

December 2020

From the Principal's Desk

It is hard to believe we are in December! Where has the time gone? This has been a different year, to be sure, but many things have also remained the same. I, along with our staff, am very proud of our students. They have been mature and understanding of the circumstances we are in and are doing their best to comply with the social implications from the Public Health perspective. There is a lot of good learning going on at the school and we are all adjusting. I would like to take the time to particularly thank our parent community for your support. It is clear that the students have had many good conversations at home. It shows, and we wholeheartedly thank you for that. In addition, so many parents have voiced their support and gratitude for school staff while we all navigate these unusual circumstances. This year's Holiday Season will also be quite different. Many families are changing their traditional plans and planning for different kinds of celebrations. This is OK, it's different, but it will be OK. On a personal note, one of my most memorable holiday celebrations was one where we had no electricity, no running water (in comes melted snow!) and a house fire! Luckily, no one was hurt, there was minimal damage, and we figured out how to make dinner on the BBQ, use candles and play games and go for walks for entertainment instead of watching TV and other electronics. We adjusted. And we will adjust again. Just think how amazing it will be once we can have larger gatherings! In the meantime, our entire school wishes all of our families a warm, cozy, safe Holiday Season, no matter what you celebrate!



Warmly,
Mrs. H.

- Virtual Parent Teacher Interviews took place last week. Thank you to all those who connected with their child's teacher. If you have not, it's not too late. Please connect with them via Google Classroom or e-mail. Teacher e-mails are available on the school [website](#).
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- Our Book Fair is still going on, but only until the end of the week, December 6th! <https://bookfairs-canada.myshopify.com/pages/5151997> All proceeds from the sales go to our Library and the books can be mailed directly to your home.
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- If you would like to purchase some Erin PS spirit wear, the link for ordering is here: <https://www.dufferinapparel.com/customer-catalogues/schools-elementary-public-up10-20/erin-public-school/none/erin-public-school-apparel-students/>

- **Reminder about bus cancellations**
 - This year, Bus Cancellations are a little bit different. Our school will remain open to students if and when school buses are cancelled for the Town of Erin.
 - STWDSTS/Transportation is responsible for cancelling buses. The UGDSB does not post information about bus cancellations, but the school will Tweet.
 - Each morning, bus cancellations are posted at <https://stwdsts.ca/> by 6:30am. STDWSTS also tweets out information in the morning at <https://twitter.com/STWDSTS>

- When buses are cancelled in a given division, [please refer to the new procedures for the 2020-21 school year](#).
 - Teachers will be teaching at the school and will also post work online
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- **Dance Ed**

I am very happy to announce that we have been able to secure the Dance Ed Group to do virtual Dance Classes with our school. Some of you will remember these talented young ladies from last year. This year, however, they will be teaching virtually. We will be masked, socially distanced and ready to go! Stay tuned for information on the virtual presentation of this. This event is free of charge to the students.

- **Rockin' Around The Christmas Tree** is a musical theatre production by Theatre Orangeville. They have prepared a virtual presentation, which our students will be enjoying this month.
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- **Erindale traffic**

- Thank you to all those who are using Erindale for dropping students off. It is working much better than Daniel street and is much safer without the added traffic of 17 school buses and 2 parking lots. However, it is not without problems. It is for this reason that we ask your assistance. **Please do not park on both sides of the street** as it greatly reduces visibility and makes things less safe for the children. It also forces them to cross the street unnecessarily.
 - If at all possible, please do not park on the street, just stop, drop and go. There are 3 staff on duty every morning to watch students. This will reduce congestion on the street.
 - The school has contacted the Town of Erin about posting *School Zone* signage, reduced speed signage and No Stopping signage on the South side of the street. We were told that it has to go to Council to get approved.
 - We also requested for the snow to be pushed closed to the chain-link fence, to allow students to walk on the grass area and not the street.
 - We thank you in advance for your support.
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- **Dogs on school property**

We understand how nice and efficient it may be to bring your dog while you walk your child to school. However, several of the dogs do not get along and have caused a lot of noise and a skirmish in the school yard. Many of our younger students became frightened and several parents have complained. For that reason, we ask parents to please refrain from bringing dogs onto school property.

- **Late arrivals and drop offs**

We are having about 30 students late on a daily basis. In addition, there are usually at least 10-12 folks dropping off forgotten items, such as lunches, water bottles, snow pants, etc. This is not to mention all of the students who get picked up early. We understand that life happens, appointments need to be kept and so on. But we ask you to please keep drop offs down to a minimum. This is for additional safety of exposure by staff and students. If your child forgets lunch, we have a stash of emergency food items that are individually wrapped. We ask that the rest of the items are leftforgotten. That may serve as a reminder to be mindful to pack what is required at school. 90-95% of this pertains to Intermediate students.

Also, we will be asking students who are chronically late to miss some recesses to motivate them to be on time.

- **Weather appropriate clothing**

These days we are spending a lot of time outside. Students are also on the field at recess in order to socially distance. Before, when there was snow, we could keep students on the tarmac, but now we

must use the field. Therefore, it is important that students have boots as well as other warm clothing. Our field can get pretty windy, there are no trees, so warm clothing is essential. This is particularly the case for our Intermediate students who often don't even bring a jacket! Brrrrrr.....

- **Staff Changes**

- As most of you know, Mrs. Klooster is currently on leave and Ms. Christina Hambly is our Office Co-ordinator until her return.
- Ms. Stewart, our Head Custodian, is also on leave. Ms. Kim Harris is replacing her.
- We have a new EA joining our team; her name is Ms. Carla Butcher.
- Mrs. Reilly will also be away for some time. She is being replaced by Miss Mallorie Lyon. Miss Lyon is currently on our staff, so this will be a re-assignment for her. She has also done work at our school last year.
- We are sad to see our folks away, but we wish them the very best while they are away and look forward to their return. We are also very excited to welcome new staff to our school and know that they will all be wonderful additions to the staff and bring in their own brand of wonderful! Welcome to all of you!

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- **Kindergarten Registration for the 2021-22 school year is from Jan. 5 to Jan. 22, 2021.** The deadline for JK French Immersion 'ontime' applications is Jan. 22 at 4pm. Early Years staff have shared information with Elementary P/VPs and Office Coordinators, regarding changes to this year's process. Keep an eye out on the board website for additional information in the weeks to come.

- **This month's UMBRELLA theme is Empathy!**

This year there will be many of us, of our students and our families who struggle with isolation, with financial concerns, with housing etc. Now more than ever we need to support each other. What better theme this month than **empathy!**?

Many of our teachers, as well as our CYC, Ms. Zappia, are working on the understanding and application of empathy. The message that our students are getting is that Empathy is about being able to consider what someone else may be going through and imagining how they might be feeling or thinking. It is about walking in another person's shoes, about listening to another perspective non-judgmentally, it's about voicing our understanding of their emotions and validating them. It's about recognizing the humanity of others and challenging ourselves to be present. Empathy is often the first step towards compassionate action and helping others. Ultimately, as Dr. Brene Brown says, "empathy is feeling *with* people". Brown also says "empathy fuels connection. Lack of empathy fuels injustice". EMPATHY is at the core of relationships, learning. It also helps to build positive classroom culture, strengthen community, and is the foundation of a safe, caring and inclusive learning environment.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO ALL!!!

