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Friday, June 4, 2021

Dear families,

Typically, the month of June brings beautiful weather and excitement about the coming summer months. Unfortunately, this year, June has arrived amid some very disturbing and sad news about the discovery of 215 bodies of children at the former Kamloops Residential School. We have been working hard to begin to come to terms with this information, and how to show our condolences and our respect in culturally sensitive ways. Many of our students have had questions, and we have tried to address them as best we can; however, it is possible that more questions may arise at home, as a result of these conversations and as more information comes out in the media. Below is some information that you may find useful in these discussions with your family. If you or someone in your family needs further support during this difficult time, please use the list of crisis lines and contacts (attached to this e-mail) for more information, or call the school and we will do our best to connect you to someone who can help.

HOW TO TALK TO YOUR CHILDREN ABOUT THE UNFOLDING EVENTS AT THE FORMER KAMLOOPS RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL - Dr. Marleen Wong

Preface

In the 1800's and through the 1900's Indigenous children in North America were taken from their homes and forced to attend boarding schools. They were punished for speaking their native languages and deliberately stripped of engaging in or even thinking about their spiritual and cultural values and practices. Even in the face of child labor laws, they were made to work long hours in unpaid manual labor. Many of the children were badly neglected. All were emotionally abused if not physically or sexually abused.

Alive today, are those who survived the experience of the residential boarding schools. From first-hand experience, they knew children who did not survive. The wounds are deep with words such as historical trauma and genocide used to describe what has occurred.

Dr. Maria Brave Heart defines historical trauma as the “cumulative... psychological wounding over the life span and across generations, emanating from massive group trauma experience.” She emphasized that we must be especially aware not only of the effects of multigenerational historical trauma but the ways in which each family and tribal community frames the story and meaning of their losses.

For adults, she identifies four components designed to foster healing from trauma and grief:

1. confronting the history;
2. understanding the trauma and its effects;
3. releasing the pain; and
4. transcending the trauma.

This is a difficult and heart wrenching journey for adults.

*Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heart, PhD (Hunkpapa/Oglala Lakota), Associate Professor of Psychiatry and Director of Native American and Disparities Research at the Center for Rural and Community Behavioral Health, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque.

How can we talk with children about this tragedy?

The following information is drawn from National Child Traumatic Stress Network, the American Psychological Association, and organizations that educate children about the Holocaust in which six million Jews were exterminated because of hate, bigotry and unrelenting political scapegoating and condemnation. You may recognize common elements. However, we are organizing them to align with what we know about prevention, intervention and resilience research in child trauma, brain science and the healing power of meaningful connections and conversations between caring adults and children.

- **Take a moment. Take a deep breath.** Take stock of your own emotions before talking about the Kamloops tragedy with your child. The purpose of your conversation is to understand and to address your child's concerns. Your child needs you to be calm and to reassure them that their safety is of greatest important to you.
- **Listen to your child's fears, questions, worries to understand what they are thinking or feeling without criticism or judgment.**
- **You can say something to Protect them.** If they ask, "How did the children die or Why did this happen?" for example, they may be wondering "Might this happen to us?" A short, honest, and reassuring answer for a young child would be something like, "This happened when children were separated from their parents for no reason except they were First Nations children. They were forced to live in residential schools where they were treated badly. We don't allow this to happen anymore. We have laws against it, and leaders who have told us how wrong it was." Connect with them in age appropriate ways. A child in kindergarten or early elementary grades want to know that they and their loved ones are safe. Let them know they can come to you anytime they feel worried or afraid.
- **Think together about ways you and your child can reach out and make a difference.** You might decide to do a good deed. There may be children in your community who can benefit from kindness and inclusion.
- **Model kind and sensitive behavior.**
- **Start slowly.** In the beginning, keep it brief. Your child will let you know what they are worried about which will change over time as more is known. We know that hundreds of residential schools will now be subject to the same scrutiny as the former Kamloops Residential School. Even though some of the survivors of Kamloops have said that they were not surprised by the discovery of the child graves, there is more trauma ahead if new discoveries are made about other abuses and losses.
- **Model tolerance, respect, and civic engagement.** The best way to make sure your child grows up to understand the lessons of the history of Indigenous people. Sponsor a family, help out at a food bank, find a way to give back and help make the world a better place for us all.
- **In your actions, show that you believe in your child's resilience.** Yes, it is a dangerous world, and there are reasons for fear. But they are not alone and together you can use the lessons of

the past to help your child feel empowered by helping to create a world that is safer, kinder, and more loving.

- **Be creative.** Help your child find healing avenues of creative expression, whether musical, visual, linguistic, dance or some other culturally or spiritually relevant way.
- **Teach your children how to face a crisis. Be honest and provide reliable information. If you don't know, it's o.k. to acknowledge that. You can say, 'That's a really good question, let's think about how we can find the answers.** Don't overwhelm your child with more than they need to know at the time. Your child will be reassured by your honesty. Children can feel secure in a dangerous world if they feel they have a caring adult they can depend upon and trust.
- **Share your belief that love is stronger than hate.** Help your child move toward constructive actions that fight every kind of bigotry, and prejudice. Share stories of the courage of First Nations heroes in everyday life who have stood up to racism and discrimination. Point out ways in which you have observed your child speaking out, reaching out or helping others at home, at school, in clubs, places of worship or in other activities.

RAINBOW DAY

We had originally planned Rainbow Day for Monday, May 31st; however, due to the current climate around the unfolding situation at the Kamloops Residential School, we have put it on pause until further notice. If you or your children have any orange in your closet, you are encouraged to wear it in the spirit of reconciliation.



LAST DAY OF SCHOOL

The last day of school for students is **Tuesday, June 29th and dismissal that day is 11:40am.** This is a new time, as we had to make changes to the calendar in response to the delayed start to the school year. Please plan for someone to be here at 11:40am that day to collect your child/ren.

There may be some families who choose to start their summer vacation a few days early and will not be at school on June 29th to collect their report cards. If this is the case for you and your family, the office will be open until July 9th for you to pick up your report card. If you would rather the school send your child/ren's report card in the mail, please leave a self-addressed stamped envelope with either the office or your child's teacher, and we will pop it into the mail for you. **Teachers will not be handing out report cards before June 29th.**

DRESS CODE



The School District is in the process of updating the dress code policy in order to properly address current beliefs and values. In the meantime, as summer approaches and warmer weather is here to stay, I ask that students, and staff members for that matter, dress in a manner that is appropriate for school and work. This means that clothing that is overly revealing or displays words or imagery that is offensive is to be avoided. We also ask that students come wearing footwear that allows for freedom and safety of movement; flipflops and sandals without sufficient straps inhibit your child's ability to be active at school in a safe manner. We rely on parents such as yourselves to monitor what your child comes to school wearing and appreciate your efforts to enforce this dress code.

CONTACT INFORMATION

I am hoping that we will have a clear idea of what the start of the school year will look like in September prior to leaving for summer holidays; however, if the COVID-19 Pandemic has taught me anything, it is to expect the unexpected. Please make sure that the contact information (most importantly phone number and e-mail) that we have on file for you is current, and that the e-mail we have is the one you will be checking during the summer months so that I can communicate if/when necessary.

BRIGHT RED BOOK BUS

As a collaborative project with community partners, the Bright Red Book Bus visits school and park sites over the summer and provides free, engaging interest books to encourage reading for pleasure. Our school will host the bus on Thursdays from **10:00 to noon** from **July 5th-August 20th**. Like last year, the bus will observe and post safety procedures and feature a "take out" menu listing popular titles.



WATER BOTTLES

The temperatures outside are climbing, and remaining hydrated is necessary for learning. That being said, we continue to have a number of students come to the office asking for a cup as they have forgotten their water bottle. Please ensure daily that your child has some sort of fillable container to use at our water filling stations until we are permitted to open our water fountains again (hopefully in the fall???).



LOST AND FOUND DAY

Our Lost and Found Day is approaching on June 23rd; however, students are more than welcome to visit the lost and found before then to collect anything that belongs to them. If you have noticed that you haven't seen your child's hoodie in a while, have them check the box at the top of the stairs by Mme Hamson's LART room.

Wednesday, June 23rd from 1:30pm – 3:00pm, we will have the contents of our lost and found out on display on tables on our field for you to peruse and collect your belongings. Anything not collected at the end of that day will be donated to Found4Kids, a not-for-profit organization which provides proper clothing to at-risk school-aged children at NO COST through a school referral system.

EDUCATION GRANTS

[Elizabeth Fry Society of Greater Vancouver](#) (also known as EFry) is sharing information about Future Bright, a **free program** that helps families with net income of less than \$48,535 access up to \$3,200 in education savings grants that are available to fund their child's education after high school. The said grants are in addition to child benefits, bursaries, scholarships, and other incentives for which eligible children may qualify.

STAFF CHANGES

In my last principal's report, I announced that our beloved Mme Dumas will be leaving us for École Élémentaire Lloyd George, and that Mme Jo McKenna was going to assume the role of Vice-Principale. We were informed last week that Mme McKenna has accepted a position with the Salmon Arm school district, and as such will not be joining us at École South Sa-Hali. There have been other resignations within the administrative leadership team in the district, which will require some more shuffling of administrators between schools. In order to minimize disruption to schools, the Board of Education only wants to do this once, and as such, we may not know who will be filling the ever-fashionable shoes of Mme Dumas until late June. As soon as I know anything, I will be sure to share it with you.



There are some other staff changes to note. Mme Bournival has decided to move with her family to Vancouver Island, has accepted a position with the Comox School District, and will be moving this summer. As a result, we will be shuffling up the grades that teachers will be teaching: Mme Donas has decided to take on the Grade 3/4 class (formerly Mme Bournival's class), and Mme Magalie will be taking on the Grade 4 class (formerly Mme Donas' class). Mr. Hallett has decided to leave the ESS nest and try his hand at teaching English at SKSS. Mme Bauhuis, M. Featherstone, and Mme Niwa will be leaving us at the end of the school as their positions were term certain. We will miss all of them dearly and wish them all well in their new positions.

Joining us in September are the following:

Mme Robyn Wallis will be taking the term certain Grade 5/6 position left behind by Mme Moffat's maternity leave; Mme Charlotte will be re-joining our team in a continuing capacity in the Grade 4/5 class; Mme Diederichs is returning to her Grade 2 class after being off on maternity leave last year, and M. Dawson Gorman will be working in Mme Magalie's class on Mondays. We are still waiting to hear who will be working in Mme Nancy's class on Fridays, who will be working in Mme Venables' kindergarten class on Mondays and Tuesdays, and who will be doing our Band/Music classes. As of right now one of our Certified Education Workers, Mme Talaine Norton, is slated to be leaving us, with Mme Hollie Farkas filling in on Mondays through Wednesdays, and Maryam Partovi Rad on Thursdays and Fridays; however, the CUPE posting and filling process is still long from being over, and I anticipate that there could be more changes before the end of the school year. I will update you as soon as I know anything.

UPCOMING EVENTS

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| Tuesday, June 8 th | Grade 7 Visit to South Kamloops Secondary (SKSS) |
| Wednesday, June 9 th | PAC popcorn day |
| Thursday, June 10 th | Track and Field Events for Grade 6 and 7 |
| | PAC Hot Lunch – Señor Froggy |
| Friday, June 11 th | Track and Field Events for Grades 4 and 5 |
| June 14 th – 18 th | Last week to take books out of the library |
| Tuesday, June 15 th | Mme Jayme's class to Gamble Pond |
| Wednesday, June 16 th | Mme Funk's class to Shumway Lake |

Thursday, June 17th

Grade 7 students to Sunnybrae (8am – 8pm)

PAC Hot Lunch – Pizza Hut

PAC Meeting @ 6:30pm – Executive Election

June 21st – 25th

All books are due back to the library

Tuesday, June 22nd

Mme Nancy's and Mme Sarah's classes to Paul Lake

Wednesday, June 23rd

LOST AND FOUND DAY 1:30 – 3:00 on our field

Thursday, June 24th

Mme Magalie's and Mme Graf's classes to Paul Lake

Friday, June 25th

Grade 7 Luncheon and Leaving Ceremony

Tuesday, June 29th

Last day of school – **DISMISSAL @ 11:40**

There are 16.5 days left to the 2020-2021 school year, but who's counting right? As always, if you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact me. Have a fantastic weekend.

Respectfully,



Susie Mabee

