

For immediate release

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Building connections through community youth policing

Langford, BC – Sooke School District welcomes the addition of a dedicated community youth officer with Sooke RCMP, beginning this month. The new position will create more opportunities for positive connections with young people in schools and throughout the Sooke community, building on the District's long-standing relationships with local RCMP.

"Schools are about much more than what happens in the classroom," said Superintendent Paul Block. "They are places where students come together, take part and develop a sense of belonging. Those everyday experiences help shape how young people see themselves and their place in the world around them."

The purpose of the community youth officer role is to build relationships with young people in schools and in the community. The focus is on being accessible and connecting with young people in positive, meaningful ways. Those relationships grow over time through shared experiences and regular interaction, helping students feel connected to the people around them and know there are adults they can turn to for guidance and support. For community partners, that means being present and taking part in school communities.

In schools, that can mean helping with a breakfast program, volunteering at fundraisers, joining an intramural sport, reading to a class or flipping pancakes at a school event. The role also supports safety around schools, including working alongside crossing guards, reminding drivers about school-zone laws and encouraging safe driving during busy arrival and dismissal times.

"We're pleased to have this additional resource focused on youth and community in Sooke," said RCMP Staff Sgt. Greg Willcocks. "Some of the most meaningful connections happen through everyday interactions, whether at a school event, through sport or simply having a conversation. Community policing is at its best when we know the people we serve and they know us, long before they ever need our help."

Every school community is different, and every student brings their own experiences and perspectives. Families, educators and community partners also see different parts of a young person's life, each offering their own knowledge and insight.

"Ultimately, this is about knowing our communities and listening to the people we serve," said Superintendent Block. "There is no single relationship or program that creates a safe and welcoming school. It takes families, educators and community partners working together. Our responsibility is to approach those relationships thoughtfully and respectfully, and to listen and respond to the young people in front of us."

The District looks forward to continuing its work with Sooke RCMP, West Shore RCMP, families and community partners to support safe, welcoming and connected school communities.

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