

# Priory Park Public School Newsletter

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Principal: Kim Kowch

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## OCTOBER 2016

### Principal's Message

We have been so lucky to have such wonderful weather as we wrap up September and enter October, and reports suggest that our luck may just continue! Although we hope for many lovely, sunny fall days ahead, please ensure that children are dressed for the cooler weather. Layers are a good way to handle the variability in temperatures from morning to afternoon. Children are reminded to bring in clothing they take off when on the yard, since our Lost & Found bin is already starting to fill up. Please try to label all clothing so we can find the rightful owners and avoid the Lost & Found bin altogether! During wet fall and winter weather, parents are asked to ensure that their children have suitable outer footwear for outside play and appropriate indoor shoes.

Priory Park staff and students have done a great job beginning their learning and work together, and co-curricular activities have started. Students are never at a loss for something to do or get involved in outside of the classroom during school hours. Active kids make for good learning so encourage your child to get involved in the fun that happens throughout the day.

Please remember that if you have any questions about curriculum, evaluation, assessment or other classroom issues, you can call the school and request to speak to your child's teacher. We are here to work with you to help your children learn and grow, and we look forward to continued focus on providing enriching experiences for our students.

Mrs. K. Kowch

### Emergency Drills

Each year, schools are mandated to conduct regular emergency fire and lockdown drills to remind students about their roles and responsibilities should an emergency occur. We had an unplanned (!!) fire drill already last week, and students and staff did an excellent job of exiting the building quickly and quietly. We will continue to practice our safety procedures in the coming months.

### Individual Education Plans (IEPs)

Individual Education Plans, or IEPs, are developed by schools when assessments show that a student needs special education programming and/or services. The development of the IEP should be a collaborative process that includes parents and the student (if possible). During the development phase, schools are required to seek feedback through consultation with parents. This is your opportunity to discuss and share information with the classroom teacher and/or special education teacher regarding your child's education. If your child had an IEP last year, you will see a copy of this working document come home within the first 30 school days.

When the IEP is sent home, you will also receive a booklet titled, Parents' Guide to the Individual Education Plan. This booklet is a resource to help parents understand how an IEP is developed, what is

included in an IEP, and how an IEP supports your child. It also includes definitions and explanations to help parents understand some of the language that is part of an IEP, such as accommodations and modifications.

One more item that will accompany your child's IEP this year is a Parent/Guardian IEP Questionnaire. We want to know your ideas about your child's Individual Education Plan (IEP). Your ideas will be used to help us improve the IEP processes in our schools, and help us provide parents/guardians with the special education information they are looking for. Please take a few moments to share your ideas and return the questionnaire to the school office. If you need any help with completing this questionnaire, your child's classroom or special education teacher can assist you.

### **Student Accident Insurance**

The Board does NOT provide accident insurance coverage for student injuries that occur on school premises or during school activities. It is highly recommended that parents purchase student accident insurance, especially if their child(ren) participate in extra-curricular athletic activities. Under the Education Act, the Board is required to make available an accident and life insurance program for students, and the Upper Grand District School Board has selected "Insure My Kids" Insurance. By now you will have received the Director of Education's introductory letter, a Student Accident Insurance Acknowledgment form and an application form. Please be sure to send back the signed blue Acknowledgment form, even if not subscribing to the offer, so that we can be sure everyone has received this information and offer. More copies are available in the office if needed. You may apply online @ [www.insuremykids.com](http://www.insuremykids.com) or complete and send in the 2016 application form that you received.

### **Creative Playground Safety**

As we enter autumn, students and parents are reminded that while the creative structure remains open until November 1st (weather permitting), playground equipment is off limits first thing in the morning from 8:30 - 8:45 because of dew, frost or rain. Also, students are not permitted to play chasing games on the structures. No bicycle helmets are permitted on the creative playground at any time.

In the event of an injury, students and staff are reminded that the injured person should not be moved, and a supervisor must be notified immediately.

### **Please Sign In & Out**

Please note that all visitors to our school are requested to stop at the office. If you are planning to stay a while, please remember to pick up a badge to wear and sign our Visitor and Volunteer Book located on the counter just inside the office. We also require students to be signed out if they are leaving at some point during the day. Thanks for your cooperation in ensuring a safe and secure environment for our students!

### **Books for Birthdays**

At Priory Park P.S., we are very fortunate to have a "Books for Birthdays" program sponsored by Sifton Properties. Students' birthdays are announced on the morning announcements, and they have the opportunity to come to the cabinet at the front of the school to pick a book on his/her special day and get the gift of reading.

## **Life-Threatening Allergies**

We have children in our school with potential life-threatening allergies to various foods and other materials called anaphylaxis. This is a medical condition that causes a severe reaction to food or other materials, and can cause death within minutes. In recent years, anaphylaxis has increased dramatically among students.

Although this may not affect your child's class directly, we are letting you know so that you may refrain from sending foods to the school that contain peanuts and nuts. We aim to create an allergy safe environment at our school. If your child is in a classroom with an anaphylactic child, or your child has anaphylaxis, you will be contacted by the classroom teacher. Our school has procedures in place to help manage anaphylactic reactions. If your child has health concerns of any kind, please tell your child's teacher or the office and we will take the necessary health protection steps. Thank you for your understanding in ensuring an allergy-safe environment for all of our students.

## **Soy Butter**

An Ontario company has created a product called "Wow Butter" (previously known as "School Safe Soy Butter"). Although it is meant as a safe replacement and alternative to peanut butter, it is difficult to tell the difference between a peanut butter sandwich and that of one made with "Wow Butter" or "School Safe Soy Butter". Because staff and students cannot tell the difference between the two, and because we have life-threatening allergies in our school, the Upper Grand D.S.B. has asked that this product not be allowed at school. Thank you for your consideration of this difficult issue.

## **Life Threatening Management Plans**

A Life Threatening Management Plan is required for any student who has a serious health concern such as severe allergies, epilepsy, seizures, etc. Parents/guardians have the responsibility to inform the school Principal and teachers of their child's life-threatening allergies. Forms are available from the office. Thank you to the many families that have already shared this important information.

## **Drop-Offs & Pick-Ups**

Thank you SO much for the effort you've put into following our drop-off, pick-up and parking areas. We have seen a huge difference in supporting the safety of our students at the busiest times of the day. Please be reminded that there is no stopping or parking on Scottsdale Drive on either side of the street in front of the school, or in the Sifton parking lot next door. Parking is allowed on the street further up Scottsdale or along Wilsonview Drive. We appreciate your support in working together to keep our students safe. A big shout out to our amazing PPPS Street and Bus Patrollers who are also doing their part to set a good example and help to safely get our students to and from school.

## **Walking Trips**

From time to time during the school year, classes will participate in a variety of short walking trips as part of their educational program. Such learning experiences could include visits to a local park or walk around the block as a DPA activity. A blanket permission went home to be signed and returned to the school. When walking trips are being planned, your child's teacher will provide you with written notice of the date, times, destination and purpose of the visit. This information could appear in classroom newsletters or specific announcement flyers informing you of the planned trip. If you do not wish your child to participate in such informal trips, please inform

your child's classroom teacher. For all formal trips that require bussing, a separate blue trip permission form will be sent home.

### **Safe Arrival and Pick-up**

We appreciate the efforts of so many parents to contact the school office when their children are going to be late or absent from school. By doing so, you help ensure each child's safety on his/her daily journey to school and that our "Safe Arrival" program works.

A gentle reminder that parents/caregivers should not enter the building during drop off and dismissal time, but meet their child(ren) out back on the tarmac. At this stage in the year, even our younger students know the routines and where they need to go, and we want to begin to foster their independence. Our halls are very busy at this time and having even more adults in the building creates crowded and unsafe hallways. If you do need to speak with one of us, you are welcome to enter the school after the students have been dismissed.

Please remember that school corridors are made safer for all students, staff, and visitors when strollers, wagons, and sleighs are left outside. This will become even more important as winter approaches, as melted snow on the floors can be very treacherous. Everyone's efforts help make a safe environment at Priory Park!

### **Terry Fox Walk/Run**

On Thursday, September 29th, the entire school and staff took part in the Terry Fox Walk/Run - and it was so heart-warming to see community members come out to cheer us on, and we all had a little better understanding of what it may have been like for Terry to continue his journey in all types of weather. This year we raised \$157.80 - many thanks to Mrs. MacKenzie for her awesome bulletin board, Ms. Lowry for getting us pepped up for our walk/run and for the students in Mrs. Hebert's class for encouraging people to donate with their excellent announcements!

### **Please Help to Eliminate Head Lice**

Lice can be an issue in the fall and various times throughout the year. We want to keep this BIG problem down to a minimum. Remember that shampoos are only part of the job... the nits and lice must also be removed. Thank you to all the parents who keep checking their child(ren) on a regular basis.

### **Recycling/Boomerang Lunches and Snacks**

As you may be aware, we are now required to have a recycling program. The Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Education are working together. At Priory Park P.S., this means that we will continue to encourage reusable containers, to sort and recycle, and will continue to discourage the use of plastic baggies and wrap. Our students are getting better and better at 'reducing, reusing and recycling'. Each classroom has been provided with bins for recycling paper products and recyclable containers. The garbage bins are only for paper towels, tissue paper, and food waste. We wish to thank all our students, families and staff for your continued participation in this endeavour. We are planning to be an Eco School this year.

### **School Council News**

School Council will have its second meeting of the year on Wednesday, October 12th at 6:30 pm in the library. If you are interested in coming out to Council or you would like to be added to our email list, please call into the office and let us know. Thanks again for your continued support!

## **Asthma Friendly Schools Policy**

Asthma is a very common chronic lung disease that can make it hard to breathe. The Upper Grand District School Board adopted a new policy in June 2016 to provide support for students with Asthma. If your child has asthma, the policy requires an Asthma Management Plan (AMP) to be completed by parents, a child's doctor and the principal of the school. A copy of this plan is available on the Board's website under Policy 516. Parents are requested to complete the AMP and return it to the school as soon as possible at the beginning of the school year. Authorization for the collection of this information is in the Education Act. The purpose is to collect and share medical information and to administer proper medical care in the event of an emergency or life-threatening situation. Users of this information may be principals, teachers, support staff, volunteers, bus operators and drivers. This form will be kept for a minimum period of one calendar year. Contact person concerning this collection is the school principal.

## **Smoke-Free Environment**

The Upper Grand DSB provides a smoke-free environment for its students, staff and others while on school Board property, in accordance with the Smoke-Free Ontario Act. This policy refers to all forms of tobacco, and any processed form of tobacco that may be smoked, inhaled or chewed, including e-cigarettes.

Smudging is the tradition of using sacred smoke from sacred medicines (e.g., tobacco and sage) that forms part of the indigenous culture and spirituality. Smudging is allowed in schools under the Smoke-Free Ontario Act. Parents will be informed using the school's usual forms of communication when smudging is going to occur in our school. Participation by staff and students is optional in a smudging ceremony.

## **Promoting Mental Health**

Helping kids grow up mentally healthy is an important part of parenting. Here are a few things that CHEO (<http://www.cheo.on.ca/en/Promoting-Mental-Health-parents>) suggests you can do to support good mental health in your children and youth.

1. Put your device down.

When you are with your children and youth, show them that they are more important than your electronic device. Lead by example: put your own devices aside and spend face-to-face time with your kids.

2. Listen when they're upset.

When children and youth are upset, they just want you to listen and understand how they're feeling. Try not to jump in with advice or reassurance. "Listen" is spelled with the same letters as "Silent".

3. Focus on their strengths.

Support your children and youth's self-esteem by helping them to see their own strengths. Show that you see and appreciate kindness, empathy and trying hard, and not just achievements like good grades. For example, "That was kind of you to think of your brother" or "You worked so hard on that and you didn't give up!"

Have a mentally healthy October!

Dr. Lynn Woodford is the Mental Health Lead for the Upper Grand District School Board.

Follow me on Twitter @drlynnwoodford.

## Changing Our Beliefs and Attitudes About Math

### Myth of the Math Person

Most people believe that math is one of those subjects that you either "get" or you "don't get." This way of thinking cannot be further from the truth; there is no such thing as a math person. Everyone can achieve in any subject with hard work, perseverance, and someone to guide them. The key to shattering this myth is developing a growth mindset in our teachers and students, and a math classroom where students are challenged by engaging problems and supported in their learning.

### The Evolving Classroom

"The reason so many people think math is the most difficult is the inaccessible way it is often taught."<sup>1</sup> When we were math students our math teachers often taught us tips, tricks, and recipes for solving math problems. In the math classes of old there was only one correct solution. We could get the answer if we memorized and followed the teacher's procedure, but if someone asked us the "why" behind our formula, most of us wouldn't be able to answer.

Today, teachers are striving for students to have a solid grasp of the "why" behind each solution. This often means that students are encouraged to share a variety of methods and strategies to solve a single problem. By sharing different strategies, teachers can help students see the common thread that connects each solution, thus deepening their understanding of the concept being taught. The teacher's role is no longer to teach procedures, but to help students make connections and understand the mathematical concepts behind the solutions.

### Growth Mindset Homework Help Tips

Let your child struggle with math problems.

- See if they have the perseverance to work through their struggles. We need to break the math myth that we need fast answers to be good at math.

Never let your child hear you say: "I was never good at math."

- Research studies have shown when parents tell their children they were not good at math, their child's achievement is immediately affected.

Ask your child if they can solve a math problem in another way.

- This shows that your child has multiple strategies at their fingertips and they are flexible with their math thinking.

Ask your child to explain the reasoning behind their response.

- "Why did you (add/ subtract/ multiply/ divide)?"
- "What does your drawing represent?"

### Online Resources

Parents' Beliefs about Math Change Their Children's Achievement - <https://goo.gl/psL33d>

"We now know that the messages we give students can change their performance dramatically, and that students need to know that the adults in their lives believe in them."

TL Talk: The Gift of Failure - Interview with Jessica Lahey - <https://goo.gl/oo7xFc>

"Jessica is the author of the New York Times bestselling book, *The Gift of Failure: How the Best Parents Learn to Let Go So Their Children Can Succeed*."

How to Learn Math: for Students - <https://goo.gl/OCywaf>

"How to Learn Math is a free self-paced class for learners of all levels of mathematics. It combines really important information on the brain and learning with new evidence on the best ways to approach and learn math effectively."

1 Boaler, Jo. *Mathematical Mindsets*. Jossey-Bass: 2016, pg 96.

2 Boaler, J. (n.d.). *Parents' Beliefs about Math Change Their Children's Achievement*. Retrieved September 22, 2016, from <https://www.youcubed.org/think-it-up/parents-beliefs-math-change-childrens-achievement/>

## **Monthly Environmental Activities to Help Celebrate our Planet**

### **OCTOBER 5TH IS INTERNATIONAL WALK TO SCHOOL DAY!**

It is vital to teach our children to respect and take care of the environment. In October we celebrate active travel by encouraging students to walk or bike between home and school. Walking or cycling to school get kids outside every day actively enjoying their natural environment. They arrive at school better able to concentrate and learn.

"In the 2015 ParticipACTION Active Healthy Kids Canada Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth, the overall grade for Canadian children and youth remains at a D- for the third year in a row. Overall, only 9% of 5-17 year olds are getting the 60 minutes of heart-pumping activity they need each day. And sadly, the grade for Active Transportation remains a D, with only 24% of 5-17 year olds walking/wheeling to school and 62% being driven by parents or caregivers. Our tendency to constantly watch over them or keep them indoors to ensure they are safe from risk limits their opportunities for physical activity, endangering their long-term health."

<http://www.saferoutestoschool.ca/>

#### **4 Ways That Walking or Biking to School Can Benefit Kids**

by Katherine Martinko

- Walking is known to improve academic performance. Children arrive brighter and more alert for their first morning class.
- Walking gives children good life experience. It's an opportunity for them to be independent, think responsibly, and make decisions for themselves. Some children feel less anxiety about being at school when they know how to get home.
- Walking gets children outdoors - and, according to Richard Louv, who wrote *Last Child in the Woods*, kids certainly aren't spending enough time outside these days. Those few minutes of walking can provide inspiration.
- Walking provides daily exercise for children. Obesity rates have skyrocketed in North America, so incorporating physical activity into a child's daily routine is a good place to start fighting it.

Urban affairs journalist Christopher Hume says, "Walking is a reflection of how we feel about the environment in which we live." Children will learn to love their town even more if they get to know it on foot. Why not gather a group of friends and participate in Walk to School Day?