whytecliff Student Community

Whytecliff students are highly individual young people who face complex challenges in their lives. Many youth are living in situations that lack the emotional and physical support required for success. They may have problems with controlling feelings of frustration and anger, difficulty getting along with peers or have few problem-solving skills. The majority have diagnosed learning difficulties such as ADHD. Others have difficulty with anxiety and/or depression associated with their lack of success and many challenges in their lives. A number of students may be exceedingly bright or superbly gifted, and are hungry for an environment that can adapt to their learning style.

After a short time at Whytecliff, students begin to experience belonging and community, instead of regarding school as an institution where they don't fit in. They gain new respect for their physical surroundings, their teachers and peers – and for themselves. As their talents, strengths and skills blossom, they begin to establish connections with the wider community, increasing the likelihood of success in the future.

Families As Partners

Families are a key element of the program. Parents/guardians are encouraged to participate in school activities, learn how to help with schoolwork at home, and participate in community-based activities involving their child. This Agile Parenting approach builds positive relationships, strengthens communication, and improves family functioning. Youth with stable living arrangements who do not live with their natural family are also eligible to attend.

Focus Foundation: Who We Are

Focus Foundation of BC stands apart as a vision-directed organization. We offer therapeutic and educational programs for youth and families with complex social and behavioural issues and learning needs. Our vision sustains our commitment to create innovative solutions that address the needs of the whole person, their family and the community. We stress the development of talent, positive growth and change.

"Agile Learning" is a registered trademark of Focus Foundation of BC. "Agile Distributed Learning" and "Agile Parenting" are trademarks of Focus Foundation of BC.



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"Current research shows Whytecliff to be an exemplary program, rooted in sound educational principles, offering hope and success to students typically marginalized or excluded in the public school system. Students at Whytecliff are happy and peaceful, and are learning and flourishing. These findings have implications for all schools."

- Dr. Wanda Cassidy, Director, Centre for Education, Law & Society, Faculty of Education, SFU