

SAIL – STEAM & STEAMX

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)



1. What is SAIL?

The Surrey Academy of Innovative Learning (SAIL) is a choice program within the Surrey School District focused on innovative, inquiry-based learning. SAIL offers STEAM (Grades 8–10), STEAMX (accelerated Grades 8–10), and province-wide online learning programs.

2. What is the difference between STEAM and STEAMX?

STEAM is a 3-year program (Grades 8–10) for highly motivated students

STEAMX is an accelerated program where students complete Grades 8–10 in 2 years

STEAMX is more competitive and academically intensive

Both programs emphasize interdisciplinary learning, collaboration, and independent thinking

3. What does a typical week look like for STEAM/STEAMX students?

Students attend:

4 days of in-person learning at SAIL

1 flexible learning day, completed independently either at home or on campus

Learning is project-based and integrates Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math.

4. Who is the ideal student for STEAM or STEAMX?

Successful students are typically:

Self-motivated and organized

Curious and eager to ask “how” and “why”

Comfortable working independently and in teams

Interested across all academic areas, not just math or science

Open to feedback, leadership, and presenting ideas

5. Which students may struggle in the program?

Students may find the program challenging if they:

Need constant teacher direction

Prefer highly structured environments

Are uncomfortable with collaboration or independent work

Are satisfied with doing the minimum

Are frequently absent or disengaged

6. Who teaches in the STEAM and STEAMX programs?

Students are taught by a highly qualified faculty with:

Bachelor's and postgraduate degrees (Master's and PhD-level training)

Experience across Math, Science, Humanities, Languages, Robotics, Applied Skills, and Counselling

Leadership and post-secondary experience linked to top Canadian universities

7. How many students are accepted each year?

Each program admits approximately 30 students per grade

Surrey residents are prioritized

Limited spaces may open in Grades 9 and 10 depending on attrition

8. How does the application process work for STEAMX?

Applications open: January 30, 2026 at 9:00 AM

Deadline: Friday, February 6 at 4:00 PM

Requires:

Application form

Two recent report cards (PDF)

Literacy & Numeracy Assessment (February 10 or 12)

Offers and waitlist letters sent by March 13, 2026

9. How does the application process work for STEAM?

Applications open April 27 at 9:00 am

Deadline: May 8 at 4:00 pm

Brookside SAIL Elementary students receive priority

Remaining spaces are filled via lottery, with Surrey students prioritized

Offers and Waitlist letters sent in mid-May

10. What happens after students finish STEAM or STEAMX (Grades 11-12)?

Graduates typically move into:

Their catchment high school

International Baccalaureate (IB) programs

Science Academy programs

Students leave SAIL well-prepared for academically rigorous pathways.

11. Is this program right for every student?

No. STEAM and STEAMX are best suited for students who are:

Highly engaged learners

Comfortable with challenge and ambiguity

Interested in innovation, leadership, and inquiry

Families should carefully consider learning style, motivation, and long-term goals.

12. Who can I contact if I have questions?

Dana Sturm

Counsellor, Surrey Academy of Innovative Learning (SAIL)

sturm_dana@surreyschools.ca

or

Zahara Rawji (She/her)

Principal, Surrey Academy of Innovative Learning (SAIL)

604 592-4263

