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Friday, February 12, 2021

### Principal Update

Because this year hasn't been challenging enough, Mother Nature decided to throw some arctic weather in our direction. The first couple of days in the week were cold, but the sun was out and there wasn't that much wind, so we were able to go outside for recess and at least half of the lunch hour. The second half of this week, has not proven to be so kind. We've needed to keep the students indoors during break times, as the temperatures with wind chill dipped as low as -30°C. The students have also been allowed to enter the school before the 8:30 bell in the morning, as this time of day is particularly frigid until the sun comes up over the mountains. Here's hoping that the weather warms up a bit, so we can go outside and expel some of the energy that has been building.

### COVID-19 Updates and Reminders

As you are undoubtedly aware, there have been some updates to the Provincial Guidelines prescribed by the Public Health Officers. Here is a quick summary for you. If you would like to read about them in more detail, please visit Board Chair, Rhonda Kershaw's post [here](#).

- **All K-12 staff are required to wear a mask or face shield (in which case a mask should be worn in addition to the face shield) in schools - *both within and outside of their learning group***, except when:
  - sitting in/standing at their seat or desk/workstation in a classroom or learning space
  - there is a barrier in place
  - eating and drinking
  - outdoors
- Elementary students are not required to wear a mask or face covering at school or on the school bus.
  - All other environments, (i.e. skating rink, Harper Mountain, etc.) have their own specific guidelines to follow and may require students to wear a mask while visiting/using their facilities.
- Masks are not to be used in place of other safety measures. Physical distancing, hand hygiene, staying home when ill, etc. are still our primary means of negating the spread of COVID-19.
- Staff outside of a learning group (ie. prep teachers, LART, CEAs, AEW, etc.) must practice physical distancing (2m) while interacting with the learning group and staff members and avoid close face-to-face interactions.
- Consistent seating arrangements are being used where practical.
- Group activities are being adapted to minimize physical contact and reduce shared items.
  - Manipulatives and items that encourage individual play, that can be easily cleaned, and that reduce hand-to-hand contact and cross contamination are offered.

- Enough high-touch materials (i.e. pencils, art supplies), in order to minimize sharing between children are available.
- There is no evidence that the COVID-19 virus is transmitted via textbooks, paper or other paper-based products. Laminated or glossy paper-based products (e.g. children's books or magazines) and items with plastic covers (e.g. DVDs) can be contaminated if handled by a person with COVID-19; however, the risk is low. There is no need for these items to be cleaned and disinfected or quarantined for any period of time, or for hand hygiene to be practiced before or after use.
- Students **need to stay home** if;
  - They have been confirmed by the health authority as testing positive for COVID-19.
  - They are a person confirmed by the health authority as a close contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19.
  - They have travelled outside of Canada in the last 14 days.
  - They have been tested for COVID-19 and are awaiting the result.
  - They are sick.
- Students can come to school if:
  - They experience conditions with a previously diagnosed health condition when they are experiencing these symptoms without requiring further health assessment.
  - A member of their household develops new symptoms of illness, provided they have no symptoms.
    - If a member of their household tests positive for COVID-19, public health will advise the asymptomatic student's family, on self-isolation and when they might return to school.
- Parents and caregivers can utilize the [K-12 Health Check App](#) to perform their child's daily health check.
- Parents/caregivers should maintain physical distance and avoid crowding on school grounds, including outside.

### **Valentine's Day Considerations**

February 14<sup>th</sup> is typically a day when students exchange cards, treats, candies and kindness. In a typical year, I have consumed enough cupcakes and other sugary treats by 10am to last me a year. Unfortunately, this year our Valentine's Day celebrations will look a little different, as we need to follow the strict COVID-19 health and safety measures. I look forward to enjoying two years' worth of cupcakes next year!!!



- Activities that **CAN** go ahead:
  - Student/staff exchange of paper cards. However, we will be mindful of how the exchange occurs, as not to involve large groups of students/staff gathering in an enclosed area.
  - Crafts that involve paper, ensuring students are using their own set of supplies (glue, scissors, colouring pens, etc.).
  - Valentine's Day-themed dress up day (or pajama day).

- Activities that **CANNOT** occur:
  - Sharing of food of any kind (includes, but not limited to, individual exchange or communal sharing of chocolates, cupcakes, candy, treats that come with Valentine's day cards, treats that are prepackaged and are individually wrapped, pancake breakfasts, staff potlucks).
  - Student dances.
  - Crafts that involve baking, or items intended to be consumed, even if prepared by the teacher and the students are provided with individual kits.

Please connect with your child's teacher as to what they have planned for the day's celebration.

### **Water Bottles and Cutlery**

We are continuing to give out plastic cutlery and cups at an alarming rate. Please ensure that your child/ren has the necessary tools to eat his/her/their lunch and a refillable water bottle to stay hydrated while at school.

### **Value Village Clothing Drive**

Our grade 7 parents have decided to hold a clothing drive to raise money for their year-end celebrations. More information will be available in the coming weeks; however, if you are planning on doing any spring cleaning in the near future, save your old clothing for the clothing drive, scheduled to take place March 22<sup>th</sup> -29<sup>th</sup>.

### **Pink Shirt Day**

February marks National Pink Shirt Day, which typically focuses on anti-bullying. While we can all agree that teaching students the difference between bullying, mean behaviour and peer conflict is incredibly important, it is even more important to teach our students how to be kind to and accepting of each other every day, not just on Pink Shirt Day. Students and families are reminded of the presence of our ERASE reporting tool, located [here](#), at the bottom of our [SD73 website](#), and at the bottom of our [school webpage](#).



Our official Pink Shirt Day will take place on Wednesday, February 24<sup>th</sup> and students are encouraged to wear as much pink as possible that day. Our pink shirts/hoodies went home yesterday, and it was so nice to see students wearing them already today.

### **Parent Input for our School Learning Plan**

We are adjusting the goals of our School Learning Plan and need your input. A big thank-you to the 10 of you who have already filled out the survey. I will keep it open to the end of next week (Friday, February 19<sup>th</sup>). Please take 5 minutes to answer a couple of questions to help guide the creation of our new goals. <https://forms.gle/7H8LyqvyeudK8wbw8>

### **Young Artists' Conference**

Each year, in hopes to encourage students to explore their creative side, SD73 organizes its Young Artists' Conference for students in Grades 4-7. The [Young Artist's Conference](#) is an annual event for aspiring artists in elementary school to showcase their artwork and take part in a series of workshops. SD73 has offered this unique opportunity to students since 1987. Each year over 120 students from Grades 4 through 7 are selected to participate in the Young

Artists' Conference. Each school has a selection committee which reviews a variety of 2-dimensional artwork submitted by students. The selection committee chooses between two and six students (depending on school enrollment numbers) to represent their school at the Young Artists' Conference.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, in all probability, students will participate in a series of virtual workshops once again this year. Students wishing to submit a piece of art for consideration need to have their piece into Mme Muraca by Friday, February 26<sup>th</sup>. The criteria for artwork is as follows:

- All work must be 2-dimensional (including canvas panels). No 3-dimensional art is eligible.
- Artwork can be done in any 2-D medium.
- The artwork may be created at school or at home, but should be done independently.
- All artwork should be original; you cannot copy well known images, or trace someone else's work.
- Artwork should be unique. Try something completely different; be creative and inventive!
- Artwork may be an extension of what has been taught in class, but not a duplicate of a teacher's or other student's work.

### **Face masks**

We still have a few face masks for sale at the office for \$10.00. If you are interested in purchasing one, please contact Mme Lisa in the office.



I know it was a long one! Thanks for reading all the way to the end. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Susie Mabee in blue ink.

Susie Mabee