

# January 2020

## Newsletter

### From the Principal's Desk

Happy New Year to all! I hope everyone had an opportunity to enjoy the company of family and friends during the holiday season. The school staff and I would like to take this opportunity to express a sincere thank you for the tremendous support that the school has received over the past year. The staff greatly appreciate everything that has been done to assist the students and staff at our school. A special thank you to our School Council members for all of the work they continue to do for our students and school community, including raising funds to purchase valuable resources, organizing Hot Lunch Programs and coordinating fun-filled activities. We wish all of you a safe, happy and prosperous 2020!



Before the update with the new events at school, I would like to extend a sincere Thank You to everyone who has helped make our year-end activities at EPS a huge success!

- Thank you to all of our dedicated staff who have contributed to a great Winter Concert! Particularly, we are grateful to Ms. Andrea Gregorius and Ms. Krista Deady from DanceEd for their residency at our school and for teaching the entire school how to dance to hip-hop! What a talented, dynamic duo! I think everyone had lots of fun, and this is the most Intermediate students that I have seen at the Winter Concert! I, for one, am thrilled to have been able to provide something new and different for our older students. This is definitely something to continue in the future.
- We have been working hard on making our school a happy and welcoming place to be. One of the ways to achieve this is to build warm traditions of events in the school. Grade 7 Sleepover and Grade 6 Mansfield Trip in the fall allowed all students to build friendships at the start of the year so that they may continue and strengthen all year long. Hot cider for the Winter Concert, Christmas Bazaar, Spirit Week for the last week of school, Pancake Breakfast and It's Wrap Day on June 26<sup>th</sup> are all traditions we hope to continue into the coming years. Thank you to all who contributed their time and talents for these events and thank you to those who have sent kind words of encouragement to let us know that these events are worth the effort to continue and are meaningful!
- Thank You to all the families who supported all of our fundraising activities, such as the Book Fair, Fresh From the Farm, McMillan's Food, the Hot Lunch Programs and FundScrip gift cards.
- Thank You to our Parent Council, who have organized the Christmas Bazaar for the grade K-8 students. This has now become an annual event to be sure because our students and parents alike loved it!

Jan. 7-17	Kindergarten Registration
Jan. 9-10	Gr. 8 IPRC Review meetings
Jan.14	EDHS Parent Information Night for Gr. 7-8
Jan. 15	Cardboard Boat Racing, Fergus
Jan. 16	Family Transition Place [FTP] 8-week presentations series for our 7/8 classes
	College Heights Gr. 8 Parent Night 6:30-8:00
Jan. 21	Parent Council Meeting 7pm in the Library
Jan. 22	Gr. 8s working on course selection with Ms. Weber
Jan. 23	FTP presentations continue
Jan. 24	<b>Berenstein Bears</b> Production for K-3 students @1:45
Jan. 29	Gr. 6 to Fur Trade Programme at Island Lake CA
Jan. 30	FTP presentations continue
	Family Movie Night sponsored by Parent Council
Jan. 31	PD Day <b>No School</b> for students

**Allergies:** A number of students in our school have a life-threatening severe allergy to peanuts and tree nuts. In order to reduce the risk of exposure, we respectfully request that allergens, or other products that mimic the qualities (taste and smell) of the known allergen, not be brought into the classrooms or cafeteria. If there is a different life-threatening allergy in your child's classroom, we will send out a reminder letter specific to that classroom as well. We thank you in advance for helping keep all our children safe and healthy.

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**Cold Weather:** A reminder to parents to send their children to school dressed warmly enough to be outside during recess breaks, which are 20 minutes long, even on very cold days. We will generally call an indoor recess when it is -20C with wind chill, otherwise we go out. It is healthy for children to get fresh air and exercise during the day. It helps them to concentrate and learn better. Please send a scarf to cover the face, snow pants, a warm coat, a hat, mittens and insulated, waterproof boots. Extra mitts and socks are nice in case things get a little damp at first break and don't completely dry by second break. **We are noticing that our Intermediate students in particular, are not dressed for the weather.** If your family is going through a difficult time financially and you need some support to ensure that your children are warmly dressed, then please do not hesitate to call Mrs. Harrison (519-833-9685 ext. 223). There is funding that we can access through the Board to help out and this will be done discretely and respectfully.



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**Bus Cancellation Procedures:**

There are several ways you can find out if the buses are cancelled. You can check the UGDSB app (search "upper grand" where you get apps); you can check the UGDSB



Transportation Website (<http://www.stwdsts.ca/> updated by 6:30 am); you can follow the Transportation Consortium on Twitter (@stwdsts); and you can listen to the local radio station. Our own school website, Twitter account and EPS UGConnect will also be updated as promptly as possible. On days when school buses are cancelled in the morning, they will not be running at the end of the school day, even if the weather improves. If you wish to drive your child(ren) to school on days when buses are cancelled, you must pick them up at the end of the day as well.

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**Lates and Absences:** Please continue calling our Safe Arrival line (519-833-9685 ext. 100) if your child will be late or absent. With the onset of colder weather, we see a sharp increase in the number of students who are late or dropped off late. Being late puts students at a disadvantage because the instruction on what the day is going to look like, as well as the instruction in the subject, are missed and the student starts his or her day in a "catch up" mode. This is a particularly stressful and difficult situation for students who are already struggling at school and who benefit from stability and predictability. Of course, life happens and who hasn't been late once or twice? But chronic lateness is a concern: it disrupts the teaching and learning that has already started for other students. If your child is chronically late, please speak with the teacher or the principal if there is an explanation; we sincerely want to support our students and families and may be able to work out a reasonable solution together. But if students continue being late without demonstrating an effort to solve this problem, they may have to wait in the office until the end of the period to transition into class more smoothly without interrupting others.

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***Get ready! JK Registration is from January 7-17***

Junior Kindergarten Registration for the 2020-2021 school year is from January 7 to 17, 2020 at all schools in UGDSB between the hours of 10 AM and 4 PM. All Kindergarten students (JK and SK) who are new to the UGDSB must pre-register online at [www.ugdsb.ca/kindergarten](http://www.ugdsb.ca/kindergarten).

For more information, you may wish to use [this link](#) as well. The school website has a link on the Homepage if that is more convenient for you.

Each elementary school will have a computer available for families to pre-register online at the school if you do not have access at home. Once they've pre-registered online, parents must go into their child's home school before the Jan. 17th deadline, to drop off required documentation and complete their registration.

Required documentation:

1. Proof of Age (child's birth certificate or passport)
2. Proof of Immunization (Health Record card)
3. Proof of residency identifying parent/guardian's current home address (e.g. utility/tax bill, bank statement, purchase/lease agreement)
4. Verification of date of arrival/immigration documents (if child was not born in Canada)



or lost.

**School Supplies:** January is a good time to take stock of your child's school supplies and replenish them if need be: paper, pens, pencils, crayons and markers, calculators, rulers, sharpeners, erasers and scissors are some of the items that get used up quickly



**Indoor shoes:** All children must have indoor shoes at school. Boots bring in snow, which creates unsafe, slippery puddles. They also tend to scuff the floors. Indoor shoes will keep the students' feet dry and warm while inside.



**Forest of Reading**

**Forest of Reading:** The Forest of Reading® is Canada's largest recreational reading program! This initiative of the Ontario Library Association (OLA) offers eight reading programs to encourage a love of reading in people of all ages. The Forest helps celebrate Canadian books, publishers, authors and illustrators. More than 250,000 readers participate annually from their School and/or Public Library. All Ontarians/Canadians are invited to participate via their local public library, school library, or individually. We are participating in 2 of the programs here at EPS: **The Blue Spruce, K-3 and The Yellow Cedar, Gr. 4-8 non-fiction.** Blue Spruce will run when primary classes come to the library. Yellow Cedar will meet once a week during nutrition break. Please encourage your youngsters to participate in this wonderful program!

Goals of The Forest of Reading:

- Love of reading: Create a meaningful experience for young readers and create exciting opportunities for reluctant readers to create lifelong readers.
- **A proven head start: The results are in! Children who read for fun have higher literacy scores, have more success in science and math, and are more socially and civically engaged** (Reading for Joy, P4E, 2011).
- Libraries at centre stage: With fun activities, prizes and more, the Forest of Reading puts libraries at the heart of the action!



- **Know your hood:** Draw a map of your neighbourhood, adding in important places like school, library, doctor and pet store!
- **Game-ON!** Play a board game and plan a family game night – invite your neighbours.
- **Story Dynamo:** Make-up a story and draw a picture to go with it. First, show the picture to your friend and see if they can tell you what your story is about.
- **Building Buddies:** Build something together with modeling clay or building blocks. Check out what Family Literacy Day Honourary Chair Barbara Reid can do with modeling clay!
- **Did you Know?** Teach someone you know something new. Did you learn why the ocean and sky are blue yet?



***Avoid School Suspension By Keeping Immunization Records Up-To-Date!***

Students' immunization records must be provided to Public Health in order to attend school. In the next few weeks, Public Health will be sending notices to students with incomplete

immunization records. Anyone who gets a notice should contact their family doctor so they can update their vaccines, and then report their new vaccines to Public Health.

**Please do not send proof of vaccination to the school, these records are kept and updated by Public Health.** Report every vaccine to Public Health using one of the following methods:

- Online: Fill in the form at [www.immunizewdg.ca](http://www.immunizewdg.ca)
- Email: Send a photo of the immunization record to [vaccine.records@wdgpublichealth.ca](mailto:vaccine.records@wdgpublichealth.ca)
- Call: 1-800-265-7293 ext. 4396. If a student is not getting vaccinated for medical reasons, reasons of conscience or religious [www.wdgpublichealth.ca](http://www.wdgpublichealth.ca). Public Health is committed to helping students update their vaccination records so they can avoid suspension from school.



**INFORM US!** Please notify the school if there are any changes in your child's information such as your work numbers and emergency contact numbers. This is really important should we need to contact you during the day. Also, this is a reminder to please call the school attendance line to notify the office if your child will be late or absent.

## Monthly Newsletter Inserts

Monthly environmental activities to help celebrate our planet



JANUARY is the time to carry out your Eco Resolutions!

*“There will be more waste plastic in the sea than fish by 2050” Dame Ellen MacArthur*

It's a brand new year and the perfect time for positive change. For example, let's end plastic pollution.

Based on the daily news, it's never been more critical to increase your environmental efforts. The *Earth Day Network* is calling to end plastic pollution. Imagine a future free from harmful plastic garbage! Single-use plastics are especially wasteful and many plastics are also not properly recycled and take up precious landfill space or pollute our oceans, killing marine life and washing up on pristine beaches. Plastic garbage 'islands' are appearing in seas and oceans all over the world.

<https://www.nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/great-pacific-garbage-patch/>



[www.wuft.org](http://www.wuft.org)

Tips on how to reduce single-use plastics:

- Extend your use of cloth shopping bags beyond the grocery store. Use them at all other retail stores too.
- Avoid buying over-packaged food. The choice is yours. Do you need to buy the carrots that are shrink wrapped on a Styrofoam tray?
- Let the restaurants you frequent know that you would them to join the growing movement to ban the use of straws. Many have implemented a 'serve-straws-upon-request' policy.
- Tap water is best. Bottled water can deplete our precious groundwater resources and produce unnecessary green house gas emissions through the production and transport of plastic bottles. Carry a reusable water bottle instead.
- Lug a travel mug to your local coffee shop. (The plastic lining makes coffee cups unrecyclable, and they all end up in the garbage and in our overflowing landfills.)
- Write letters to the government asking them to fix a problem that you are concerned about such as: mandating the reduction of plastic packaging, banning Styrofoam, or promoting research for recyclable coffee cups or coffee pods, etc.

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## TALKING ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH

### Starting the Year Mindfully

Starting a new year, coming off of a two-week school break, new resolutions and on-going challenges are a few of the things we have on our plates in January. There is a lot of research that has shown the power of mindfulness in reducing stress and anxiety, increasing mental well-being, helping with sleep patterns, and also overall emotional regulation.

### WHAT IS MINDFULNESS?

Mindfulness is a way to turn off auto-pilot and bring awareness to the present. It may seem easy, but in a world full of schedules, appointments, deadlines and other daily stressors it can be a challenge to disconnect ourselves from auto pilot. Daniel J. Siegel defines mindfulness:

“Mindfulness in its most general sense is about waking up from a life on automatic, and being sensitive to novelty in our everyday experiences...Instead of being on automatic and mindless, mindfulness helps us to awaken, and by reflecting on the mind we are enabled to make choices and thus change becomes possible”

Mindfulness is not only turning off auto pilot and staying aware but doing so non-judgementally – of yourself, of others, of your experience. In that age of social media likes, followers, and commentaries this non-judgmental stance is something we could all benefit from doing. Jon Kabat-Zinn writes: “Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally”

### **WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?**

Research in the area of mindfulness shows benefits in the following areas:

- Improved working memory
- Lowered anxiety levels
- Reduced emotional reactivity
- Reduced stress
- Regulating emotions
- Less distractedness
- Enhanced sleep

### **SO WHAT CAN YOU DO?**

There are many ways to bring mindfulness into your life from a regular time every day to finding opportunities for mindfulness skills in daily life.

- Bring mindfulness to a walk by focusing on what you see, hear, feel. Listen to the sound of your steps, notice the feeling of your legs, notice what you smell.
- Try listening to someone mindfully by not crafting what you are going to respond and thinking ahead but rather listen fully to what the other person is saying – sounds easy but you will be surprised!
- When you or your child are having a difficult time take a moment and focus just on breathing, in and out. Notice what your body feels like. Notice thoughts that pop into your head – AND LET THEM GO. Just “be” for even 2 minutes. It can be very powerful to take even just one or two minutes! And a great example to set for your children.

So perhaps you can find some time in your day, your week, your month to turn off auto pilot and practice a little mindfulness!

Jenny Marino, Mental Health Lead, Upper Grand District School Board