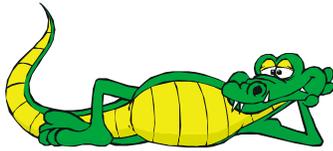


ALMA NEWS



March 2015

Alma Public School, 12 Simpson St E. Box 118, Alma, ON N0B 1A0

Principal – Mr. Andy Hill

Visit our WEBSITE: <http://www.ugdsb.on.ca/AlmaPS/>

Principal's Message

Dear Families,

March has arrived and with it we hope an end to a very long, cold winter. Thank you for everyone's patience as we work through bus cancelations, school closures and indoor recesses. March break is from the 16th to 20th this year and closely following this we have the ECO Fair on the 25th. This year we will be having Mountsberg Conservation come in with their bird display and demonstration. I hope to see everyone there!

Around the School

During the past month, students have been involved in many and varied ongoing academic and social learning activities:

- Scientists in the Classroom
- Mad Science Weekly Workshops
- Primary & Junior Reading Tutoring (Thanks to Shannon Pegg)
- Remembrance Day Service
- Fundraisers (Thanks to the School Council and parents)
- D.A.R.E. Program for grade 5/6 (Drugs Abuse Resistance Education)
- Progress Reports & Parent/Teacher Interviews
 - Morning Announcements
- Student Leadership Opportunities:
 - Lunch supervision
 - Character education
 - Crossing guards
 - Healthy snack program
 - Environmental incentives
 - Milk distribution
 - Morning announcements
 - Office helpers

- Kindergarten helpers
- Composting & recycling

Are You Moving?



We are working on staffing again for the next School Year. If you know that you will be moving it would be helpful for us to know. Please contact the School if you are planning on moving.

Helping your child learn French

As a parent, the best thing you can do to help support your child's learning is talk with him or her **in the spoken language used at home**. Talking helps build communication skills. These skills are transferable from one language to another. (Cummins, 1998)

When engaging with your child, consider the following:

- listen to a television program together and ask your child to share his/her thinking
- listen to music and ask your child why he/she thinks the artist wrote the song
- listen to the radio and ask your child to share his/her opinion about what is happening in the city and/or the world
- use a variety of words (i.e, friendly, kind, considerate)
- allow your child to hear you questioning what you see and hear around you
- talk out loud as you attempt to solve a problem
- tell your child a story about when you were little or tell him/her a story about something that happened at work that day and leave off the ending for him/her to provide
- ask your child to provide 3 things and make up a story that includes all three (example: a princess, a race car, and an ice cream cone)
- read aloud daily to your child, talk about the pictures, make predictions and see if they come true
- read to your child on vacation or during a long wait at the doctor's office
- read a book to your child and ask him/her what he/she would do if he/she was the main character
- leave notes for your child in his/her lunch box or school bag
- ask your child to leave notes for you around the house
- have your child create a to-do list
- play word games such as Scrabble Junior and Boggle
- encourage your child to bring his/her writer's notebook whenever he/she goes on family outings where there will be plenty to notice, wonder and write about

Parents who don't know French can help their child learn French.

Are you a parent of a student who has special needs?

This is an exciting time in Ontario as four government Ministries are working together to develop a new system of services and supports for children and youth with special needs and their families. The Dufferin-Wellington Special Needs Strategy planning table would like to hear from you! Focus groups will be held from March 2-10, 2015. If you can't attend a focus group, complete our survey March 6-22, 2015. Please visit the website below to learn how to participate. <http://dufferinwellingtonspecialneedsstrategy.weebly.com/>

School Safety Check

Please continue to help keep our school safe:

- ✓ Call the office if your child will be absent and, **if they are ill please say that** as we have to report to Public Health daily.
- ✓ As the weather worsens, ensure your child has appropriate clothing, and for the little ones, you may consider sending extra clothing should they need to change (i.e. mittens, socks).
- ✓ **Thanks to the many parents who are picking up their children in the front foyer.** This has reduced the number of people in the main hallway where students line up for buses at the end of each day.
- ✓ **Bus Zone** – This area must be kept clear between 8:10 – 8:30 a.m. and again between 3:40 – 4:00 p.m. We do not want to have an unfortunate accident occur.
- ✓ **NEVER drive into the school parking lot, or out of the school parking lot when there are children boarding busses. PLEASE , SAFETY is PARAMOUNT where our children are concerned.**
- ✓ For our walkers, who have to cross County Rd 7, we continue to encourage that you use the crossing guard. This is in place for the safety of all!!



Bus Cancellation Days

On a day when the buses are cancelled and the school remains open, all walkers can come to school if parents feel it is safe to walk, or if parents decide it's safe to drive them. **We need the parents of the students who walk** to call the school if their child is not going to be at school (sick, unsafe to walk).

When buses are not running, we do not need a call from parents who have children who are bused because we know why your child(ren) are away. If you're driving your regularly bused students to school, remember to pick them up at the end of the school day (3:30 p.m.). Once buses are cancelled in the morning, they do not run in the afternoon.

Thanks so much for helping us with our efforts with safe arrival for all students.

Announcements will be made on the following radio stations in the event of bus cancellations and/or school closure: 1460 CJOY AM - Guelph, 106.1 Magic FM -

Guelph, Oldies 1090, 99.1 FM CBC, 105.3 Kool FM, 570 AM, and 96.7 FM CHYM.

CKCO TV will also announce bus cancellation and parents can check the Alma Public School website (site at top of this newsletter) for bus cancellations and on the Board website under Transportation.

Help Your Child to be More Resilient

Life can be stressful for both children and their parents. When children learn how to handle challenging situations in positive ways and to bounce back after a negative experience they become more resilient. Resilient people are happier, healthier and more successful in life. Children learn resiliency skills from the adults in their lives. Here are some ideas to help you to build resilience in your child:

1. **Build a caring and trusting relationship:** listen to your child and talk about their day, share cuddles or hugs, play or do activities together.
2. **Think positive:** each evening ask your child to share a positive thing that happened during their day. You could share something positive that happened in your day too!
3. **Gently challenge your child's negative thinking:** If your child has had a stressful experience, acknowledge their feelings and help your child see that experience as only one of many things that happened that day: "It sounds as if Max really hurt your feelings by not inviting you to play hockey. Did you play with him at another time? Did you play with some of your other friends?"
4. **Build confidence:** allow your child to do things independently as often as possible; such as getting dressed, helping to make dinner, wrapping a birthday gift, helping with a chore. Only give guidance if absolutely necessary.
5. **Allow your child to feel that he or she has control over his or her life:** allow your child to make age-appropriate decisions, such as what to wear, a choice of what to have in their lunch ("would you like a banana or yogurt?"), what book to read before bedtime, what movie to watch on the weekend.
6. **Model and practice calming:** When you are dealing with a difficult situation show your child how you calm yourself down. Practice calming with your child (deep breathing, counting to 10, going to a quiet place).
7. **Model coping:** when you have a problem, talk to your child about how you solved the problem calmly. What did you think about as you were solving your problem?
8. **Build your child's coping strategies:** Help your child think through a challenge. Help your child to know that the issue is just temporary and that he or she can solve the problem. Support your child in coming up with a solution.

In supporting your child in building resiliency skills you are developing a positive outlook that will last a lifetime. For more information on resiliency please go to the website below.

Source: Reaching In, Reaching out Website: <http://www.reachinginreachingout.com/resources-parents.htm>

Talking About Mental Health – Anger and Calm March 2015

When one of my children was about 8 years old, he had a lot of anger in him. He would shout, slam things, throw things, break things and stomp about. When he got very angry, it was upsetting for all of us, but particularly for him. He did not like the way he felt when was angry, but it seemed to come on so fast. He would quickly feel out of control and then feel upset afterward about what had happened. So, when he was calm, we talked about his anger. We drew pictures and read stories about dealing with anger. And he told me “Mom, when I am angry, don’t talk to me, just let me go to my room and be angry, when I feel less angry I will talk to you”. So the next time, he was angry and started yelling, I started to say “What is making you so angry?”, but he stopped me and said “Mom, you promised you wouldn’t talk to me when I am angry and would let me just go to my room”. It was hard not to try to solve the problem, but I let him just go to his room and yell and throw things. After about 30 minutes, he came down and we talked about what was up. He knew he did not like being angry and needed to gain some more skills to be able to deal with his anger. He decided he wanted to do meditation to help with his anger, which he did, and over time, it helped a lot.

We all get angry. Different things set off different people. We all have our pet peeves and our easy triggers. Often our child/youth know how easy some of our buttons are to push. When our child/youth gets angry, it is hard not to get upset and respond in anger. But we all know that does not usually result in the best outcome. Here are some tips for dealing with anger in your child/youth and yourself.

1. Don’t respond to anger with anger. It is hard not to, but yelling at our child/youth when they get angry makes everyone feel out of control and increases the anger. No one likes the feeling of being out of control. The best thing you can do is remain calm and not feed the fire of the anger. Have compassion for your child and how they are feeling.
2. Don’t try to reason with an angry person. When someone is angry, they are not able to process what you are saying. Their brain space and energy is taken up by the anger and they don’t have much space left to think, process and reason. Instead, wait to have the conversation until you have both calmed down.
3. Pay attention to how you are reacting. When dealing with someone who is angry, often our heart rate increases and the adrenaline begins to pump. The trick is for you to have already practiced how to stay calm, so when you are in these challenging situations, you know how to calm yourself. By staying calm, you are not engaging in a power struggle, which escalates the anger.
4. Allow your child/youth time to be angry. Allow them a safe place to let off steam. So long as they are not hurting themselves or others, let them be angry and safely calm down. It also teaches them that feeling angry is OK and we can learn how to process our anger in a safe way.
5. Give consequences for the behaviour, not the emotion. Teach your child/youth that whatever they feel is OK and it is OK to feel frustrated and angry. However, there are still rules and consequences. Don’t negotiate or change the rules when trying to get an angry child to calm down. In the moment, the focus is on calming strategies. After the child is calm, then have a discussion of safe ways to express anger.
6. Take a break. For most of us, we need a break from the person and situation, so allow your child to take a break. This helps our kids to calm down and also allows ourselves to calm down as well.
7. Make a plan. When everyone is calm, talk with your child/youth about what helps them stay calm and what calms them down when they are upset. Create a plan of what things the child/youth finds calming and empower them to use those strategies. It could be music, breathing exercises, relaxation exercises, physical activity, drawing or just being on their own for a bit. Whatever works for them is included in the *plan*. Calming strategies that a child/youth will use when angry need to be taught and practiced regularly, so they can be used when the situation arises. Include strategies to keep calm and decrease frustration and then what to do when they feels really angry. Having a plan makes you and your child/youth feel like you have some control over the anger. The child/youth knows that the anger does not control them, because they know what to do when it happens.
8. Role model appropriate responses to anger. Show your child/youth how you deal with anger. You can say things such as “I am getting frustrated, so I am going to take a break” or “I can’t talk to you right now, because I am upset. I am going to calm down then we can talk”. Admitting that you are angry and need to calm down is not a weakness. It takes strength to talk about your feelings. You are teaching your children the lesson that it is good to talk about your feelings and that we can manage our anger by using our coping skills.

Here is a link to a great video of kids explaining what it feels like to be angry and how breathing helps:

Just Breathe. by Julie Bayer Salzman & Josh Salzman

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RVA2N6tX2cg>

*Dr. Lynn Woodford is the Mental Health and Addiction Lead for Upper Grand District School Board
Follow me on twitter: @drlynnwoodford*

March Environmental & Character Education Theme



Walk and bike more – be SELF-DISCIPLINED

The climate is changing, and the impacts on the planet could be substantial. Due to burning fossil fuels such as coal, gas and oil we have dramatically increased the amount of carbon dioxide in the Earth's atmosphere and the temperatures are rising. When we burn fossil fuels, we create two main kinds of pollution: greenhouse gases and smog-causing pollutants. Smog has been linked to many health problems, from respiratory diseases to cancer. We need fewer cars on the road. So what is the answer? What can you do about it? You can walk or bike to school, or your friend's house or the store. It is good for the environment and it is good for you too. There are plenty of great reasons to walk to school — less traffic, safer streets, cleaner air — but one of the best is that you will be healthier. Lack of physical activity is a major cause of chronic illness and fatigue. Being fit helps you feel better, and a morning walk helps you to be more alert and more ready to learn at school. So find a friend and ask them to walk to school with you too.

If every Canadian left their car at home just one day a week, we would save about 3.8 million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions each year – the equivalent of taking about 800,000 cars off the road.

The I CAN WALK pledge (found online at icanwalk.ca) asks you to identify locations in your community that you could easily and safely walk or bike to, then pledge to use active transportation instead of driving. You'll save one pound of carbon dioxide for every kilometer you don't drive!

Stop pollution, we've got the solution – walk to school! Let's go green, everyone!

Upcoming Special Education Workshops for Students and Parents

Here are some upcoming dates for both Wellington County and the surrounding area for families looking for opportunities and information about Special Education.

Some upcoming dates for Wellington County:

Indoor Playground Family Event with Autism Ontario - Wellington Chapter

Time: March 1st, 9:00am-10:00am Location: Funmazing Play Centre (Imperial Rd. N., Guelph)

Registration: Visit <http://goo.gl/rdZ6sg> Contact: Jennifer Dent, jennifer@autismontario.com or (226) 748-3372

Families are invited to come out and enjoy Funmazing Play Centre in Guelph. We will have full, exclusive use including play structure, arcade games, Piñata pit, and a car track! Don't forget to bring socks (Caregivers included). Registration is required. This event is open to children with ASD, their siblings and caregivers only. Spaces are limited.

Some upcoming dates for the surrounding area:

Understanding the Impacts of Learning Disabilities

March 25, 2015, 7:00 – 8:30 p.m. Learning Disabilities Association Toronto District, 121 Willowdale Avenue, Suite 100, Toronto, Ontario M2N 6A3

This workshop will focus on understanding the impacts of LD on children and their families and will offer strategies for how to help children cope at home, school and play.

Fee: Members: \$10, Non Members: \$15, Registration at the Door: \$20

Solutions for Learning - Minds That Matter Conference (March 26, 2015) The Learning Disabilities Association of Halton hosts their 4th annual Solutions for Learning Conference, Thursday March 26th, 2015 at the Holiday Inn Burlington Hotel and Conference Centre

Parents, educators and associated paraprofessionals will gather together for this full day of sharing and learning about learning disabilities and/or ADHD. Multiple speakers and breakout sessions offers something for everyone. Breakfast and lunch included.

Complete registration details, program description and information about hotel accommodations can be found on the website: www.ldahalton.ca.

Learning Disabilities Association of Toronto Understanding the Impacts of Learning Disabilities

March 25, 2015, 7-8:30pm Learning Disabilities Association Toronto District, 121 Willowdale Avenue, Suite 100, Toronto

This workshop will focus on understanding the impacts of LD on children and their families and will offer strategies for how to help children cope at home, school and play.

Fee: Members: \$10, Non Members: \$15, Registration at the Door: \$20

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
 <h1>MARCH 2015</h1>						
1	2	3	4 Lunch Orders Due	5 Scholastic Book Orders Due	6	7
8	9	10	11	12 Harriston Meat Order Delivery	13	14
15	16 March	17 Optimist Swim Program	18	19	20 Break	21
22	23	24	25 ECO FAIR Bag2School 5:30 – 7:30pm	26 Linamar Production Gr. 3 & 4	27	28
29	30	31				

Harriston Meats will be ready for pick up by 3:30 p.m. until 5:00 p.m. March 12th