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Monday, October 26, 2020

Dear parents, guardians, and caregivers,

Just when I thought that 2020 couldn't get any weirder, it chooses to dump more snow in four days than we had in all of December last year. I remember as a kid, being disappointed when having to wear a winter coat over top of my Halloween costume, so I can only imagine the battles you will have when you ask your child to don snow boots on their candy quest.

Needless to say, as much we had started to prepare for the fluffy white stuff, we didn't expect it to stick around as long as it did, or for it to snow once again today. I know that the children are keen to start sliding on the snow hill, but we deemed it off-limit today, as there wasn't enough snow to allow for hundreds of kids to slide safely. Today, Mme Dumas and I will be revisiting our playground zone schedule to ensure that everyone has equal time in the sledding zone to play safely. Once the snowhill does open, all students wanting to slide will need to wear snow pants, snow boots, a jacket, and mittens/gloves.

With the premature arrival of the snow, we also spent a great deal of time reviewing expectations around entering and exiting the school, while dealing with winter boots, snow pants, jackets, mitts and hats. There are mats in the hallways for everyone's boots, and we ask everyone, staff and students, to take their boots off at the door. It just takes one pair of wet and snowy boots to make the hallways slippery and dangerous. Also, no one likes to step in wet snow in sock feet on their way to putting on their indoor shoes. Please make sure to send a pair of indoor shoes to school with your child, if you haven't already done so.

With the arrival of the cold, wet weather, comes the closing of the gate on Whiteshield Crescent. The maintenance department closes this gate, as the stairs coming down the hill are very difficult to keep clear of snow and ice, making it a safety hazard for those using them. In the winter months, snow removal does become a part of our custodian's job; however, we need her inside to ensure that our school is clean and safe to house your children for the day.

Because this gate will be closed until Spring, more parents will be using the drop-off/pick-up area at the bottom of the hill. So far, the staggered drop-off/pick-up times have been working quite well, and there have been no major issues, but with more people using this area, in addition to the roads being more slippery and travel time to work being longer, I anticipate, and have already heard of some instances when, people will have shorter patience.

I have a simple ask and that is to **be kind to one another**. Remember that there are young ears and eyes in your car, and when you lash out rudely to someone who is not following the rules/etiquette for the drop-off/pick-up zone or respond negatively to someone who was rude to you, they see and hear everything. You can't control how others behave (wouldn't it be nice though), but you can control your reactions to those behaviours. When you lead with and respond with kindness, you are setting an excellent example for you children.

All that being said, we can alleviate the majority of the discord at the drop-off/pick-up area if everyone follows the rules. A few rules that I have gotten the most complaints about are:

- people parking and getting out of their vehicles in the drop-off lane, closest to the curb. This backs up traffic and causes confusion and frustration for the drivers behind. If you need to get out of the car **for any reason**, please park in a designated parking stall. Do your hugs and kisses before you get in the car so that when you pull up to the lane, you can drop off and go. You may even get a more genuine hug/kiss from your child if you do it away from their peers. Save your visiting until you are out of the way. Be cognizant of the fact that some families are in a hurry to get to after-school activities or back to work, and there is nothing more frustrating than watching two people happily chatting, while inadvertently holding up the traffic behind them.
- People driving aggressively in the parking lot and rushing people to get out of their spot quickly. Our primary goal is to get all students dropped off and picked up safely. Please be patient with all drivers, as sometimes there are small children getting into/out of vehicles, which takes a bit longer.

Our daytime custodian's, Mme Chrystal, last day at SSES will be Tuesday, November 10th, as she is moving to Dallas Elementary. We will miss her dearly, as she works tirelessly keeping our school spick and span. The good news is that our evening custodian, Mme Dianna, will be replacing Mme Chrystal during the day, so the transition should be pretty seamless. Our new evening custodian will be M. Coughlan.

School picture order forms are going home today. Please visit the LifeTouch website to make your order. Re-takes for those families unhappy with their picture, or who were not here for picture day in September will take place next Monday, November 2.

PAC HotLunch orders and payment are due today. Please visit www.sses.hotlunches.net to place your order and make your payment. If you are unable to pay for your order and do not want your order cancelled, please contact the office to arrange for alternate payment options.

Some final reminders regarding Halloween:

- Students are welcome to wear their Halloween costume this Friday. Please contact your child's teacher about their plans for the day and when they will expect their students to change back into their street clothes. Remember
 - No masks
 - No weapons
 - No ultra-violent or gory costumes/make-up (we don't want to frighten the younger students)
- Because of COVID-19 restrictions, there is no sharing of food. I am hopeful for a day when I can safely eat birthday and Halloween cupcakes once again.

Sincerely,



Susie Mabee